



BALGÁK KERTJE / GARDEN OF THE FOOL

Fotó: archív



ESSAYS, REVIEWS AND CRITIQUES ON THE PERFORMANCES OF METANOIA

ON IDEA-TIME:

I want to be a horseman like the you is!

"The corresponding part of the whole-time in the presence-time: that is the idea-time. A man's life in the idea-time does not begin with his birth and is not over with his death." In this imaginary but still most real world we can see the characters, who, according to the wish of the compiler-director, Zoltán Perovics (who dreamt his vision into reality), lead the spectator down on the descending steps of the Golden Age, Silver Age, Ore Age and Iron Age [...]

I am still not sure to which genre I should connect this performance, which I found excellent. Tragedy? Avant-garde performance? Neither and both. According to the definition of the programme, it is a 'naive surreal gift'. And why? Perhaps because as Sándor Weöres put it: *"All your manifestations that nicely, freshly, freely emerge are your gifts..."* The group intends to hand over this way a thought-provoking, vigorous and captivating gift to the whole audience.

(Péter T. Zselenszky: *»Olyan lovas akarok lenni, mint te vagy!«, Szegedi Egyetem*)

"Idea-Time is also something unusual since it approaches, in a completely new dimension, the eternal questions of MAN: where do we come from? where do we go? which is the space of life, the way that leads us to the BEAUTIFUL, to the WHOLE? Its symbolism and means are entirely different from those of 'traditional' drama [...]

(Edina Tallér in: *A szegedi Stúdió Színház bemutatkozó előadása a Sziládyban, Halasi Napló, ?*)

ON GARDEN OF THE FOOL:

Not documented.

ON DAMNED STORY:

"The 20th century, the century of crime and punishment, appears on the director's, Zoltán Perovics's stage. Seeing these pictures, we might associate to concentration camps, gulags and oppressive regimes."

(Márta G. Nagy: *Az elátkozott század, Reggeli Délvilág, 25/07/1994*)

"Damned story – (anywhere) out of time

... the sight that could be photographed at any moment, the statue-like, symbolic figures, the sounds and the music merge into a dream-like picture that surpasses the imagination of any fantasy [...]

A great achievement of Metanoia's *Damned Story* is that its figures and characters, their apparel, the mud, their mostly rhythmically broken movement give the impression as if they had been torn out of time, as if it had stopped in them, as if they did not need anything else but space for their spatial movement, and so as if they were both before and after annihilation. They somehow absolve time, their own little story becomes the negation of time and, therefore, a piece of space in negation itself.

(Szilárd Podmaniczky: *Átkozott történet – ki az időből, Délmagyarország, 29/07/1994*)

"Zoltán Perovics, the director, thinks in pictures. We can see separate photos and paintings, and almost all of them are both beautiful and chilling at the same time just as in his earlier directions. [...] we can witness a very remarkable directorial process in the Hungarian so-called alternative theatrical medium. Metanoia, it seems, has found the way with which an existence outside the traditional 'brick theatre' can show more and perhaps truer things than most of the so-called 'professional drama groups' can. This way/method is built on the unity of picture, movement and sound [...] Peculiar as it is, it almost completely lacks the script. In this case the script is overreflected and, as such, it separates rather than keeps together, whereas the picture, sound and movement can tell things that are incommunicable through language. This kind of theatrical art seems to make an attempt at doing what, according to the old Wittgenstein, too, is the most: it wants to tell and not to show."

(Zoltán Gyenge: *Átkozott történet, Fényfüggöny, Spring 1996*)

ON PROTECTED ANIMALS:

"Front View

The apartment theatre of Metanoia is a rather peculiar place. It 'infantilises' yet sobers down at the same time. It is something both before the cradle and after the grave. Almost all the props are symbols and are extremely small and model-grotesque. However, men are human-sized. How is it then? Are we giants in the very middle of chaos? We ourselves are the protected animals, I mean, there can be a vast number of interpretations who they really are. [...] it was like a movie."

