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ROBERT LEPAGE/EX MACHINA

THE FAR SIDE OF THE MOON

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THE FAR SIDE OF THE MOON

Robert LePage / Ex Machina

United Kingdom

Drama

About the performance

The Far Side of the Moon concentrates on the conflict between two brothers who are trying to come to grips with the death of their mother. It is also concerned with Russian cosmonaut Leonov, confronted with the immensity of interplanetary space as he took his first steps out of the Voskhod 2 spacecraft.

It brings forth a mad but sincere project for a space elevator that would allow humans to confront the Void.

And it also sees a goofy but touching video recording by the main character sent out to space, in an attempt to show potential extraterrestrial viewers the poetry that sometimes hides in human daily life.

This solo show by Robert Lepage, also performed by Yves Jacques, premiered in Quebec City in March 2000, has since been shown in over forty-five cities all over the world.

About the performers

Robert LePage

Versatile in every form of theatre craft, Robert Lepage is equally talented as a director, playwright, actor and film director. His creative and original approach to theatre has won him international acclaim and shaken the dogma of classical stage direction to its foundations, especially through his use of new technologies.

Among his most noticed work for the stage: *Dragons' Trilogy*, his solos *Needles and Opium*, *The Far Side of The Moon*, *The Andersen Project* and *887*; at the opera: *The Damnation of Faust*, *The Nightingale and Other short Fables*, Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and *L'Amour de loin*; his multimedia creations: *The Image Mill*, *The Library at Night*, Peter Gabriel's *Secret World Tour* and *Growing Up Tour*, and *KÀ* and *TOTEM* for Cirque du Soleil.

At the invitation of Ariane Mnouchkine, he is currently working on *Kanata*, a new theatrical creation with Le Théâtre du Soleil.

Among Robert Lepage's most important awards, the Légion d'honneur; the Stanislavski Award, the Prix Europe; the Governor General's Performing Arts Award, the Eugene McDermott Award at MIT; the Glenn Gould Prize, and he was made Compagnon des Arts et des lettres du Québec.

Ex Machina

In 1994, when Robert Lepage asked his collaborators to help find a name for his new company, he had one condition: the word theatre could not be part of the name.

Ex Machina is thus a multidisciplinary company bringing together actors, writers, set designers, technicians, opera singers, puppeteers, computer graphic designers, video artists, contortionists and musicians.

Ex Machina's creative team believes that the performing arts - dance, opera, music - should be mixed with recorded arts - filmmaking, video art and multimedia. That there must be meetings between scientists and playwrights, between set painters and architects, and between artists from Québec and the rest of the world.

New artistic forms will surely emerge from these gatherings. Ex Machina wants to rise to the challenge and become a laboratory, an incubator for a form of theatre that will reach and touch audiences from this new millennium.

Robert LePage's approach to creating work

Robert LePage's creative style rests on intuition and gives actors, designers and technicians the latitude to contribute and to invent the shows together with him.

Cross-cultural experiences and a diverse and baroque character are at the heart of LePage's work. These elements are echoed by a creative process which, rather than relying on themes, principles and subjects, makes use of all kinds of resources: objects, places, anecdotes, historical or other events, memories...

By freely associating ideas, the creative team can discover poetic connections between these seemingly unrelated elements. The shows develop in an organic manner, like a tree that sees its branches grow in unexpected directions...

Common characteristics often recur from show to show: a visual framework influenced by cinema, a sense of ritual (LePage believes that theatre is a place for communion), and a highly developed formal side that sees usually decorative elements become infused with meaning and emotion.

Directors note from Robert LePage

Since we surveyed, explored, mapped and planted a flag, our interest in the moon seems to have greatly diminished. Already, at the beginning of 70s, the last Apollo missions no longer seemed attractive enough to justify their telecasts. But although it has lost some of its mystery, the moon has certainly not lost its poetic strength. By being interested in some chapters of the conquest of space, I was forced, despite myself, to revisit my childhood and a significant part of my adolescence. It was an appointment I was trying to push back for a long time and the creation of this show has cornered me at the foot of the wall.

The most difficult thing was surely to discover that my youth - which I thought sunny - bathed most of the time in the blue and gray tones of the moon. I hope that this story of reconciliation between two brothers will touch you and awaken in you a little lunar nostalgia.

Resources

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2001/apr/14/theatre.artsfeatures>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/the-far-side-of-the-moon-national-theatre-london-9252950.html>