

Christian Friedel

Actor, singer, and director: Magdeburg-born Christian Friedel is a triple threat, who stops at nothing. On stage since the age of 10, he is best known for his atmospheric, neoteric theatre performances. With his striking stagings and scenographic Shakespeare concerts, he has been wowing audiences at the State Playhouse Dresden as well as the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus for years. As the village teacher in the Oscar-nominated film ‘The White Ribbon’, he achieved the international breakthrough in 2009. Last year, his band ‘Woods of Birnam’ made the leap from theatre productions to music charts and festival stages (e.g. 2019 Open Source Festival) with their indie-pop album ‘Grace’. By his own account, Christian leads a gypsy life in search of happiness — we are curious where the journey will take him.

You’re an actor, musician, and director. How do you juggle all of that?

First of all, it’s extremely fortunate that I can exercise these different activities and seeing them grow simultaneously makes me very happy. Generally speaking, I try to set priorities and to think in projects. Sometimes it’s impossible not to work on two things at once, but making compromises in terms of time usually stresses me out. If I do projects one by one, they tend to cross-fertilize each other better.

By what criteria do you choose your roles?

I care about the figure’s character and whether there is a certain development throughout the story. From an actor’s point of view, in the best-case scenario, the role is a challenge. Does it suit my nature, or is it the complete opposite? Usually, the following applies: The more complex and mysterious a figure is, the more interesting the role gets. For me, other important factors are the director and my collaborators.

With which person, dead or alive, would you most like to be on stage with?

As regards music, I’d like to perform with Björk. When it comes to acting, there are many people whom I find great. For example, I’m a big fan of Meryl Streep — a true character actress!

In your opinion, what makes the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus so special?

I think that thanks to Wilfried Schulz the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus has succeeded in getting a very wide and young audience enthusiastic about theatre. In addition to its comprehensive programme, the Schauspielhaus also has a very passionate and empathetic ensemble that characterises it.

Finish this sentence: For me, a perfect day in Düsseldorf means...

Sleeping in, drinking a good coffee at Woyton or TENTEN, eating a delicious salad at Green Karma and performing on stage in a sold-out Schauspielhaus at night.

What are your upcoming projects and plans for the future?

At the moment, I’m recording a new album with my band ‘Woods of Birnam’: ‘How To Hear A Painting’ takes priority over everything else until the release date on December 6th of this year. In parallel, I’m also working on the conception of ‘Macbeth’ because I’ll be staging Shakespeare’s famous tragedy as a play. My band will once again be responsible for the musical side of things and I’ll be on stage as well — perhaps because I have a small penchant for megalomania. I usually avoid acting and directing at the same time, but the idea for ‘Macbeth’ emerged during our Shakespearean evening ‘Searching for William’. In this context, the figure of Macbeth played a role that we wanted to flesh out — but that’s just by the by. The premiere is at the State Playhouse Dresden on the 21st of March 2020.

MUSIC

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TEXT MERIT ZIMMERMANN · PHOTO JOACHIM GERN