(-göan-: *Előlnézet, EX-STASIS, the daily paper of THEALTER 97, 03/08/1997*)

"Hymns to the night

Peró's (Zoltán Perovics's) theatre does not proceed forwards but inwards (...) its performances reminded me more of a well-organised work of art than of a theatre performance. (...) Instead of



ÁTKOZOTT TÖRTÉNET

Fotó: Révész Róbert



complicated machines and treacherous props, it displays the simplest symbols: swaddling-clothes, bread, water. We can see the requisites of a world waiting for re-consecration. The Miskins, the innocent and the simpleton of the world gather together under the black or white flag of Metanoia."

(Andor Deutsch: *Himnuszok az éjszakához, EX-STASIS*, the daily paper of THEALTER 98, 22/07/1998)

"THEALTER '98

[...] One [of the performances] was the play of Metanoia from Szeged, which was directed by Zoltán Perovics, and which the audience of the festival already had a chance to see last year. A prelude was added to it, and it was moved from their apartment theatre into a tent erected in the Old Synagogue. The story is about the director's uncle, who died at an early age, but it is [...] much more general than just being the story of one person. What we can see here is, in fact, that man is a captive of stereotypes, of ideologies, and lives his whole life without having a real chance of finding what is really important for him. This whole thing functions like a clockwork; little cogwheels clutch each other and there is only one direction, one path, which cannot be left. Meanwhile we are consuming the oxygen of the tent among beautiful silences and darkneses, among wonderful little and frightening bigger structures in a mystified and ingeniously illuminated space, until the monotony of the slowed-down plot reminds us that it is time we left this world. Without us the performance carries on just as well."

(Zsolt Bárány: *Thealter '98, Kulturális ajánló műsorfüzet* (published in Győr), September 1998)

"Banished from the theatre

"The question is not whether there will be dawn anymore"

Lajos Szabó – Béla Tábor, *Indictment against the Spirit*

The intellectual basis of Zoltán Perovics's theatre, its starting and returning point, is the artistic and philosophic heritage of Béla Hamvas. The behaviour and decision by which Hamvas and his friends – quoted in the motto – endured, or rather consciously undertook, marginality as the consequence and price of the maintenance of their intellectual position provides a model, too. The name of their theatre – Metanoia Detachment – also signifies the separation and, furthermore, the radicalism of opposition and resistance.

The sharpest possible contrasts are used in the organisation of space: the global has to be moved into a space designed for one person (the performance was originally conducted in an apartment). (...) In each and every corner something is permanently happening and working. It is the constant repetition of the given actions which at last makes it possible for the consciousness of the spectator to grasp an element of each sequence so that, from the many separate movement patterns, a homogeneous mass can be formulated: the ceaseless action-film, the total vision, and furthermore the almost painful physical sensation of inhumanity.

Time is analogous with the organisation of space. (...)

The Cageman, who observes the plot from the side but still from the same height as the spectators, starts to comment after a certain time what he can see, what he has already experienced.

[...]

Theatre always exists, it always happens to those living in it, to its creators; however, the spectator is not an integral part of it, not anymore. This is suggested by the alienating effects and by the suspense at the beginning, and this is the function of the multiple stage, too. The last scene is really a theatre within the theatre, the third stage behind the proscenium and the pit is the 'real' theatre, it is the innermost circle, which is independent both from the chaotic outer world and from the traditional framework of arts. When the real action, the action of the inner circle, starts, the actual performance is over. [...] (Not even the beginning of the performance can be defined exactly, therefore the performance cannot be over in the usual sense.) *Protected Animals* is interesting not only because it can bring close, physically and spiritually, the world fallen into lethal madness, and the mystery of Redemption by theatrical means (which is indeed quite an achievement in itself), but also because it problematises the position and the role of the spectator. No more do they expect the spectator to take part creatively, to 'dissolve' himself in the performance as they did in their earlier works. On the contrary, the spectator is (twice) deemed to be the non-participating stranger, the witness. [...]

The showman [...] does not hide the pain experienced during the show, he rather reveals it to the spectators. He does not let them meditate in the expanded time but takes back the moment created by him. [...]

The spirit is also responsible for the state of the world, it may even have the biggest responsibility. The purification of the world can only be done by the one who is himself absolutely pure, who has not been manipulated by the institutions of civilisation: the challenged, the outcast, the child. [...]

