

Morten Buckhøj – teater & revy:

http://www.mortenbuckhoj.dk/446609533/6967935/posting/extremophiles?fbclid=IwAR3scrReJBARNeOq_NfstqzisokecrSkfXbCNcWdXEDb6qDCRCIz316FRE

4 stars by Morten Buckhøj

What happens to people who are isolated at the end of the world in a critical situation? Exciting new drama at Krudttønden.

Three people are sitting at a research station in Antarctica. They are literally at the world's end. Outside the wind is howling and it is 30 degrees of frost. They eat carefully measured food rations, make seismological records and – get on each other's nerves a little bit.

Especially the eldest of the three, English Bertram, seems to be a bit of a mouthful with his petty-pedantic routines. The leader of the group is English Angela and the Dane Lars is the trio's radio operator.

There was a fourth, but he went out in the blizzard to catch a supply ship home. We meet him briefly in the introduction where he tries in vain to get in touch with the group over the satellite phone. For something is wrong. Completely wrong.

The English-language Danish theatre, That Theatre Company, has for a number of years presented a Copenhagen theater audience with English-language drama, new as well as classical, and with *Extremophiles* they give the world premiere of Fergal O'Byrne's new play, which is first part of a trilogy with the focal point 'locations.

So the first location is at the end of the world. In the beginning, everything goes a little slow, would one have expected otherwise in a place where there is nothing to do, apart from the daily meter readings and the dry finding that the weather is as it used to be here; cold, windy and dark!

It is a bit of a bomb that Angela detonates in the group when she tells that she is pregnant. Of course, everyone knew that she has a relationship with the now missing fourth person in the group, but how do you get her home and give birth and can you get out of there at all? Can one have an infant in those surroundings? And quite concretely, then suddenly there is one more mouth to feed.

The drama only seriously takes off when the fourth man finally comes tumbling back through the

storm, and when the first shock of the news that he is to be a father has subsided, he can tell that the world outside is not as they think. A devastating nuclear radiation has deserted the world, presumably killed all life – *It's all gone, man!* The four – soon five – are with some probability the least people on earth.

Extremophiles means according to the dictionary; *organisms that live or survive under extreme living conditions that would otherwise be lethal to most creatures.*

The four survivors of the play are such extremophiles and how do they react to the situation? Different, but each in their own way with a form of self-preservation drive. That is how we humans are arranged. When everything seems most hopeless we will try to find a way out. Somehow strange, it is a bit like the current time of corona. And it gives the play an extra dimension and a probably completely unintentional topicality.

How it turns out is not to be revealed here, but the play is an intense and immensely well-played little one-act of an hour and a half. Ian Burns stands strong in the image as the older Bertram who gets more and more isolation fever, Sira Stampe creates an interesting character study of the expectant mother, Benjamin Stender is the radio telegraphist who carries a deep, personal grief and from the cold comes Michael Worthman as a subdued savage with a mixture of authority and horror for the future he as the only one well knows does not exist.

Claus Bue has directed with a good sense of the individual characters, but perhaps also with a, especially in the beginning, rather slow-moving stage arrangement between microwave and dining table and finally the TTC crew is credited for the quite authentic scenography.

In the spring comes the second part of the trilogy which you can allow yourself to have expectations for.