

'Salted – how they drank and kept on drinking'

Multilingual theatre co-production in Friesland

LJOUWERT - This summer eight theatre companies from various European minority language communities will be participating in an international theatre coproduction about language and identity. The production, called 'Salted - how they drank and kept on drinking' involves theatre companies from Friesland, Basque Country, Wales, Occitania, Ireland, Sorbian Germany, Sámi Norway and Slovene Italy. Each company sends a young actor to participate in the project. Besides English, all actors speak their own language in the play.

The play will be performed at the Oerol theatre festival. This festival takes place on the Frisian isle 'Skylge' from the 14th to the 23rd of June. The festival is famous for its site-specific shows, and attracts audiences of around 40,000 people. In October the show will be taken to Bautzen (Germany) and to Bangor and Harlech (Wales).

The theatre production is a part of the Offspring project, an international network of theatre companies that perform in a minority language. Some 20 companies from all over Europe participate in the network. They have been co-operating rather intensively for 5 years.

The aim of the project is to (internationally) promote minority-language theatre, to decrease the regional isolation of the companies, and to create opportunities for young theatre makers in the participating regions. Thus a festival, meetings and study-visits have been organised, work-experiences opportunities have been created, and plays are being exchanged. The Offspring project was initiated and is co-ordinated by Sytske de Boer from the Frisian company Tryater.

The co-production 'Salted' is written by Judith de Rijke. The multilingualism of the play, the beautiful location and the fact that all actors are young and come from a different (theatre) culture, will make the show very special. Judith de Rijke based the play on two workshops she held in 2000 and 2001 with the actors. De Rijke: "The actors that participate in the show know from experience what it means to speak a minority language. Each has his own, personal bond with the language. They try to preserve their own identity and culture, not to disappear in the dominant culture. Thus a friction between the personal and general is created. That' s the core of the show".

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