Zoltán Perovics's theatre is threatened not only by the outer darkness, but also by its intransigent metaphysic yearning for absolute purity...

The question quoting Klimov: 'Now what are you doing here, don't you see that the show is over?!' does not only loosen up seriousness but also gives ground to further thinking about arts.

In the performance of *Metanoia Detachment*, the artist creates the inverse, the other side of the act of the one founding a religion, since, instead of personifying the transcendental, he rather transcends the 'original' personal story. To be more precise, this theatre tries to create by its means the moment when the two orientations meet and merge. When the Word becomes Flesh and the Flesh becomes Word. The immortal and immeasurable act when the son of the carpenter from Nazareth refers to God as 'my father'. We can recognise the theatre adaptation of the Berdayevian philosophy in this effort: by repeating the creating act of God in the artistic creation, the human creates itself as a person.

The question is therefore not

whether there will be dawn anymore, whether there will be theatre and art anymore after the 'aestheticised', empty and corrupt theatre and art. There is always dawn just as there is always a starry sky above us. Comment II, the Weöres quotation, made on the performance refers to this. *Metanoia's* question to itself and to the spectators is whether theatre and man himself are able to recreate and realise their cosmic origin and duty as eternal conditions or will it/they be burnt up in the dark fire of History. The maintenance of the faith of this theatre in itself is at stake.



VÉDETT ÁLLATOK

Képes Gabriella

Fotó: Révész Róbert



We do not know why somebody starts to purify the world around him with brick-dust mixed with water. We do not know why someone else has got to repeat and imitate this act. We do not know what makes us be the witness of this all. The current mainstream philosophy of art does not give answer to these questions. As a matter of fact, from its point of view theoretically everything is over: History is over, Philosophy is over and Art is over, too. The clever, calm and cheerful final settlement of the western tradition is being done with great efficiency in the spirit of pluralism and multiculturalism. This kind of 'end' can last for ever since there is nothing anymore in relation to which something could be new.

The answer

was there in the Old Synagogue. It was the gesture as the theatre man pointed to himself: this is my uncle and this is me. *Protected Animals* exemplifies that art is destiny, it is the constant repetition of an inherited story and the faithfulness to this story. The duty of the strong contrasts is to reveal how frail this destiny is, how much it is at the mercy of the overdriven rule of impersonal powers. However, it also shows how strong and forceful an example it can nevertheless become.

As far as Metanoia Detachment is concerned, it does not take part in the big postmodern compromise. Our whole world is anathema to them just as Hamvas expressed in *Patmosz*: *'There is no reconciliation. Man must occupy for himself all the hatred of the world so that he will not and cannot yield. The radical humanity of man must be in this hatred. Rage is my conciliation. I do not tolerate any kind of corruption of human existence whatsoever in anybody anywhere.'*

(Gyöngyi Mikola: *Küszetés a színházból, Üzenet*, September 1998)

"As an unprotected animal in Somorja

(Metanoia Detachment) This is the name of the group that was handing out leaflets in front of the synagogue in Somorja the other day. I do not know what metanoia means. I know 'meta', but not 'noia'. The leaflet contains Comment I, a one-minute short story about Lacika, who had epilepsy. This is an illness which can accompany genius, however, it is lethal in our world of indifference. I should have been able to interpret the play – or whatever it is – on the basis of this leaflet. I didn't manage to. My efforts to interpret were useless. [...] The dough on the hook kept on stretching down to the ground. So we went home. [...]"

(István Dusza: *Védtelen állatként Somorján, Új szó*, 22/10/1998)

"Reacting – as a protected animal..."

on the performance (*Protected Animals*) of an avantgarde theatre group from Szeged (Metanoia Detachment), who introduced themselves in the Synagogue of Somorja in October. The sheer fact that, in our little world of theatre, we can very rarely witness the visit of an 'apartment theatre' was enough for me to satisfy my interest by seeing the play.

