

PRESS RELEASE

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“Woyzeck” in China – Hessian State Theatre Wiesbaden invited to the festival „Splendid Europe“ in Beijing

With the production **Woyzeck** by **Georg Büchner** (Stage Director: Manfred Beilharz) the Hessian State Theatre of Wiesbaden will present on Tuesday, 30th of October and Wednesday 31st of October 2012 two guest performances in the frame of the festival "Splendid Europe" at the Chinese National Theatre Beijing. The Hessian State Theatre is invited as the only German theatre to this famous Chinese theatre festival.

With *Woyzeck* the State Theatre of Wiesbaden gives a significant contribution to the memorial years 2012 (175th date of death) and 2013 (200th anniversary) of one of the most important German playwrights, Georg Büchner, and will introduce the most important dramatic play of Büchner to a Chinese audience. The International Theatre Festival in Beijing takes place every two years since 2004 under a special theme and invites renowned theatres and productions from China and abroad to Beijing.

China has already been represented several times with dance and opera productions in Wiesbaden in the frame of the International May Festival: among others with choreographies by the Beijing Dance LDTX Company (*Unspeakable*) by Sang Jijia. For the first time in Germany in 2010 a Yue Opera (*Butterfly Lovers*) by the Zhejiang Xiaobaihua Yue Opera Troupe and in 2012 a Chongqing Sichuan Opera (*The Caucasian Chalk Circle* after Bertolt Brecht) were invited as European premieres to the May festival in Wiesbaden.

The acclaimed drama-production *Woyzeck* of Artistic Director Manfred Beilharz has been invited several times as guest performances abroad, to Ljubljana/ Slovenia, Poznan/ Poland or Nanjing/ China, where in October 2008 at the Festival "Theatre of Nations" in the Frontier Grand Theatre it formed with two performances the festive ending of the festival. Manfred Beilharz will also stage the opera *Wozzeck* by Alban Berg/Georg Büchner at *The Israeli Opera* in Tel Aviv end of November. After the return of the stage set of *Woyzeck* from China to Germany the production will be in the program of the Wiesbaden theatre again next spring as part of the Büchner jubilee 2012/2013.

The play: The drama of Georg Büchner (1813 – 1837), which remained a fragmented text, goes far beyond its time. For the first time in the European theatre in the 19th century, an underdog is the tragic hero. For the first time the question of determinism and freedom of human action is raised in such a radical form. For the first time the principle of montage as a scenic approach is used. And therefore, this drama has kept its topicality over the centuries and attracts the audience all over the world.

The story: Shaving the captain, fatigue duty, acting as a guinea pig for medical experiments – the soldier Woyzeck will put up with anything just to be able to feed his mistress Marie and their child. But when the drum major seduces Marie, Woyzeck loses all self-control. Büchner's drama is based on an actual criminal case, which made headlines in his time: In 1821, a former soldier named Johann Christian Woyzeck stabbed his lover to death. The assumed motive for his crime was jealousy.

But as a poet, natural scientist and revolutionary, Büchner was not only interested in the social aspects of the case. For Büchner, Woyzeck served as a prototype for all those rushed and restless people who are never able to find a place to just be themselves due to constant societal pressure, work and indoctrination. When Marie's desire for love causes her to cheat on Woyzeck, she destroys his last place of refuge.

"There have always been poor people. People who have to run their hearts dry for diverse jobs and obligations in order to put food on the table – that still exists in our society", says Stage Director Manfred Beilharz. "But I did not attempt to stage this play around a particular modern-day condition. That would have belittled and diminished the scope of this topic. The message of the story is so clear that it calls up images for audiences of every age and in every society", he comments further on his production of *Woyzeck*.

More information on the festival *Splendid Europe*: <http://ent.sina.com.cn/f/h/5thifsa/>

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