Ecole d'Humanité presents
The Winter's Tale
Program
The achievement of an individual self, a being with a unique past and a trajectory into the future, is one of the glories of human evolution, but it is not without its drawbacks and potential disorders. The price of the sense of an individual identity is a sense of separation from others and nature. Self-reflection can lead to great intellectual and artistic achievement but also to destructive forms of self-regard and many types of unhappiness.

Michael Pollan, How to Change Your Mind  
(2018)

The Winter’s Tale explores the solitude at the center of genius, and at the same time celebrates a faith in human creativity - “Pray you,” says Hermione to her young daughter Mia, “sit by us/ And tell’s a tale.”

Shakespeare's late play is a story of art and artists, some mad and some miraculous. In our production the tale of Leontes first emerges from the mind of the Artist, the sculptor Julia Romano, who we meet in her studio, struggling to have an idea and find the confidence to create...

But out of her mind on fire comes a cold statue, a winter of madness, the narcissistic genius that is the King.

Leontes, King of Sicilia, forms chilling fantasies of his wife Hermione’s unfaithfulness; he imagines she is having an affair with his childhood friend Polixenes, delusions which send Leontes deep into an abyss of solitude and the Nothing. He commands Camilla, his advisor, to poison his friend, sends his pregnant queen to prison, and banishes their newborn baby to “some desert place.”

When this “fabric of his folly” has wrapped Leontes’s family in a shroud, Paulina, wise woman of the court, enters and accompanies the remorseful king on a journey of “re-creation,” from winter into spring. And then, on the shores of Bohemia, we meet “with things dying,” and with things “newborn.”

Time passes, Nature’s Artist. And sixteen years later we are with the farming villagers of Bohemia, celebrating spring and fertility – flirting, dancing, dressing up, telling tales...delighting in the natural creative spirit of humanity with the Shepherdess and her twin daughters, Mopsa and Dorcas. And part of that creative humanity is of course the trickster Autolycus, lurking along the public highways - the actor, the cheat, artist of cheap trinkets and lies, whose pop art pleases the crowd...

Also in that humble crowd is Florizel, Prince of Bohemia, who prefers the natural grace of the shepherdess Perdita to the pomp and posing of the court. His father King Polixenes disapproves; but Camilla, advisor to kings, who escaped Sicilia and Leontes’s madness years ago, has artistic plans of her own, a design to bring the royal families back together in peace. And finally, in Sicilia, Paulina becomes the director of a climactic and healing coup de théâtre in her own private museum of hidden statues.

The Artist Julia has journeyed through the seasons, from the solitude of her studio to the sun and warmth of living bodies, veins that “verily bear blood”, and a natural magic which is “an art/ Lawful as eating.”

What fine chisel/ Could ever yet cut breath?
The Winter’s Tale Cast

Directors Melissa Bagg and Sophie Jaschok

The Artist, Julia Romano
Leontes, King of Sicilia
Hermione, Queen of Sicilia
Mia, daughter of Leontes and Hermione
Perdita, daughter of Leontes and Hermione
Paulina, wise woman of the court
Antigonus, husband to Paulina
Camilla, Advisor to the King
Emilia, First Lady
Cleomenes, First Lord
Jailer and Mariner
Polixenes, King of Bohemia and friend to Leontes
Florizel, son to Polixenes
Autolycus, a Peddler and Trickster
Shepherdess in Bohemia
Mopsa, Daughter of Shepherdess
Dorcas, Daughter of Shepherdess
Bohemian boy

Sharon Jegede-Heiner
Wesley Whitfield
Maya Khan
Anisa Levin
Lola Goncharova
Sophia Tighe
Ria Reeves
Lunabella Levin
Shirin Yazdian
Iso Niyazov
Janic Nussbaumer
Laurie Boissenin
Ariane Heimann
Wanida Bouvier
Charlotte Ager
Irina Stocker
Luisa Marti
Tassilo Waldburg

Costumes Sophie Jaschok

Photographer and Video Artist Mohammadreza Yazdian

Drawing Lola Goncharova

Surreal Clock Maria Meier

Lights Cuillin Chisholm-Eckhardt, Linus Leibundgut, Noah Bühler

Make-Up Athana Naji

Musicians Josh Curtis, Jann-Andi Klug, Ernst Thöni, Sigrid Thöni, Elisabeth Wäschenfelder, Stefan Wäschenfelder

Thanks to Dany, Jochen, Markus, Tom and the stage building crew!
mr youse needn’t be so spry
by e. e. cummings

mr youse needn’t be so spry
concernin questions arty

each has his tastes but as for i
i likes a certain party

gimme the he-man’s solid bliss
for youse ideas i’ll match youse

a pretty girl who naked is
is worth a million statues