However, it is not a secret that some attention has already been paid to the performance – I have read István Dusza's critique which appeared in the October 22 issue of *Új Szó* [...] this time I cannot agree with him. Wondering why? [...] – art is free. Nothing can influence me in having my own free opinion about anything, and nobody can define what is good for me or what gives me artistic experience! [...] What about the spectator? The spectator should remain holy and untouchable, and furthermore, he should be protected – no matter how stupid he is (whether he understands or not...)."

(Attila Győri: *Védett állatként – reagálok...*, *Új Szó*, November 1998)

GENERAL PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS

THE AREA

The host must provide an area which is well-ventilated (i.e. relatively cool in the summer), can be made adequately dim, has at least – but preferably more than – five grounded sockets (220V), and which is, therefore, adequate for the accommodation of the *construction* provided by Metanoia.

i. The story takes place partly in a *construction* (height: 4.5m, length: 7m, width: 5.6m) containing a two-storey auditorium with room for 30, and partly in the space adjacent to it.

ii. The construction is pierced by a nearly diagonal and firmly fixed harpoon protruding up and down on both sides of the box, which, therefore, has a dimension of 10x8m as basic area and 5.5m height.

iii. The area ideal for providing a view of the external actions (version A), for the visual construction and for object creation, both sensitively connected with this, and for the arrangement, too, is at least 8m high and has a basic area of 15x20m or more.

