

Johannes Müller / Philine Rinnert

DAS WEISSE RÖSSL AM WOLFGANGSEE (In schlechtem Deutsch und ebensolchem Englisch)

05 – 08. April 2019, Sophiensaele Berlin, World premiere



What happens to culture, when you have to flee your country? What do you take with you? What is left behind? How does the culture of the place you are leaving change and how do you build yourself a new cultural home? Johannes Müller and Philine Rinnert ask those questions in their new music theater hybrid by taking a historical detour: Hardly anyone knows that the legendary revue *Im Weissen Rössl* (1930) was not only performed in Berlin, but also in New York in absurd miniature versions created by Europeans fleeing the Nazis regime. One of those examples of cultural transformation is Jimmy Bergs' adaptation „*Das Weisse Rössl am Central Park – In bad German and bad English*“, which was played at New Yorks emigrant meeting point „*Café Vienna*“. The entire room of the café was transformed by Berg and his ensemble, the head waiter turned into the Emperor (the *Deus-ex-machina* figure of the original revue), who not only served the audience, but also awarded medals to everyone. In their project of the same name Johannes Müller / Philine Rinnert search

for traces of those long forgotten miniatures in places like Vienna, Berlin and New York. Archival artifacts, biographical fragments, interviews with Bergs friends and family and the music of the famous revue are intertwined into a mixture of music theater and lecture performance. In collaboration with author Daniel Sauermilch and the artist Leila Hekmat Johannes Müller / Philine Rinnert take the audience on an excavation field – a space of lost entertainment history, refugee experience and the sparkling reinvention of Heimat.



With Paul Hübner, Sarai Cole, Misha Cvijovic, Hauke Heumann, Sabrina Ma, Jördis Richter, Shlomi Moto Wagner, Lixue Lin-Siedler, Jochen Carls

Concept and direction: Johannes Müller, concept and scenography: Philine Rinnert
Arrangement and musical direction: Misha Cvijovic, additional texts: Daniel Sauermilch, „Trachten“ costume: Leila Hekmat, assistant scenography: Maria Gamsjäger, production: ehrliche Arbeit – freies Kulturbüro

A production by Johannes Müller / Philine Rinnert in co-production with SOPHIENSÆLE. Supported by the Senate Chancellery for Culture and Europe and the Performing Arts Fund with funds from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. Media partner: taz. die tageszeitung

With the kind permission of the Courtesy of the Austrian Exile Library in the Literaturhaus Wien and Trude Berg. Lyrics from *Das weisse Rössl am Central Park*, *The White Horse Rides again* (lyrics by Jimmy Berg) and individual song poems from Berg's estate. Rights: Verlag Felix-Bloch-Erben

<https://vimeo.com/333961649> password: central park



„In recreating the experiences of Jewish-German refugees in New York, Müller and Rinnert produce a multilayered, intertextual performance with a dizzying blend of elements: fragmentary lyrics from the original musical appear on projection screens, cut-up sections of play scripts cover the desk, archival tapes and personal testimonies are read aloud. The smooth harmonies of acapella merge with aggressive cello solos and a vigorous live band to create exciting aural textures. The modernity of New York, conceived through flashing neon restaurant signs, is juxtaposed with nostalgia for the rural Austria and Germany of old; a nostalgia which itself appears misplaced for the characters, who struggle to miss and mourn a country so riddled with National Socialism. One of the starkest and most humorous points of contrast actually comes at the opening, when a lone trumpeter plays in front

of a Pepsi sign as though in competition with it, his notes becoming increasingly muffled and eventually breaking down. Germany's love-hate, dependence-revulsion relationship with the USA is finely teased out." (*Madeleine Pollard, Exberliner*)



„Die Pointen wirken zeitgenössisch, so wie auch das Schicksal Jimmy Bergs' an heutige Flüchtlinge denken lässt. „Im Weissen Rössl am Central Park“ bringt das Kunststück fertig, das Original zu kommentieren und zu verfremden und gleichzeitig in schönen Melodien zu schwelgen.“ (*Oliver Kranz, RBB Kulturradio*)

„Well, well, well.... how about this? "Das weiße Rössl am Central Park" in a production by Johannes Müller/Philine Rinnert. It's supported by Senatskanzlei für Kultur und Europa. Miracles can happen!“ (*Operetta Research Centre*)

