

## **Brexit goes through the stomach**

**I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE (THE BREXIT EDITION), concept and direction: Gob Squad, sound design: Jeff McGrory, video design: Miles Chalcraft, light design: Max Wegener, décor: Glamor Glaneur (Tatiana Sapphire / Tamara Sapphire / Moriya Matityahu), dramaturgy and production management: Christina Runge. With: Johanna Freiburg, Sean Patten, Sharon Smith, Berit Stumpf, Sarah Thom, Bastian Trost, Simon Will. Prod. HAU Hebbel am Ufer Theater, BERLIN.**

“Ordeeer! Ordeeer!”, screams the Speaker of the House and smacks a wooden hammer on the table. Dressed in a red cloak and wearing a black beret, he is sitting centrally at the balcony of the Hebbel am Ufer theatre hall in Berlin. It is March 29, the date on which Britain should have left the European Union. Therefore, the German-English group Gob Squad has entitled their newest production *I Love You, Goodbye (The Brexit Edition)*. It is a live cooking show with a single enactment. Seven dishes are prepared on the revolving stage during nearly six hours. Each member of the group cooks a typical dish of his hometown and assumes successively the role of the speaker, the chef or of one of the two sous-chefs.

Order has to be restored when a conflict arises on stage. At times, the Speaker calls on the spectators, as representatives of the “House”, to give their opinion on certain issues. Usually “the Noes have it”. Some questions get the approval of the audience, for example that Beans on Toast can be considered a meal. Every cooking session follows the same pattern: an introductory karaoke song prior to the meal preparation, which is interrupted by dance scenes or sessions of “bilateral talks” in which cultural clichés are dealt with. The emblematical soundtrack begins with Frank Sinatra's “Strangers in the Night” performed in the Esperanto language. Humorous wordplay causes bouts of laughter as the parody avoids any direct political content, focusing on deepening mutual knowledge.

Only the final shocking video is a harsh awakening: in an arid valley, an iguana is being chased by a lot of snakes. At some point she gets caught with the snakes wrapping around her. Miraculously, she then manages to free herself and escapes. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief. But does the hunted one represent Great Britain? So the snakes depict the other EU member states? These questions are left open while each spectator receives a slice of toast with a small portion of each cooked dish – all prove to be inedible. **Irina Wolf**