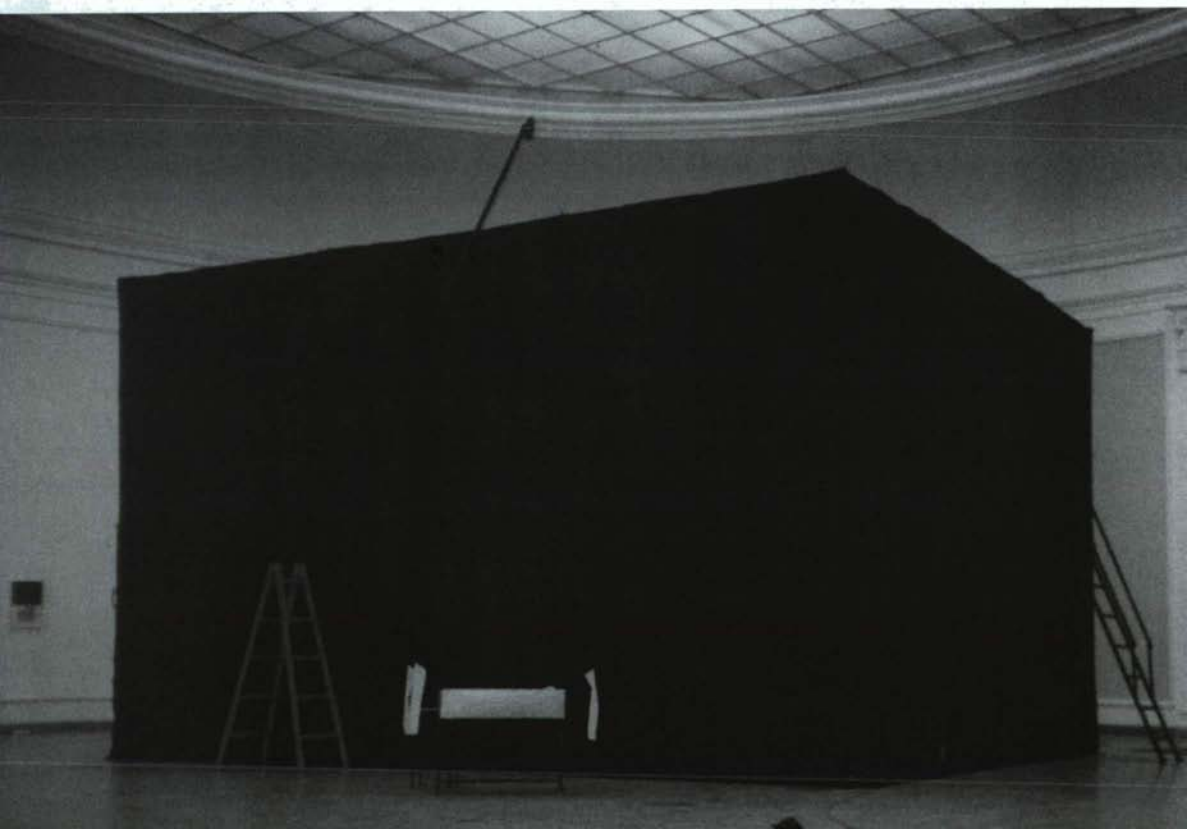
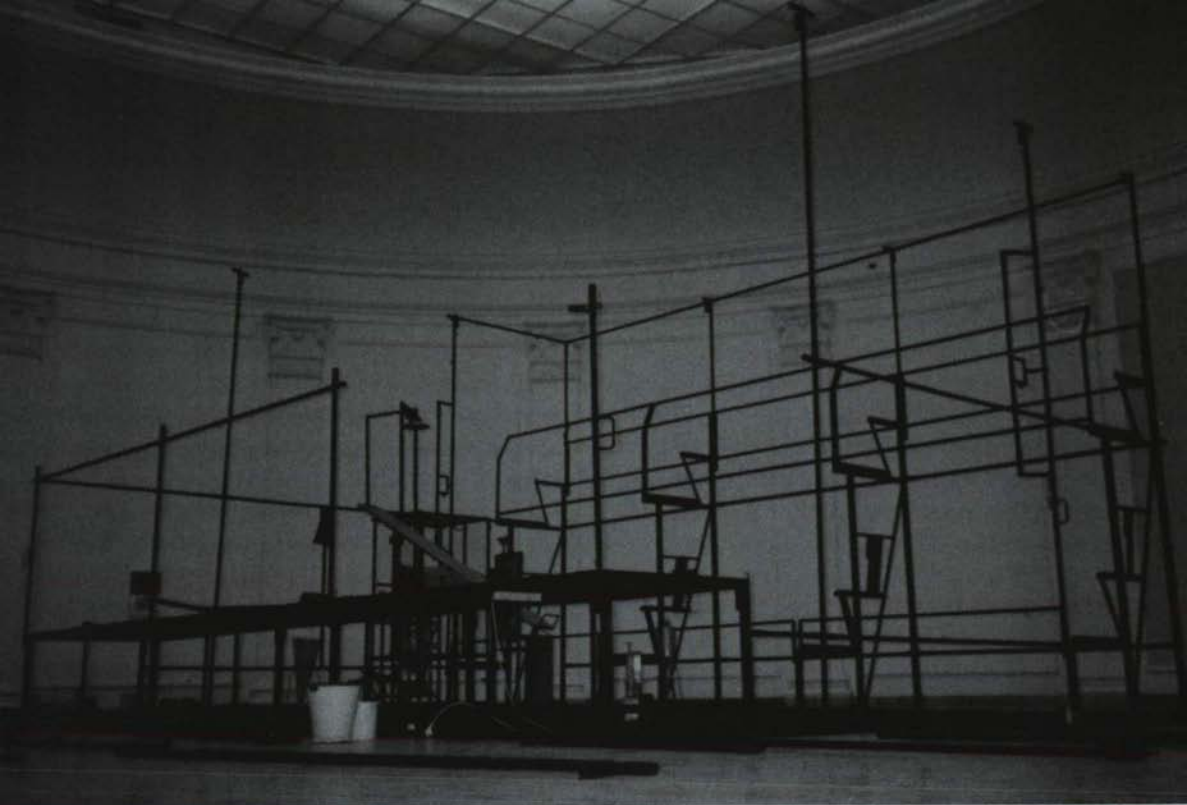
iv. The area which even if not ideal but (with a modified version A) still practicable and acceptable is 6m high and has a basic area of 12x15m.

v. If the area at the host's disposal is even smaller than the ones indicated above, then only version B of the external actions can be realised. Metanoia undertake the realisation of version B only in exclusive cases and only with full knowledge of the precise and detailed ground-plan of the area in question.

INSTALMENT

0th day: The members of Metanoia arrive at the venue one day before the beginning of the instalment either in the afternoon or in the evening according to prior negotiations. They examine the building hosting the production. They unload the props from the truck on that evening if possible, then carry them in to the premises and prepare them for instalment, which is to start at 9 a.m. the following morning. (If the stage is not on the ground floor, it is indispensable that the unpacking be arranged on this day.) Only then do the members of Metanoia occupy their accommodation.

