

Hotel Europa

Eastern Loves by Hotel Europa



Koudelka 1968, Prague

Short description

This project looks at the lives of young Portuguese communists and also members of FRELIMO (Liberation Movement of Mozambique) and MPLA (Liberation Movement of Angola) that lived in eastern bloc countries through the scholarships that these countries provided before 1989. These scholarships were provided as support for the struggle against Portuguese fascism and colonialism that ended only in 1974 and as part of the effort to help in the foundation of those free and independent countries. Did the time that they stayed in those countries changed their views on communism? Particularly the students that had love relationships with people from those countries, did that experience change their ideology?

This project is bringing questions regarding the struggle and resistance against fascism, colonialism and communism. Framing these questions under the topic of love will allow to understand the connections between the personal love and family relationships under those political spectrums.

This is a documentary theatre performance that works from interviews with people that lived those situations. We will interview families that have been dismembered by the fall of communism between Europe and Africa, people that have left the communist party after the experience of living in those countries and people that still continue to be communist. The work of Hotel Europa is multidisciplinary combining theatre, music and movement.

There are 9 people on board (6 performers, 2 technicians, 1 producer/stage manager)

We still do not have the technical rider, but the performance is planned for large and mid stage.

Description

In 2018 the artistic directors of Hotel Europa Tereza Havlíčková (Czech) and André Amálio (Portuguese) met a Portuguese-Czech couple in Portugal. A Portuguese communist who studied in Prague on one of the scholarships given by the Eastern countries in the 60's, 70's and 80's and a Czech woman, daughter of a communist agent of the STB - the Czech political secret police and the most visible face of the Communist oppression in the former Czechoslovakia. This meeting reminded Havlíčková and Amálio of the different views that communism has in their countries, if in Portugal communism can mean resistance and struggle for freedom, in Czech Republic it is seen as oppression and domination. Immediately they realized that those live stories would be the vehicle to confront these different views on communism. They decided to interview other couples and other students in the former communist countries, trying to understand how the multiplicity of these experiences and how living in those countries may have changed or not their ideological beliefs. Have these students witnessed the horror and oppression that most people in these countries speak of or have they chosen not to see beyond the Communist ideal and did not realize the past oppressive reality? Have they changed their beliefs?

For decades the countries of Eastern Europe have granted scholarships to thousands of young communists around the world. Many European students benefited from this program through their national communist parties in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Many of these students fell in love, married, had children, many returned to their homes with their new families and others stayed in those same countries to this day. This documentary theatre performance has as starting point a collection of testimonies with these former students and their families, trying to portray the multiple experiences lived by these students who lived in the communist countries of Eastern Europe before the fall of the Berlin Wall and as they have witnessed the lives of those people under the authoritarian rule of the communist regimes. Trying to investigate with the interview process if these experiences have altered or conditioned their ideological positions or, on the contrary, if they still continue to defend



the communism as they lived it? This performance will continue the research methods of Hotel Europa that are based on the collection of testimonies through interviews, which is then completed with a broad historical and archival research, these material are later worked theatrically through devising methodologies.

With this documentary theatre performance Hotel Europa continues the investigation on the recent European past, in particular on the authoritarian regimes that marked the life of our parents, such as communism and fascism. In this work we look in particular at communism and how it was lived in western and eastern Europe, analysing the case of Portugal that was under a fascist dictatorship at the time, the post second World War France and in the former communist countries. But also how it is remembered today in these European countries. Furthermore, it looks at scholarship given to members of MPLA (liberation movement of Angola) and FRELIMO (liberation movement of Mozambique), investigating the role communist countries in the struggle against colonialism. Did the time that they stayed in those countries change their views on communism? Particularly the students that had love relationships with people from those countries, did that experience change their ideology?

During the artistic collaboration of André Amálio and Tereza Havlíčková (artistic directors of the company Hotel Europa), there were several moments where the topic of communism appeared, especially the way communism was lived and portrayed in the recent history of the two countries (Portugal and the Czech Republic). While on the one hand it was important to underline the role played by the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) in the anti-fascist struggle, the resistance to the Estado Novo (fascist dictatorship), the struggle against colonialism; on the other parts of Europe communism represented oppression, torture, and lack of freedom.

Company History

Hotel Europa is a company formed by André Amálio (Portugal) and Tereza Havlíčková (Czech Republic). They have been collaborating together, developing documentary theatre performances that explore the boundaries between theatre, dance and performance. They use in their work an overlap of autobiographical material, family stories, national histories, testimonies, interviews and historiographical research, creating a complex web of references that allow the public the opportunity to travel between cultures, times and genres. The work of **Hotel Europa** has been performed in Portugal, Brazil, France, Germany, UK, Czech Republic and Slovakia. The company created the shows *Portugal is not a small country* (2015), *Pass-Port* (2016), *Liberation* (2017) and *Post-Colonial Loves* (2019), *The Children of Colonialism* (2019), *The End of Portuguese Colonialism* (2019), *Agora que não podemos estar juntos* (2020).

André Amálio is theatre director and actor that has developed his work in the area of documentary theatre, memory, postcolonialism and the recent Portuguese colonial past. André holds a PhD from Roehampton University and a MA from Goldsmiths, University of London. His research was supported by Gulbenkian Foundation, GDA and Rush. He lectured theatre directing and documentary theatre in HAMU (Prague) and ESAD (Portugal) and is currently lecturing in Universidade do Minho (Portugal). Has worked as an actor/performer/dancer under directors like Anna Furse, Giacomo Scalisi, João Brites, Lúcia Sigalho, Luís Castro, Madalena Vitorino, Marie-Gabrielle Rotie, amongst others.

Tereza Havlíčková

She began her career as a dancer by completing her BA Dance Theater at Laban Center in London and then graduated at Goldsmiths, University of London (MA Performance Making). She is particularly interested in the multidisciplinary exploration of movement, text and visual forms, as well as the use of autobiographical material. She worked and studied with artists like Graeme Miller, Marie

Gabrielle Rotie, Twitchin Mischa, Steve Paxton and worked with Firenza Guidi, Etta Ermini, Anna Furse, Ajaykumar, Petr Boháč, Miřenka Čechová and Madalena Vitorino.

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