

P R E S S R E L E A S E

THE ELECTRIC GRANDMOTHER

A play by Franz Schwabeneder based on a short story by Ray Bradbury. A production of the Phoenix Theater in cooperation with the Ars Electronica Futurelab. Premiere: June 22, 2006, 2 PM, Balkon at the SCHÄXPIR 2006 International Theater Festival.

For audiences age 7 and up

Her name is Cecily and her serial number is 0000214. She's the world's first humanoid model-microcircuit-biocommunications-activity-electrical-grandmother. She was created by famed robotics engineer Guido Fantoccini to be a helpful companion—for example, to a family that had lost its mother. This is the very blow that fate had delivered to Thaddäus, his daughter Agatha and his sons Thomas and Timo. So, one evening, Guido Fantoccini arrives by flymobile to bring the family an electric grandmother. The granny-robot takes over the organization of the household and assumes the childrearing duties in word and in deed. After all, she's the result of state-of-the-art programming and possesses an immense body of knowledge in virtually all areas of life. At first, Agatha is not the least bit happy with the new "family member" since she fears that the "android box" will repress her memory of her beloved mother, but the electric grandmother also knows how to deal with the pain a child feels. On the other hand, Timo, the youngest member of the family, has discovered that his new granny is absolutely wonderful at telling stories, and these exciting

tales nurture his enormous talent as an inventor. Together with his brother Thomas, he builds a tunnel designed for "digital teleportation," but there's dreadful danger lurking at the end of this tunnel. And if it wasn't for the electric grandmother ...

This play will run at the Phoenix Theater October-December 2006

"The Electric Grandmother" is a cooperative project of the Phoenix Theater and Ars Electronica and will also be performed at this year's Ars Electronica Festival (August 31 to September 5, 2006).

Cast: Randolph Destaller, Gabriele Deutsch, Thomas Pohl, Christian Scharrer, Waltraud Starck

Director: Franz Schwabeneder

Artistic Advisor: Ioan C. Toma

Sets/Props: Bonnie Tillemann

Lighting: Erich Uiberlacker

Virtual Staging: Ars Electronica Futurelab/Christine Pils, Christopher Lindinger, Andreas Jalsovec, Stefan Schilcher

Thanks to the Museum of the Province of Upper Austria.

Franz Schwabeneder was born in 1942 in Linz; in 1965, he began working as a journalist for the *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten* newspaper, heading its "Culture and Media" section from 1973 to his retirement in 2003; journalistic activities on book projects include "Die Ars Electronica – Kunst im Zeitsprung" and "Promenade 39 – Das Landestheater Linz 1803 – 2003"; he authored an important part of Linz's successful application to be named 2009 European Capital of Culture; awards: Cultural Medal of the City of Linz, Golden Service Cross of the Province of Upper Austria.

With queries, please contact:

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