

**REVIEW "THE CHOSEN ONES"
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COSMIC COMFORT

I still have no overview of what really happened there. But when I walked out of the theatre, people looked quite different. More whole. Holier. And I could still taste a bit of space in my mouth: Something larger than us, in us.

By Demian Marco Vitanza



The performance starts with a girl sitting and reading from "Alphabet" by Inger Christensen. The poem starts with the letter A, "Apricot trees exists..." Then it continues describing things that exists, with increasing verses for each letter.

Those who know the structure of Inger Christensens poem also knows that each increasing verse follows the number system of Fibonacci. A number system that is reflected in nature, for example in the flowers petals, or the galactic spiral shape. And this is a good start for the performance "The Chosen Ones": the galactic is linked to the microscopic. The human to the cosmic. Maybe the best reading of the opening scene is that this is the story of Genesis, where the big things and the small things are mentioned, and therefore also: exists.

In the Bibles first book of Moses it is, of course, God who mentions all these things, and creates them, but in this performance it is a girl with Downs Syndrome. At the end of her reading she says:

*You think at words as chromosomes
And the failed growth of the Lyche, the fruit of love
Somewhere I'm suddenly born*

Downs Syndrome is caused by one chromosome too much. When I think of words like chromosomes I think too much of this word. A word that doesn't fit in. A misshapen and interfered word. And I think of the poems that never would have been created without these beautiful-difficult words. The poetry that never would have existed without the "failed growth of the Lychee, the fruit of love". It strikes me that the performance *The Chosen Ones* is in itself a poem, where the degenerated is not something to peal away, but something that is through poetry elevated with a force to threaten the power.

The use of the useless

At a point during the performance one of the actors talk about being different and, amongst others, refers to Giorgio Agamben: "If we don't own anything, the law cannot reach us. The Roma, the old, artists, disabled, we all threaten the power. If we don't have tasks besides of being." This is left for me as the intellectual backbone of the performance.

During the fall of 2012 I have seen two other performances with disabled on stage – *I answered a dream* (nr. 4/2012) and *Disabled Theatre* (in this issue). What is unique about this performance is that otherness is not presented as a problem that has to be solved, but as the solution of a problem. Something revolutionary.

It is not correct that the law doesn't reach artists or disabled in Norway. They have both rights and duties, under the protection of the state. But even though they are not outside the legal system, they still might be outside the economical system, cause they don't produce under the common conditions. This is potent enough, cause in our time the idea of value is not the same as the idea of economical use. When someone is outside the system of production and consume, the very idea of value is at stake. In this performance the economically useless is not a loss, but a victory. Or the triumph of the extraordinary over the ordinary, to turn one of Stig Sæterbakkens (Norwegian author) sentences upside down. The performance takes us beyond the economy of opinions. Into poetry. Out in cosmos.



Biblical and cosmic

Dramaturgically the performance is not structured as a linear story, but more as a poem. It's composition is clever, with powerful choices in sound and music (including sounds NASA has recorded from earth's vibrations).

As in the previous production "The Art of Getting Tamed" the audience get 3D-glasses, and from time to time there are 3D projections on the floor and wall, that makes the surfaces dissolve and the dimensions of the room is stretched. Suddenly stars are projected, and we are in space. The two actors on stage, both disabled, find themselves in the universe. With telescopes they are watching the earth from the stars. In this way De Utvalgte constantly play with perspectives. If it had been only one person watching the earth, I would have thought of it as a staging of the "observer", or the individual. But with two actors it is the perspective that is staged: to see the earth from far away. One of the actors say:

Humans also have their own thoughts,
They are on earth
I watch the earth, I...
Quite an earth!
At night, when the sun rises to the sun,

At west

There also love will arise, on the
third day

Heaven and earth
The change of the earth, that's a good sign
At earth also the humans lives
My own earth