

feierabend! – the antidote -

feast by Helena Waldmann & friends

the seven phases of the feast:

1#

Dearest guests, a feast in the theatre: what is it all about, being welcomed at the entrance with the question „Are you brave?“ – „Yes, first of all, I am brave, I have the courage for a feast, as refusal of the rules of theatre!“ For the feast is seduction, the mask is a means to seduce you to hand in your personality for the short duration of the feast, an invitation to lose the seriousness of everyday life in the frenzy of togetherness, community. An antidote to the coercion to work and fixed rules that inhibit lust-

Will you please listen to the speech of the sheep

Dear Guests,

as a sheep, sacrificial lamb or scapegoat I am honoured to cordially welcome you tonight.

I am delighted that you have come to the theatre in order to restore the theatre to the feast.

The theatre has forgotten that it evolved from the feast, just as we have forgotten that we cannot live without the exception to the rule, which is the feast.

The feast means community and resistance against having to function, against control, fear and security paranoia.

Feasts can make you lose your head, as you can see here with me.

Feasts can only be celebrated wholeheartedly or not at all.

Feasts are the highest form of human play.

The feast is our very own, joint creation, a triumph of our freedom over the violence of our conditions.

The feast of freedom means work.

It requires our dedication.

We must be lavish with our time, our means, and ourselves.

Or else it is not freedom that triumphs, but the violence of our conditions.

The antidote to it is the feast.

Welcome dear bodies, welcome to the feast. Baa!

2#

Initiation means dissolution and dedication, lavishness and ritual, ornamentation and ugly grimace. With the animal masks we will find our way to overcome ourselves, we commit auto-da-fe together, serene, cheerful and without contradiction – a feast is the exception to the rule, it goes beyond the given scope. Lions, bears, monkeys, mice, wolves and horses flock together and are initiated by their alpha animal. Only the sheep remains singular, a mysteriously shy, tender creature, giving the feast its meat, its music.

#3

Is 'feierabend', that is quitting time or post-work activities, dangerous? Because it makes you want to lose face. Loss of control and union, the outburst of the sensual and the communication of the body must be celebrated.

The body of the community knows this and has found symbols for it that are united in violence and lust. A piñata is beaten until it bursts open, which costs us effort and strength and is violent, but lust is the reward – only when the piñata bursts and a shower of coloured paper strips, balloons and artful origami covers the floor of the feast, the body can exhaust itself. A feast without dance is a failed feast. So: sweat is required, the head is sacrificed for the sake of the physical. Community can be found in the physical, the laws of everyday life are forgotten. Eroticism, conflict, desire and violence enter the stage of the feast.

#4

Pause, exhaustion after the effort, calmness. The body sinks down. The Last Supper brings tranquillity. With the wolf, the mind returns to the feast:

"We are sitting here in the auditorium for the 'last supper' as if you want to judge about us. Here, where normally the audience sits, like a justice. But we are eating, not judging. Same for the dance: We can watch the dance or just dance. Same for the meal: we can eat the meal or just look at it. It is strange not to dance the dance as if the meal only exists for looking at it. Do you want to look at us or do you want to eat with us?"

In the calm, the body of the community disentangles, separates into individuals with the pleasure of the meal and the conversation, begins to talk of experiences and sensations.

#5

The ceremony follows this calmness. Religion has built sanctuaries for this, churches looking like theatres. Both church and theatre celebrate the pause, death, healing and sacrifice. The lonely sheep becomes the symbolic sacrifice, sign of the reappropriation of one's own personality. Everybody sacrifices their mask on the sacrificial table, sacrifices their celebratory mood and secrets to the feast, in order for it to return cyclically and be revived for other guests.

#6

With the sacrifice the feast is cleansed so that it can follow high art, be enveloped by it, and the self can now be consciously left behind. Unmasked, the guests make an experiment on themselves, abandoning themselves to the primordial powers of nature, daring to move towards the "Gods, the mythical connection of mind and nature" and seeking out the body's own intoxicants of trance, looking for happiness and dissolution of self in the circular motions of the Sufis, as if the whole world revolved around oneself. Later, when the body finds rest, chant will breathe new life into the scene, as if the sun was rising, letting in a new day. The way is paved.

#7

The fire in the cold, dark night creates a final warmth, like a memory of sensual pleasures. A wish is thrown into the fire and flies towards the Milky Way, accompanied by an a cappella trumpet. The heart is where fulfilment takes place – if you open your heart, you have the chance to achieve it.