

Münchner Kammerspiele, Munich, GERMANY

Rainer Werner Fassbinder:

WHY DOES HERR R. RUN AMOK?

directed by: Susanne Kennedy

Kamila Łapicka (Poland)

Who keeps the strings?

The performance directed by Susanne Kennedy and based on the movie created by Michael Fengler and Rainer Werner Fassbinder was for me an interesting formal experiment. The story about Mr Raab`s family has the same movie tension, but the acting, the rhythm and... the murder weapon was totally different.

The director created a feeling of artificiality and sterility, the so called alienation effect. The stage design was simple. The room with wooden panelling after adding a few props was changing into a living room or a pub. Every emotion was killed like bacteria; hence the audience had no emotional connection with the stage. We watched a series of short, conventional scenes entitled, „In the living room”, “In the record shop” etc., but the characters were cut off from their feelings. Their emotions were „frozen” in silicone masks which covered their faces (except the eyes), transforming them into mannequins, like the ugly part of a Barbie Doll family. The effect was intensified due to the use of wigs, wearing not very attractive clothes borrowed from the 80s. and only slight, artificial body movement. The actors were like robots or like string puppets (but who pulls their strings?). In addition, the dialogues were played from tape, while the performers synchronized their lip movements with the recording. The words were colloquial; the jokes were bad, everyday life seemed to be hopeless and full of scary routine.

I don't know if we are aware of the reason for Mr Raab`s amok. I am not sure if there is any reason. This scares me more than Mr Raab`s lack of character, lack of ambition and last but not least – lack of love in his life.