

Press Release

22 May 2024

UTOPIA: Keep on Moving

The Akademie der Künste presents *Underground Birds*, a theatre performance by the KULA Compagnie with Afghan artists

Theatre guest performance

In German, Farsi, French, Hebrew, Italian and Norwegian with German and English supertitles

Saturday, 25 May 2024, 7.30 pm

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg

Press and Public Relations

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To conclude the **“UTOPIA: Keep on Moving”** programme, the Akademie der Künste is presenting a guest performance of *Underground Birds* by the KULA Compagnie. Created in KULA’s transcontinental Writers’ Room together with artists from the Simorgh Theatre in Herat, Afghanistan, the play premiered in Bolzano in autumn 2022 in a production by Robert Schuster.

Taking as its starting point the Evil May Day riots that took place in England in 1517, targeting refugees from the continent, *Underground Birds* focuses on migration and flight through different periods and in different places. Thomas More speaks to the enraged citizens of London, moving them to compassion; a fragment of a play attributed to Shakespeare depicts the scene in a contemporary way. The dramatic journey continues on into present-day Herat – and, going beyond the play, it brings the actresses of the Simorgh Theatre in Afghanistan out from the underground and back to life. Only able to appear via video link at the premiere in the Teatro Comunale in Bolzano City, they are returning, one after another, to the stage, which is once again open to them in exile – performing at home would have meant risking their lives.

Following *Malalai: The Afghan Maid of Orléans* in 2018 and the co-production *Journals of Exile*, which premiered in 2023, this is the third collaboration between the transnational KULA Compagnie and the Akademie der Künste. A guest performance of the new production *DIBBUK: Between (Two) Worlds*, which had its premiere at the Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen on 17 May, is planned for January 2025 at the venue on Hanseatenweg.

Underground Birds

Performers: Azar, Fariba Baqueri, Mahuba Barat, Zahra Barat, Max Bauer, Hadar Dimand, Pasquale di Filippo, Ingrid Mikalsen, Sarah Merler, Céline Martin-Sisteron, Tahera Rezaie, Alexandre Ruby, Jonas Schlagowski, Peter Schorn, Sindre Arder Skildheim

Direction: Robert Schuster

Stage design and costumes: Sascha Gross

Music and sound: Max Bauer

Ambadress, assistant director, supertitles, stage manager: Khitam Hussein

Video technology: Nicola Munerai Faes
Dramaturgical support: Zainab Qadiri, Sarah Calicotti
Lighting: Michael Bischoff
Movement: Slava Kushkov
Co-production with Vereinigte Bühnen Bozen, Hålogaland Teater Tromsø and the Simorgh Theatre Herat

Event details

Underground Birds

Saturday, 25 May 2024, 7.30 pm

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, 10557 Berlin

Admission: € 15/9; ticket reservations: 030 200 57-20 00; ticket@adk.de

Online tickets: www.adk.de/tickets

Press passes: presse@adk.de; tel. 030 200 57-1514

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