

A KING LISTENS

sound theatre for children

Conceived, directed and music by **Peter Kus**
Text by **Nebojša Pop Tasić**, **Peter Kus** (inspired by a short story by Italo Calvino)
Dramaturgy by **Nebojša Pop Tasić**
Puppets and set design by **Gregor Lorenci**
Original instruments by **Peter Kus**, **Jurij Kus**, **Darko Korošec**
Light design by **Borut Bučinel**
Poster design by **Andrej Štular / Stripcore**
Photos by **Nada Žgank**

Performed by **Miha Arh**, **Gregor Cvetko**, **Peter Kus**

Produced by **Zavod Federacija Ljubljana** and **Cankarjev dom Ljubljana**

The performance was produced with the help from The Ministry of Culture RS and Urban Municipality Ljubljana.

Information:
m/ +386 41 657860 (Peter Kus)
e/ peter@federacija.net

For audience over 7 years of age. Duration is 45 minutes.

APPEARANCES AT INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

2008

Multikids, Vienna (Austria)

Summer Puppet Pier, Maribor (Slovenia) – award for *best visual appearance*

Puppets 2008, Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Puppet & Music, Gorizia (Italy)

2009

Lutfest, East Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – awards for *originality* and *best music*

Luagna & Losna, Feldkirch (Austria)

Pomeriggi d'inverno, Gorizia (Italy)

2010

Internationales Welscher Figurentheaterfestival, Wels (Austria)

The 17th International Children's Theatre Festival, Subotica (Serbia)

KinderKinder Festival, Hamburg (Germany)

2011

Kotor Festival of Children's Theatre, Kotor (Montenegro)

Figuren Theater Festival Basel, Basel (Switzerland)

BEMUS Festival, Belgrade (Serbia)

2012

34. Puppentheertage Mistelbach, Mistelbach (Austria)

AWARDS

18th International Festival Summer Puppet Pier 2006 Maribor (Slovenia):

Award for visual appearance of the performance

10th Lutfest Festival, East Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Award for originality, Award for best music

5th Biennial of the Society of the Puppeteers of Slovenia, St. Michael (Austria):

Award for originality and poetry, Award for puppet technology,

Award for puppet animation

19th Kotor Festival of Children's Theatre, Kotor (Montenegro):

Best performance in the category of the new theatre tendencies

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Composer Peter Kus has been lately creating performances in which he is researching different applications of music and sound in theatre. The result of his work are performances *Black Kitchen* (Mini teater, 2004), *The Voice* (KD Priden možic, 2005), *Tristan Vox* (Ops! Productions Ljubljana, 2006) and most recently *A King Listens* (Ops! Productions Ljubljana and Cankarjev dom, 2007).

A King Listens is based on the use of musical instruments as elements of set design, stage props or puppets that 'supply' the performance with sound in a special way. Their 'double nature' enables them to perform music alongside their artistic and dramatic expression. When animated, they can become the protagonists of drama while when played on, the animators and musicians can extend their expressions to the field of music. In a certain sense, musicians in the performance do not only animate puppets and objects – they also animate sound!

The story used in the performance is inspired by a short story of the same name by the Italian writer Italo Calvino. It is a tale about a king who is forced to sit on his throne night and day to protect it from rebellion. His only contact with the outside world are the sounds coming to the throne from different parts of the palace. He cannot see their source but is obsessed by interpreting their meaning and the destiny they are predicting. The tale could be summarized by a series of aural events that trigger king's imagination and flow of his thoughts.

This kind of 'aural' structure of the Calvino's tale presents a challenge for Peter Kus to realize his idea about a 'sound theatre', a hybrid form between a concert and a puppet performance. The goal of the performance is to consider the traditional relationship between sound (music) and drama in theatre. While music is usually used as a secondary element, designed to intensify sensual perception of the visual (so called 'synaesthetic' effect), the performance *A King Listens* puts music into conceptual starting point of theatre. Its goal is 'to stage' the sound events as the base elements of the performance; it encourages the spectator **to listen the music with his eyes**.

THE STORY

The king lives in a never-ending paranoia about losing the power, so he is sitting on his throne night and day to protect it. His only contact with the outside world are the sounds coming to the throne from different parts of the palace: footsteps of the servants, whispers and conversations, fanfare trumpets at the raising of the flag, ceremonies, sounds of the city at the outskirts of the palace, riots, rumble of the ruffles, etc. He cannot see their source but is obsessed by interpreting their meaning and the destiny they are predicting. This paranoia only seems to halt when he hears something that completely enchants him. Through the window the wind brings a singing voice of a woman, a voice of pure beauty, unique and irreplaceable. For the king it is the sound of freedom.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PETER KUS is a composer, puppet theatre director, instrument builder and educator from Ljubljana, Slovenia. In his latest projects he is exploring the field where music and theatre meet. The results are puppet/musical performances like **Black Kitchen** (2004), **The Voice** (2005), **Tristan Vox** (2006), **A King Listens** (2007), **The Lost Tone** (2010), **The Singing Castle** (2011) and **The Forest of Sounds** (2012). The performances were invited to numerous international festivals and received many awards for music and originality. Peter Kus is also an original musical instrument's designer and builder. In September 2008 he conceived a widely appraised series of exhibitions of original musical instruments **Euphonia**, presented in various towns in Slovenia. In 2012 and 2013 his exhibition **Le jardin Musical (Klanggarten)** was presented in Reims, France and in Wels, Austria. In October 2010 he published a guide book *The Singing Castle, a Guide for Making Original Instruments in the form of a comic book* together with the illustrator Kaja Avberšek.