1st day: The instalment starts at 9 a.m. and lasts until 8-9 p.m. depending on whether something has been damaged during transportation or whether the given area requires modifications in the construction. We finish the work for the day not later than 11 p.m.



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Fekete doboz a Múcsarnokban

Fotó: archív



2nd day: The instalment is continued from 9 a.m. and lasts till the end of the building of the construction. The instalment is followed by a technical rehearsal and by the adjustment of the lights. The size and the passages of the given area determine and, in certain cases, modify the direction of the original external actions, therefore the moving rehearsals are to be done, too. We leave the area not later than 11-12 p.m.

REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES (IN CASE OF SIX PERFORMANCES)

3rd day: From 10-11 a.m. we have partial rehearsals followed by an evaluating discussion. After a short break we have a complete rehearsal in which the lights and the mechanical apparatus are to function. Short break and preparations for the performance. Performance. The duration of a performance, together with the entrance of the audience and with their staying there after the end, is approximately 80-90 minutes. The time necessary before the second performance is approx. 60-80 minutes. After the second performance, the audience usually stays in longer and also there is a chance for them to meet the group. After a short self-evaluation we ventilate the room, do the necessary preparations for the following day and then leave the area.

4th day: Just like on the previous day, but we only have a rehearsal if it is necessary and repair works are done if something breaks down.
Performances.

5th day: Just like on the previous day. If we have to hand over the area until the following morning, then an approx. 1.5 hour break follows the performance and then we begin to dismantle the box. At 6-7 a.m. we load the already packed props on the truck. We leave the area not later than 8 a.m.

NOTE:

– Metanoia do not give interviews to the TV during the time of the preparations and (without prior negotiations) do not consent to the making of any kind of recording whatsoever of the performance!

Photographing during the performance greatly disturbs both the visual construction and its reception. We would be most obliged if photographing during the performances could be avoided.

– *The performance* is recommended only for 14 or above.

- The attention of the audience should be drawn to the following things already at the sale of tickets:
- Food, drink and bigger bags are not allowed in the performance area.
- It is recommended that the spectators decide in advance whether they want to view the performance from the row above or from the one below in order to avoid a jam when they enter the area. They should get their tickets in accordance with this decision.

CONTACT:

Metanoia
6701 Szeged
P.O. Box 905.
Hungary

tel. and fax: +36 62 312 303
maszk@maszk.hu



ÁTKOZOTT TÖRTÉNET
Fotó: Révész Róbert



TECHNIKAI IGÉNYEK, BEÉPÍTÉS ÜTEMEZÉSE:

A TÉR:

A meghívó félnek a Metanoia által biztosított konstrukció befogadására és felállítására alkalmas, jól szellőztethető (a nyári hónapokban is viszonylag hűvös), jól sötétíthető, minimum öt, de lehetőleg annál több földelt dugaljzattal (220 V.) rendelkező, üres teret kell biztosítania.

I. A történet a 7x5,6m alapterületű és 4,15m magas fémkonstrukcióban – amely egyben a 30 férőhelyet biztosító, kétszintes nézőteret is magában foglalja – ill. az azt határoló külső térben zajlik.

II. A konstrukciót majdnem átlós irányban fixen rögzített szigony szúrja át, ezért az mindkét oldalon lefelé és felfelé is, el- és kiáll, így annak elfoglalása 10x8m alapterületre, 5,5m magasságra terjed ki.

III. A külső történésekre („A” verzió) való rálátás, az azzal érzékenyen összeadódó vizuális építkezés és objektumalkotás a lebonyolítás szempontjából is ideálisnak tekinthető térben: legalább 8m magas, 15x20m, vagy annál nagyobb alapterületen valósulhat meg.

IV. A nem ideális, de még (a módosított „A” verzió esetén) megvalósítható, azaz a még vállalható tér mérete: 6m magas, 12x15m alapterület.

