

FLOOD

**A Multi-Media Project devised by Frido Mann (text)
and Vladimir Tarasov (music)**

**Première: 21 August 2009 at the Museum of Modern Art, Vilnius
(European Capital of Culture 2009), Lithuania**



Synopsis

Clips from documentary film footage are projected in rapid succession. They show scenes of global ecological destruction brought about by war and economic exploitation over the course of the 20th century. The chorus provides a running commentary. Over loudspeakers, we hear the voices of those responsible for the violations – the voices of those who, in response to accusations being brought against them, attempt to justify their actions.

An angel sent by God declares His purpose: to destroy the world He has created by means of a great flood. By God's grace, Noah alone, together with his family and pairs of animals from each animal species, are to be saved. Noah sets about building the ark (symbolised in this production by a boat used by refugees from the Third World as a means of escape).

Noah, his family and the animals enter the ark. The flood begins. The audience is presented with a series of camera shots of natural catastrophes – specifically, recent hurricanes and floods in the USA, Asia and Europe: this includes photographic material from Al Gore’s 2006 Report (“An Inconvenient Truth”) on world climate change. Meanwhile, based on texts from both the Jewish Midrash and the Koran, Noah engages in an extended monologue: he addresses God concerning his extreme feelings of guilt at finding himself the sole survivor of the flood.

The flood abates and, under the sign of the rainbow, God establishes His Covenant. He gives His blessing to Noah and the succeeding generations, ordering that all living things within His new Creation be granted lasting protection. Noah, finding himself in this special role and greatly challenged by what it signifies, remains utterly confused. He feels lost – starts to imagine himself in the person of those who, over the centuries to follow, have tried to safeguard God’s Covenant: following rabbinical tradition, Noah proceeds to quote from the Seven Noachide Commandments; then, the words of the Prophet Mohammed from the Koran, those of Saint Francis of Assisi, of Mahatma Gandhi and the Dalai Lama – all of which serve to confirm God’s instructions to abide by the Covenant. With seeming confidence, the participants (solo artists and chorus alike) withdraw to the back of the stage – back into the historical framework from whence they came. As they do so, a sudden torrent of water breaks over the performance space and, in a matter of seconds, has engulfed everything in chaos and darkness.

Music - Lighting

The musical instrumentation is almost wholly concentrated on the use of percussion (five percussionists, accompanied by three string-players). The vocal contribution is represented by a solo soprano, a speaker and chorus – the members of that chorus forming an ensemble of soloists. They are supported by a second chorus, invisible to the audience, who perform from behind a curtain. Importance is attached to the light installations, which serve both to illustrate the text and complement the music.

Contributors



Text: Frido Mann (Germany, Switzerland)

Music: Vladimir Tarasov (Lithuania)

Lauren Newton – Soprano (USA)

N.N. – Speaker (Lithuania)

Andreas Schreiber – Violin (Austria)

Vytis Nivinskas – Double Bass (Lithuania)

Eugenijus Kanevičius – Double Bass (Lithuania)

Pavelas Giunteris – Percussion (Lithuania)

Arkadijus Gotesmanas – Percussion (Lithuania)

Tomas Kulikauskas – Marimba, Vibraphone, Glockenspiel (Lithuania)

Rytis Kamicaitis – Tabla (Lithuania)

Vladimir Tarasov – Percussion (Lithuania)

The "BREVIS" Choir of Gintautas Venislovas Vilnius (Lithuania)

The Choir of the Russian Orthodox Church in Vilnius (Lithuania)

Director: Vladimir Tarasov (Lithuania)

Producer: Kastytis Narmontas (Lithuania) under the auspices of
The City of Vilnius – European Capital of Culture 2009

English Language Consultant: Philippa Comber

Biographies

Frido Mann

Born in Monterey, California, Frido Mann represents the third generation of a distinguished family of writers, then living in exile in the USA. After the end of the Second World War, he moved to Europe where he studied Music in Zürich and at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. This was followed by studies in Theology, Psychology and Medicine in Munich and Münster. For the next five years, he worked as a Clinical Psychologist in a psychiatric hospital. After studying for his doctorate in Münster and Leipzig, he accepted a number of academic posts in Medical Psychology in Germany as well as a guest lectureship at the Charles University, Prague.

1985 saw the publication of his first literary work *Professor Parsifal*. This was followed, in 1992, by *Der Infant*; and in 1994, *Terezin oder Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* ("Theresienstadt or the Führer Gives a City to the Jews"). A stage version of *Terezin* was performed under the direction of George Tabori at the Akademietheater in Vienna. In 1999, Frido published *Brasa*, the first volume in a series of "intercultural" novels. This was also the year in which he helped establish an international cultural centre in Paraty, Brazil. In addition to his seven novels, 2008 saw the publication of his autobiography *Achterbahn* ("Roller-coaster").

Vladimir Tarasov

Vladimir Tarasov was born in Archangelsk, Russia. Since 1968 he has lived in Vilnius, Lithuania. He has performed with the Lithuanian Symphony Orchestra as well as other symphony, chamber, and jazz orchestras throughout Lithuania, Europe and the USA. Between 1971 and 1986 he was a member of the jazz trio GTC, making over a hundred recordings on disc and CD. Vladimir has also composed musical scores for film and theatre, including for the State Theatre, Stuttgart, the Majestic Theater at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York and the Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne at the Meyerhold Centre in Moscow.

Since 1991 he has been active in the visual arts, both on his own and in collaboration with artists such as Ilya Kabakov and Sarah Flohr. He has taken part in numerous international exhibitions, including the Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, the Venice Biennale, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. In 1999 Vladimir directed the play *Drink Up* (adapted from the poem by Venedikt Erofejev) and in 2002, Edwin Geist's opera *The Return of Dionysos*.