

Carlos Martínez Mime actor

Mirage

The 30th Stage Anniversary Show

In his jubilee year, 2012, the mime actor Carlos Martínez looks back over thirty intense years on the stage. His premiere performance as a mime took place in 1982, in a youth club in Barcelona; and his repertoire consisted at that time of six mime pieces.

Today, that young theatre buff has become a master of his profession, someone with whom not only advanced mime students and actors study, but who business managers, teachers and theologians consult in order to understand more fully body language and nonverbal communication. From his initial programme of six mime pieces, Carlos Martínez has gone on to produce six full-length shows, has performed in over thirty countries in countless theatres, public halls and even convention centres with several thousand participants. His timeless art that relies entirely on the imagination of the viewer, enchants young and old. His humanity and his humour inspire and reach across all levels of society. Some pieces like "The Bus Stop" or "Creation" have become classics.

Carlos Martínez is the laureate of the 2002 prize awarded by the German foundation "Bibel und Kultur" and his shows have been the "audience choice" in two theatre festivals in Portugal: Almada in 2004 with "Hand Made" and TeatroAgosto in 2009 with his programme "Books without Words".

Throughout all these years Carlos Martínez has remained faithful to his own mime identity: the austerity of black clothing, white gloves

and white makeup that turns the actor's face into a neutral canvas on which he can project a range of emotions. He loves the woodcut style, this minimalistic form of expression that does not use any props. His measured movements, simple gestures and facial expression allow him to portray characters rich in nuance; all the while revelling in our human inconsistencies and contradictions. Whereas in the past it took a mere 15 minutes for the mime to apply his makeup, nowadays he takes a full hour to complete the process. However it takes just a few seconds to get rid of it at the end of each programme, in front of his audience, in order to say a few words to them.

The process of applying his makeup is both ritual and mental preparation for the stage. The intimacy of the dressing room, where the mime sits alone in front of the mirror, inspired his book "From the Dressing Room", which was initially published in 2009 in German ("Ungeschminkte Weisheiten"), and since, in 2011, in English and Spanish ("Desde el camerino"). Asked about getting older the actor says: "The art does not get older, however, the artist does. What is interesting is that, the older the actor becomes, the closer he grows to his art. And that in return keeps him young."

For his 30th stage anniversary Carlos Martínez has worked on a new show, "Mirage", which he performs in combination with all time audience favourites. Inspired by the discussion around climate change and water shortage, which has always been an issue in his home country of Spain, the programme refers to our most precious and most natural resource: water. And as in previous programs, in "Mirage" the actor leaves both the interpretation of the images he paints in the spectators' minds and the conclusions they reach, up to the imagination of each person.

As the show begins we see how a man loses his way in the desert. His canteen is almost empty. His cell phone battery is running low and anyway there's no coverage. As his growing thirst and tedium lead to delirium, he begins to see illusive images of water: one mirage after another. The water he has taken for granted, appears to him in the desert as the miracle of turning on the tap, the sound of waves at a beach, a well, a public toilet ... Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink. How will he survive?

Without props, wardrobe changes or voice, alone on an empty stage with his white-masked face, the mime faces a desert of his own. With only movements to evoke stories in the imagination of an audience, all mime is mirage, creating life from gesture, life which arises from the pure physicality of dramatic (and comic) events.

Carlos Martinez offers us yet another chance to discover the reflection of our humanity in Mirage!