

THE FORGOTTEN LAND

WRITING AND DIRECTING **Jean-Michel d'Hoop**
POINT ZERO COMPANY & THEATRE DE POCHE (Brussels)

WINNER OF THE MEDIA PRIZE FOR BEST SHOW 2017-2018



WITH **Sophie Delacollette, Héroïse Meire, Corentin Skwara, Leopold Terlinden**

VIDEOS **Yoann Stehr**

MUSIC **Pierre Jacqmin**

STAGE DESIGN **Olivier Wiame**

PUPPETS **Ségolène Denis** ASSISTED BY **Monelle Van Gyzegem**

LIGHTS **Xavier Lauwers**

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR **François Regout**

WRITING AND DIRECTING **Jean-Michel d'Hoop**

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR **Thomas Kazakos**

STAGE MANAGER **Loïc Le Foll**

PRODUCTION MANAGER **Nathalie Kamoun**

STAGE PHOTOS **Alice Piemme, Véronique Vercheval**

A Point Zero play, in coproduction with the Théâtre de Poche and the Coop asbl. With support from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and Shelterprod, Taxshelter.be, ING et the Tax-Shelter of federal Belgian government.

WRITER'S STATEMENT

BY JEAN-MICHEL D'HOOP

On April 26, 1986, occurred the biggest disaster in the History of Humanity.

The accident of Chernobyl emitted over one hundred times more radiation than the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

The explosion of the reactor produced a radioactive cloud and contaminated rains that primarily touched Belorussia and Ukraine, but also all of Europe. Heavy metals and radioactive elements are still present in the ground... and they always will be... Well, almost always... They will be there for millions of years... Much longer than our memories will live on.

In our collective imaginary all this happened in a faraway country... And yet... Chernobyl is only a three hour flight away from Brussels... 2000 kilometres... It's like travelling to Lisbon.

Or almost.

The team of Point Zero went to Belorussia then to Ukraine to meet the inhabitants of the Chernobyl region in order to ask them questions about their past, their everyday life. This play could also have been called "the people of the aftermath". It is inspired by the word of the witnesses more than that of the theoreticians or politicians. It is based on intimacy and impressions.

The Forgotten land is a creation that was conceived as an invitation to enter the surroundings and the heart of the mysterious zone of exclusion strangely named "Natural Radiological Reserve". A zone that largely consists of forests and within it: lynxes, wolves, bison, wild horses, a few old people who have returned to find their houses and then... Pripjat, the abandoned city. A ghost town where eagles nest at the top of old deserted soviet buildings. It can almost sound romantic...

This play is also the encounter with people who have no other choice than to eat the vegetables of their gardens. Cultivated in their soil. Their outraged soil. And that is a bit less romantic... Particularly as the health of the population remains worrying. Even the children who are born recently already have illnesses. The small doses of radioactivity and heavy metals cause cancer, cardiovascular accidents, heart attacks, sclerosis and today, very young people suffer from illnesses that usually concern the aged.

Beyond the social issues for the humanity and the planet, it appeared to us that this catastrophe conveyed many interesting aspects that could be questioned on a theatre stage: it ceaselessly questions reality; nothing is visible, palpable. The radiation is odourless and colourless... Yet it is there.

To get near this universe which sometimes flirts with the imaginary, we continue our research, mixing actors and human scale puppets.

And if the subject is serious, we still invite poetry on the stage thanks to **Ségolène Denis'** puppets, to **Yoann Stehr's** videos and to **Pierre Jacqmin's** music. A play written between fiction and radioactivity.

THE PRESSE – Excerpts

*The play that cries out on the subject of nuclear energy which the government should see! (...) The play is like being hit by a fist, by claws but also by human warmth. The show proves how much human word, focus, incarnation and attentions to living beings moves much more than a cold enumeration of facts. **La Libre Belgique *******

*Strong and staggering images! **L'Écho***

*Thirty years after the Chernobyl catastrophe, the Point Zero Company went back to the site. In an intelligent and sensitive way, they ask, between video, actors in flesh and bone and puppets, the question of the aftermath. **Focus Vif***

*"The Forgotten Land" has our eyes wide open. **Le Soir ******

*The Company Point Zero at the summit of their art! (...) A distancing which, far from reducing the strength of the intention, gives it a fine depth, between poetry and fantasy. Impressive team work. A must see, especially for young people who will have crucial choices to make for the future of their planet. **RTBF – Culture***

*Captivating... not to be missed! **Le Monde.fr***

*Remarkable! A considerable feat. **Demandez le programme***

*A superbly frightening play. **L'Humanité.fr***

*A very fine poetical work on memory and the future of a population forgotten by all. **Le Bruit du OFF***



CONTACTS

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