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„What You have to know about Deaf Theatre“

Deaf theatre is a form of theatre with its own artistic potential existing as any other forms of theatre with the same artistic power as all forms of theatre.

Professional deaf gives the professional deaf theatre artists the opportunity to present their creation of theatre on stage.

There are a lot of different possibilities to present deaf theatre on stage: theatre in sign language with deaf actors, theatre in sign language with deaf and hearing actors, visual choreographed theatre (starting from signs it is wonderful to create a choreography), visual music, music by feeling the vibrations, physical theatre, dance theatre and “story-telling” (the last one is only possible in the world of deaf theatre, because deaf artists can perform dramatic miniatures in sign language).

These different forms of deaf theatre are for deaf and hearing audience. For the whole audience it is amazing to see and understand deaf theatre.

Deaf also exists only in the deaf world, but there deaf theatre cannot get the whole public.

By going to the whole public (deaf and hearing people) deaf theatre shows productions on the same level as all other forms of theatre.

In the theatre sign language is used as a form of art.

In the performances of ARBOS – Company for Music and Theatre and the presentation of that productions in Austria also in professional theatres as in the “Theater des Augenblicks” in Vienna, the “Toihaus” in Salzburg, the “neuebuehnevillach” and by the European and International Deaf Theatre Festival deaf artists get the same attention as all others.

So in the world of theatre equal possibilities for deaf artists exist.

But in everyday life such equality does not always exist. The best example for the equal rights of the sign language presents Finland. Since 1955 in the Finnish Constitution sign language has the same rights as all other languages of minorities in Finland in the daily life as the Swedish language, the Russian language, the language of the Romany and also the language of the Sami People in the arctic part in the north of Finland.

The Sign Language uses mime and gestures and hands. In every country of the world original sign languages exist with their own signs (and regional dialects as every other language). Every sign language has its own grammar. But the grammar in all sign languages is similar. Also in Austria exists an original sign language, which is very different to the German sign language. In Austria there are living 500.000 people who hearing impaired and 10.000 people who were deaf born. But sign language has one speciality more than other languages. For international communication deaf people are using “International Signs”; there are a number of

signs existing, which are used in the communication between deaf people from different countries (we can compare that fact with the situation of “Esperanto”, but that spoken language is an artificial one). As a visual “Language in Space” the sign language of the deaf is the best language for theatre and in the theatre of the world.