



**Summary of a proposal to be submitted to the Creative Europe
call for the
CULTURE sub-programme**

**By the Street Theatre HELIX
In cooperation with European partners**

Title of project:

***“The CASPAR Machine. Performing in the public space for
awareness raising and participation”***

Short description: A performance designed to be shown in public space, preferably in old deserted industrial buildings, quarries, harbour piers, concentration camps, rugged landscapes etc. the performance will address the issue of oppression and exclusion and will invite amateur theatre associations and drama schools to join in, creating a spectacle that will be partly spontaneous and certainly educational, both for the participating non-professionals and students and for the audience.

Background

The performance is partly exploiting the monologue “Cries for help” and short excerpts from Peter Handke’s plays “Offending the Audience” and “Caspar” which have been characterized as “oration plays”, grounded on the sound elements of beat music, rendering the language itself as content. Aiming to recover the theater of reality and truth, these plays take advantage of open questioning, redemption, insult, apology, excuse, prophecy, cries for help. Drawing on the origins of the “theatre of the oppressed”, the proposed project will bring on the stage members of excluded communities to share their cries for help with the wider community and build the principles of participatory theatre.

Being played in a public space, the boundaries of the stage are eliminated and the urban landscape is transformed to a container for dramatized action and artistic expression, changing from its foundation the relationship between actors and audience. The actors become audience and the audience are turned into actors.

The performance Caspar Machine represents a synthesis of the arts. Physical movement, sounds, street theatre arts (acrobatics and stilt dancing), the

construction of a huge marionette on stage, instrumental music, choral music and unconventional scenography are all orchestrated together guided by the sharp words of Handke. Although these words do not constitute a full play, they provide the tone and the frame within which the play is being built, complemented by different means of artistic expression, pre-designed and improvised.

Aims

The project aims to provide an artistic space for professional actors, students and amateur actors to try different forms of performing, outside the conventional theatre genres, exploiting physical movement and sounds, and incorporating improvisation and street theatre media and techniques into the design of a performance.

It also aims to transcend a social message to audiences, turning the flashlights on communities that face social exclusion, such as people with handicaps and immigrants/refugees, approaching through symbolism important social issues that burden the collective conscience.

Thus, the aims of the proposed project are 3-pronged:

- They are educational, bringing in students of drama and the arts and amateur actors
- They are social, trying to raise awareness and increase the public sensitivity on important social problems, such as the exclusion of certain communities and the agony of being excluded
- They are artistic, encouraging the experimentation with a multiplicity of theatre media and expression channels, blending improvisation and participative theatre into the design of a performance.

Proposed activities

- A workshop at the beginning of the project to collect ideas about the detailed implementation of the project and about methods of involving the different audiences addressed by the project
- Calling a competition in all participating countries addressed to drama school students and amateur theatre groups, inviting them to come forward and present their own proposal for acting certain parts of Handke's plays.
- Present the results of the competition in a public event and select the most interesting proposals to take part in the performance. Care should be taken to make sure that amateur groups involving persons with handicap and immigrants/refugees become aware of the competition and are encouraged to participate.

- Design the performance as a multi-art, multi-national fusion event, with professional actors, drama students and amateur actors, to be staged in a public space with suitable symbolism.
- Present the performance in Athens, making sure that it can tour several European locations at minimum cost.
- Present the performance in the Sibiu International theatre festival in Romania
- Create a game “make your own Caspar machine” to accompany the performance, with the possibility to be played independently as an educational medium to be used by schools
- Include an art exhibition in the space of the performance, to increase the connection between different forms of art and strengthen the symbolism of the show.
- Create a training package on street theatre and run a seminar parallel to the rehearsal of the play to teach young professional actors, drama students and amateur actors the art of street theatre.

Partners

Partners are sought from Italy, Poland, The Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Romania, Portugal, Spain, Malta, Belgium, Czech Republic and Bulgaria.

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