

# JAWS / DER WEIßE HAI

## A CONVERSATION WITH A CULTURAL ICON



### THEATER | WORLD PREMIERE

Premiere: September 21, 2022 / 20:00

Additional Performances: September, 22 - 24 /

September 28 – October 1 / 20:00

Tickets 16 Euro (10 Euro students)

*Jaws / Der weiße Hai* attempts to capture the aura of a turning point in time that is still of central importance today. Today, the shark is no longer suitable as an animal

metaphor for human greed and violence; it has already had its day as a threatening beast. While the sensational success of Spielberg's film *Jaws* conveys an image of this species that has long been untenable, it also opened up a new view of the relationship between man and animal, a view of the impending ecological catastrophe and the threats to flora and fauna that accompanied the turn of the millennium. The film's images, its music, its evocative qualities transform the new stage production into a long overdue conversation with a cultural icon.

Steven Spielberg's 1975 film *Jaws* is a movie about a fish, a threat and a hunt. The fish is a giant great white shark that appears off a town on the East Coast of the United States. It kills several swimmers and becomes a threat to the summer season of the seaside town, which depends entirely on tourism. An adventurer, a policeman and a scientist pursue the fish in a boat and, after a losing battle, bring it down - the boat sinks, leaving the adventurer and the fish to die.

*Jaws* is a striking example of a cultural turning point: just when the so-called counterculture seemed to finally dominate, preparations for a new era began. The names Thatcher, Reagan and Kohl and the economic terms neoliberalism, deregulation and privatization brought traditional values back to the fore and countered the ideas of counterculture. After ten years of youthful optimism, but also mistrust, defeat and fear - Nixon and Watergate; defeat in the Vietnam War, the oil crisis and economic decline - *Jaws* showed a society banding together in the face of a grave threat, recalling its old values and again producing heroes from its midst.

Overfishing of the oceans and species extinction also threaten the shark populations of our planet. In 1975, the great white shark had to serve as a powerful metaphor, and the film's worldwide mega-success led to decades of demonization of an animal species. Using performative means - acting, dance, music, game show - *Jaws / Der weiße Hai* examines a cultural icon for its (then) critical content and its (dwindling) relevance for a new view of things.

Performed by Mary Kelly, Ben Maddox, Angharad Matthews, Jeffrey Mittleman, Bianca Radoslav | Devised by Günther Grosser, Mary Kelly, Ben Maddox, Angharad Matthews, Jeffrey Mittleman, Bianca Radoslav | Concept and Direction: Günther Grosser | Stage Design: Tomas Fitzpatrick | Lighting Design: Katri Kuusimäki | Video Design: Rebecca Shein | Cosume Design: Heike Braitmayer | Assistant Director: Rose Nolan | Poto: © Stefania Migliorati | In English

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