

MÄRKISCHE ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 19.09.2022

On supposed freedom

The theatre group Ton und Kirschen performed in Putlitz on Saturday to the delight of young and old alike

By Kerstin Beck

Putlitz. It had bucketed down on Friday evening in Lenzen, so the scheduled performance by the Ton und Kirschen traveling theatre company was rained off. Nevertheless, on Saturday evening, four people from Lenzen and two others from Cumlosen subsequently travelled to Putlitz, where around 500 guests turned up to brave the cold and drizzle. "It's not our first time here and we're excited to see what Ton und Kirschen will put on for us today," was the response from many of the visitors from Putlitz and the surrounding area.

There were to be "open doors" inspired by the works of Shakespeare, Kafka, Rilke and others, including the fairy tale *Bluebeard* by Charles Perrault. Two sets of doors were erected, one great two-winged portal and a small doorway, which were passed through, closed and even overturned at one point – as a symbol of how wars overturn the rule of law.

But first comes an arrest – loosely based on Kafka. Why has he been arrested [by these people] when he doesn't think he's done anything wrong, the young man wants to know? "It's the guilt that has brought them here – that's the law!" is the succinct answer. Which prompts the delinquent to reply to his guards: "It's only because of your stupidity that you're able to be so sure of yourselves". Soon enough, in the background, David Johnston sings about what all this leads to in his self-penned song "And the war keeps going on". The puppet, which is led by four people, provides accompaniment. Or is it the puppet that leads the people? First to reckless pleasures and then to ruin? Because the doorway where a party takes place turns quick as a flash into a grave – now there is mourning where once there was celebration and the flowers to one side become a funeral wreath.

But Ton und Kirschen also knows how to strike a balance: an amusing Pulcinella scene cheers the audience up and they also manage to pull a classic out of the hat. In one act there is a magic casket, into which a young man, tied up, is bundled. A spectator from the audience named Petra is allowed to assist and is given the key to the four locks. And what happens? A different young man emerges from the magical apparatus, of course.

Similarly enchanting were the three puppets that tell the story of Bluebeard's locked door, which must not be opened under any circumstances. Justice is ultimately done: the bride, who secretly opened the little door and saw something terrible, is about to be stabbed by the noble woman-killer but her armed brother rushes to her aid at the last moment.

The final scene tells of a man who wants entry into a room, but there comes a categorical "no" from the watchman. The guard is the law itself, before which a puppet passively spends his entire life. "And why didn't anyone apart from me request admittance?" asks the grey-haired doll at the end of his life. "Because the locked door was made only for you!" replies the guard scornfully.

Praising the performance, Annemarie Schramm, chairwoman of the Nettelbeck Cultural Association, said, "As always, it was sheer excellence. You have to look closely and pay close attention in order to understand everything, but that's precisely what's interesting about it." Another visitor put it in a nutshell: "They are very different from other theatre groups, which is why we are drawn here every year." The six eleven-year-old girls, who, giggling at the start, had just seen the first play of their lives also proclaimed, "We'll be back next year."