DRAMA

An escape into imagination

Us/Them

CARLY WIJS

1 September 2004. It is the first day of school in Beslan, a quiet town in North Ossetia, part of the Russian federation. Chechen rebels force their way into a school and hold more than a thousand pupils, teachers and parents hostage inside the gymnasium. Three days later the siege comes to a horrendous conclusion: 334 people are killed by bullets and explosives. More than half of the victims are children.

> Remarkable piece of theatre – playful, surprisingly and painfully funny as well as moving
>
> THE GUARDIAN

In the children's play 'Us/Them' Carly Wijs lets two surviving school children speak. A girl and a boy try to describe the three days of the siege in as much detail as possible to get to grips with the terrible events. Painstakingly, the children chalk a plan of the school on the floor. But before long, their imagination takes over. As they carefully move among the wires strung up by the hostage-takers, these now turn into an obstacle course from their gym class. Balloons become bombs and the terrorist invasion transforms into a heroic scene from an action film. Both level-headed and precise, as well as stubborn and playful, the two exorcise their fears by escaping into the imaginary. This is a play that will make a lasting impression on children and adults alike.

> The Beslan massacre is given such bold, off-centre treatment in Carly Wijs's production that it inspires much deeper consideration.
>
> THE TIMES

AUTHOR

Carly Wijs (b. 1966) is a theatre maker and author. In 2014 she wrote and directed the children performance 'Us/Them' about the siege of a school in Russia. Following great success at home, the play was also performed in London (National Theatre), Montreal (Maison Théâtre) and Cape Town (Cradle of Creativity Festival). In 2016 Wijs followed this up with her literary debut, 'Het twijfelexperiment' (The Doubt Experiment), which was nominated for a Bronzen Uil. Carly Wijs teaches at theatre school RITCS and dance school P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels.

ORIGINAL TITLE Wij/Zij (2014, BRONKS theater voor jong publiek, 29 pp.)

AGE 9+

PRIZES Edinburgh Fringe First

RIGHTS SOLD German (Theaterstückverlag), English (Nick Hern Books)

TRANSLATION RIGHTS The author is the rights holder. Please contact us to obtain their contact details.

TRANSLATION GRANTS Esther de Gries - esther@flandersliterature.be , Yannick Geens - yannick@flandersliterature.be