Ruinous Gods: Suites for Sleeping Children

OVERVIEW

Ruinous Gods: Suites for Sleeping Children is a new opera-theatre piece about seven displaced children who have uppgivenhetssyndrom, or resignation syndrome, a rare trauma response to the state of living in the limbo of displacement.

On the eve of fleeing Turkey by boat with her parents, Hala, a 12-year old girl, packs a tiny backpack with her clothes but she cannot fit her most precious possession in the bag. Because of the stress of her impending journey, she falls asleep. In seven dream sequences, she follows the journeys of seven other young protagonists who have fled war and climate disaster to make homes in new countries only to learn they are not granted asylum. These dreamscapes echo familiar fairy tales: missing possessions come to life and people are accompanied by extinct animal-helpers through nightmarish and fantastic landscapes to reimagine their stories and their outcomes. But Ruinous Gods also plays against these familiar stories: the real nightmare is in waking up. In the final scene, we return to Hala. Will she wake or sleep on into eternity? When she opens her backpack at the end of the play the world is transformed but is it real or is it a dream?

The refugee crisis, as well as a global humanitarian crisis, is an ethical crisis of spirit and conscience. More than 68 million people are displaced. Over half of them are children. Recently, the UNHRC commission on the welfare of children declared that 7 million children are deprived of their liberty, over 400,000 are detained in jail or prison. Since children literally embody the future what does this mean for our civilization? This opera-theatre challenges us to wake up and save the future, not for the future's sake but for the children who will embody it.

Creative Team:

Libretto by Lisa Schlesinger – Composition by Layale Chaker – Scenography and visuals by Kevork Mourad
Work-in-Progress in collaboration with Kevork Mourad :
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRvD4H3lPWQ&t=19s