
AUTHORS

Juha Jokela (Finland)

Juha Jokela (né 1970) is a modern Finnish writer in the best sense of the word. His witty and surprising humour, compelling narratives and nuanced characterizations are tightly bound to the present moment. Whether focusing his sharp vision on the world of business or the spirit, he writes with deep understanding of the personalities involved. Jokela began his career in television. His first play: "A Mobile Horror" (2003), won unprecedented critical acclaim, and can truly be said to be one of the most successful plays in recent Finnish theatrical history. This comedy, set in a mobile phone company, was soon produced by a number of theatre companies. Jokela's Nordic Drama Award-winning play: "The Fundamentalist" (2006) is a more serious two-character play examining religious fanaticism; it, too, has achieved both popular and critical success. Jokela's highly-anticipated play "Performance Economy" (2010) premiered at the Espoo City Theatre into huge success. This satire deals with performance as a basic element of society, politics and business. The first season was sold out already in advance sales. Critics have praised the play for its phenomenal and witty dialogue, humour and criticism of the contemporary society in which narcissism has become the main fuel of all kind of action.

Titles

MOBILE HORROR

Terhi, the managing director of Dacutec, a mobile phone entertainment company, has recovered from a nervous breakdown and is now returning to work full of new ideas. She wants to re-think the firm's values and only market the kinds of products she can stand behind. With Gandhi as her model, she wants to bring joy and neighbourly love to the mobile phone business. Terhi's values are quickly put to the test, as hanging over Dacutec is the threat of a merger, and they need to develop a successful product in two weeks. Is there a space for these new, soft values when their jobs are at stake? Juha Jokela's successful comedy examines the unforgiving pace and cut-throat competition of business life through razor-sharp humour and pointed dialogue. At the same time, the play considers the values of life more broadly, examining how these values ultimately need to be realized in everyday life, if only through small deeds. The play has been staged all over the world with excellent reviews.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST

Markus, a reform-minded minister fed up with the inflexibility of the church, meets his old friend Heidi after twenty years. She has become a fanatical Sectarian who wants to save Markus from going to hell. Markus is shocked, but also wants to understand Heidi and help her. Between them develops a wrenching spiritual battle, where they are forced to re-evaluate what they believe and why. Markus must admit his own responsibility for Heidi's state as well as come to terms with his own inner fundamentalism. In this suspenseful and subtle play, unquestioned religious beliefs collide with modern-day pluralism and tolerance. The play forces us to look inside ourselves, to question the values which shape our lives. The play does not preach, but instead considers these questions from many points of view. It is not only about religion, but also about the search for truth and the ways two people can forge a relationship. The play won the Nordic Drama Award in 2008.

PERFORMANCE ECONOMY

Social Democrat MP Jaana wants to resuscitate her retrograde, floundering party with a radical poverty program. Rami, a ruthless corporate coach who has raked it in with his Performance Economy concept, starts sparring the provincial wheeler and dealer OT Toivio. Single mother and sociologist Hanna is studying the relationship between performance and society; but conducting scientific research and making ends meet is a difficult equation. Performance Economy is a satire about life that has turned into nothing but performance; this theme is considered through the prisms of sociology, tabloids, the business world, as well as local and party politics. The fragmentary scenes come together in a narrative whole that aptly illustrates the significance of the media in contemporary society. Political preaching is replaced with polyvocal

narration that challenges us to consider dramatic structures in politics and everyday life. The play premiered at the Espoo City Theatre.