



## *Mr & Mrs Sommerflügel*

A poetic circus for children 2+

**Ladies and gentlemen, dear boys and girls –**  
immerse yourself in the little fantastic world of Mr & Mrs Sommerflügel!

A suitcase full of light, a butterfly dressage without avail and a delicate romance between a whale and a ship. Come see the terrible pretty nice love story of a mouse desired by a cat. A good half an hour show of a comically marvellous jugglery.

PS.: Don` t forget to feed the bird living under your hat!

The strange little world of animals that Mr and Mrs Sommerflügel are getting out of their magic suitcase is mainly interested in eating. And thus, the little stunts in this circus only serve the purpose of getting closer to something they want to have. Not every chase is successful. It can be beautifully in vain to try to catch something, like trying to hold the shadow of a butterfly in a handkerchief. With plenty of charming tricks the two show actors make use of their menagerie to seduce each other. Because that`s what it`s all about: to try to get something from the other one. Half an hour of tentative, ingenious and clumsy attempts to get closer to something desired.



„Companies such as florschütz & döhnert have much to teach about the imaginative possibilities of theatre.“

*Sunday Herald, 16 May 2010*

Theatre company florschütz & döhnert is based in Berlin, Germany, and tours around the world. Artists Melanie Florschütz and Michael Döhnert have been working together since 1996: Melanie studied the art of puppetry in Stuttgart, Germany; while Michael Döhnert is a composer, guitarist and singer.

At the centre of florschütz & döhnert's productions is the idea of the actor as author. In their numerous productions for children they always seek a synthesis of the music, the various means of expression of puppet theatre, and human acting. The subject of the play determines the theatrical form it will take, always aiming for poetry and diversity.

Shows for children aged 2+

**Ssst !** (2012)

**Mr & Mrs Sommerflügel** (2010)

**Rawums (:)** (2007),

Winner of the IKARUS Award 2008 for an extraordinary play for young audiences in Berlin and invited to the festival 10. AugenblickMal! as one of ten best shows of the year 2009 in whole Germany

**Hare Moon Hare Night** (2004)

New show for children aged 4+

**A hole in the air and everywhere** 2015)

## Children's Theatre – A Concert of Pure Emotion

Questembert – The 6th theatre festival Festi'Mômes took place under a daily drizzle (typical bretonian weather!). The numerous spectators were sitting densely packed in the small rooms of the „Pays de Questembert“, where many families could again experience some extraordinary theatre performances that go beyond the scope of theatre for the very young.

Once again we have seen the German group florschütz & döhnert with Mr & Mrs Sommerflügel (summer wings), a wonderful performance for children between two and four, with elements of shadow theatre and object theatre. As in their earlier productions there is no „real“ story, no big words, but rather an amazing and affectionate complicity between the two actors (Melanie Florschütz and Michael Döhnert) who succeed in establishing that hesitant relationship between themselves and the boys and girls of that tender age. That is all due to the way of playing but also to an indetermined territory that leaves a lot of room for awkwardness as well as bragging and mutual outsmarting. During the show the children – and especially the youngest ones – were roaring with laughter. A very beautiful discovery... just as beautiful as the production Rawums(:) by the same group that had already seduced everyone in the audience a week ago at the opening of the festival.

*(translation of the french)*

*Michel Bélair, 13 novembre 2010 Théâtre, Le Devoir.com*

### Mr and Mrs Sommerflügel

florschütz and döhnert at the Druid Lane Theatre Galway

Mrs Sommerflügel arrives in the foyer to greet about 50 excited and expectant children. She informs the adults that it's okay to leave the theatre, if need be, and re-enter when their child is ready. In between each word she blows into a harmonica. This little intervention allays any fears the children might have had about entering the dark theatre space.

The 30 minute performance appears to be so simple. There is no 'behind the scenes' trickery, the mechanics of the performance are visible for all to see. The simplicity of the performance is probably the biggest illusion of all, Mr and Mrs Sommerflügel is packed with sequences that are the result of rigorous and complex preparation. Its apparent simplicity makes the performance so engaging for children, and adults, in the audience.

The performance opens with a closed suitcase centre stage. Mr Sommerflügel sits on one side of the suitcase behind various percussion instruments (drum, triangle,



finger organ, cymbal), Mrs Sommerflügel on the other. The suitcase 'magically' opens to reveal a glow of golden light promising all sorts of revelations. The case snaps shut. It re-opens and then snaps shut again to the rhythm of Mr Sommerflügel's instruments, children giggle. There is no high tech work at play, the performance combines joke shop trickery with precise and playful theatre.

First a simple paper butterfly flutters out of the suitcase. A single spot light draws attention to the shadow it casts on Mr Sommerflügel's handkerchief, the shadow is captured and folded inside the handkerchief, the butterfly shadow then escapes to the spontaneous applause of the children. The illusions work beautifully, Mr and Mrs Sommerflügel's timing is perfect.

The butterfly is followed by other, seemingly random, objects/puppets: a small boat, a big fish, a bread roll, a mouse, a cat and a robin. Through discreet, but not hidden, trickery Mr and Mrs Sommerflügel transform the objects into characters within a 'cat and mouse' story: Mrs Sommerflügel hides the bread roll from Mr Sommerflügel under her hat, the big fish hopes to eat the little boat, the clever robin outwits the showoff cat.

The duo present a wonderful miniature circus for the assembled children.

*Richard Tomlinson, the Lead Creative Practitioner on Take Art's Little Big Bang project in October 2011*





**Mr & Mrs Sommerflügel at international festivals:**

3rd edition of the festival Ouvè-Jou-a, Martinique, France  
 L'Yonne en Scène Auxerre, France  
 Festival La Hague, France  
 Graines de spectacles Clermont-Ferrand, France  
 Junge Augen Graz, Austria  
 Festival Momix 22. Edition, Kingersheim, France  
 Festival Têtes de bois, Villeurbanne, France  
 Ageas Salisbury Internat. Arts Festival, United Kingdom  
 Festival Premiere Rencontre, Villes du Val d'Oise, France  
 Festival Meli`Môme Reims, France  
 Kindertheater des Monats in NRW, Germany

Festival Szene Bunte Wähne Horn, Austria  
 Baboró Internat. Arts Festival for Children Gallway, Irland  
 Starke Stücke Frankfurt a.Main, Germany  
 Anfänge(r) – Figurentheaterfestival Puppentheatermuseum München, Germany  
 Penguin Days Schloßparktheater Moers, Germany  
 Festival HellwachHelios Theater Hamm, Germany  
 Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro La Barracca, Bologna, Italy  
 Scène d`europe Reims, France  
 Festi Môme Pays de Questembert, France



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Directed by: Werner Hennrich  
 Play, images, sound, concept:  
 Michael Döhnert and Melanie Florschütz  
 Live-Music: Michael Döhnert  
 Painting of the background: Wolf Dieckmann  
 Female Dress: Adelheid Wieser

Production: florschütz & döhnert  
 Coproduction: Theater o.N. / Zinnober  
 Supported by: Fonds Darstellende Künste e.V. and  
 Small Size, European Network for the diffusion of performing arts for early years  
 Première: 02.10.2010 T-Werk Potsdam, Germany