V. Ha a meghívó fél a még vállalható IV. ténél is kisebb méretű helyiséggel rendelkezik, akkor már csak a külső történések „B” verziója valósítható meg. A Metanoia a „B” verzió megvalósítását csak kivételes esetekben, és a szóban forgó tér pontos és részletes alaprajza ismerete esetén vállalja.

A BEÉPÍTÉS:

0. nap: A Metanoia tagjai a beépítés megkezdése előtti napon, az előzetes egyeztetés szerint délután, vagy este érkeznek a helyszínre. Megtekintik az előadást befogadó épület terét. Ha lehetőség van rá, úgy a díszletelemeket még aznap este lepakolják a teherautóról. Behordják a helyszínre és előkészítik a másnap de. 9 órakor kezdődő építéshez. (Ha a játéktér nem a földszinten található, úgy az előadás előkészítésének elengedhetetlen feltétele a még aznap bepakolás lebonyolítása.) A Metanoia tagjai csak ezután foglalják el szálláshelyüket.

1. nap: A beépítés de. 9 órakor kezdődik, és este 8-9 óráig tart, attól függően, hogy a szállítás során sérült-e valami, ill., hogy az adott tér módosított-e valamit az építés struktúráján. Legkésőbb este 11 órakor befejezzük az aznapi munkálatokat.

2. nap: A beépítés de. 9 órától folytatódik, és a konstrukció felépítésének végéig tart. A beépítést technikai próba és a fények beállítása követi. A tér méretei és az adott járasok meghatározzák, tehát esetenként módosítják az eredeti külső történések irányait, ezért azok lejárópróbáját is megtartjuk. Legkésőbb este 11-12 órakor elhagyjuk a teret.

PRÓBÁK ÉS ELŐADÁSOK (HAT ELŐADÁS ESETÉN):

3. nap: De. 10-11 órától részpróbákat tartunk, amit értékelő megbeszélés követ. Rövid szünet után összpróbát tartunk, amelyben már a fényeket, és a mechanikus eszközöket is működtetjük. Szünet és előkészületek az előadásra. Előadás. Ideje: a nézők bevonulásával és az előadás végét követő ott-tartózkodásával együtt 80-90 perc között mozog. Átállás a második előadásra: minimum 80 perc. Második előadás. A nézők ott-tartózkodása általában hosszabb, ill. a találkozások lehetősége adott. Rövid helyzet és önértékelés után szellőztetünk, elvégezzük a szükséges előkészületeket a következő nap teendői elé, majd elhagyjuk a teret.

4. nap: Mint az előző nap, azzal a különbséggel, hogy csak szükség esetén tartunk próbát, ill. ha valami meghibásodik, annak javítását végezzük el.
Előadások.

5. nap: Mint az előző nap. Ha reggelig át kell adnunk a teret, úgy kb. 1,5 órás pihenő követi a második előadást, utána kezdjük meg a konstrukció lebontását. Reggel 6-7 órakor a már összecsomagolt díszletet felpakoljuk a teherautóra. Legkésőbb 8 órakor elhagyjuk a teret.

MEGJEGYZÉS:

A Metanoia a beépítés, előkészítés időszakában, nem kíván a TV-nek nyilatkozni, és nem is járul hozzá – előzetes egyeztetés nélkül – semmilyen, az előadással kapcsolatos felvétel készítéséhez!

Az előadás közbeni fotózás kifejezetten zavarja a vizuális építkezést, és annak befogadását, kérjük azt mellőzni!

Az előadás megtekintését 14 éven aluliaknak nem ajánljuk.

A nézők figyelmét a következőkre érdemes, már jegyeladáskor felhívni:

- Italt, ételt, nagyobb táskát ne vigyenek be magukkal a térbe.
- Döntsék el, hogy felülről, ill. alulról kívánják-e megtekinteni az előadást (15-15 fő), s ennek megfelelően kapják meg jegyeiket, ezáltal elkerülhetik a bevonuláskor keletkező torlódást.

KONTAKT:

Metanoia
6701 Szeged
Pf. 905.
tel. és fax: 62/312 303
e-mail: maszk@maszk.hu



BALGÁK KERTJE

Czellár Mónika

Fotó: archív