

## BEFORE I SPEAK, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY

A Marx Brothers Re-enactment

### Production

Merker/Schoch

### Co-production

Fabriktheater Rote Fabrik Zürich | Kleintheater Luzern | Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn



### Tour Management & Diffusion

Bernetta Theaterproduktionen

Ramun Bernetta

Wasserwerkstrasse 96 | CH-8037 Zürich

+41 44 440 66 07 | +41 79 959 08 99

[ramun.bernetta@bernetta.net](mailto:ramun.bernetta@bernetta.net)

[www.bernetta.net](http://www.bernetta.net)

**BERNETTA**  
THEATERPRODUKTIONEN

**Max Merker / Matthias Schoch**

**BEFORE I SPEAK I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY**

A Marx Brothers Re-enactment

In the beginning was the joke. This play devotes itself to the power of the joke as much as its powerlessness. Inspired by Groucho Marx, Max Merker and Matthias Schoch set their personal enthusiasm and higher nonsense against the banality of our existence, "riding the old humor horse". Where does humor come from? Why is it not really considered an art? Could it help political emancipation?

The early Marx Brothers movies are legendary and serve as a basic idea for this "stage attack" on our risible muscles. Merker and Schoch set their humor over against our politically controversial times, following Groucho Marx' motto about show-biz: "That's Florida, folks: singing, dancing, entertainment, and after the entertainment there will be sandwiches". In a quick manner they transfer slapstick classics into our times. Certain rules obviously function over the times and generations: Schoch plays live music with roguish charisma, Merker uses recorded music. They make people laugh, dropping bricks by the dozen.

While Europe searches for its own identity in these changing times, Merker and Schoch evoke all kinds of sinister ghosts and evils. "Before I Speak I Have Something to Say" uncovers the oldest layer of our culture, the joke, born of the spirit of comedy.

**With** Max Merker and Matthias Schoch

**Concept** Martin Bieri, Max Merker, Matthias Schoch

**Director/Idea** Max Merker

**Music** Matthias Schoch

**Dramaturgy** Martin Bieri

**Stage Design** Martin Dolnik

**Lighting/Video/Sound/Technical Director** Patrick Hunka

**Assistant to the director** Marianne Amsler

**Tour Management & Diffusion** Ramun Bernetta – Bernetta Theaterproduktionen

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**Language** Deutsch

**Duration** 60 min., no intermission

**Premiere** 01. April 2016 Fabriktheater Rote Fabrik

**With the support of** Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Jürg George Bürki-Stiftung, Migros Kulturprozent, Pro Helvetia – Schweizer Kulturstiftung

## PERFORMANCES

Zurich	CH	01./05./07./08./09.04.2016	Fabriktheater Rote Fabrik - Premiere
Lucerne	CH	23./25./26.11.2016	Kleintheater Luzern
Berlin	DE	02./03./04.02.2017	Theaterdiscounter Berlin
Schwäbisch Hall	DE	03./04.03.2017	Freilichtspiele Schwäbisch Hall
Lugano	CH	26.05.2017	Schweizer Theatertreffen (Swiss Theater Meeting)
Solothurn	CH	01./02./26./27.8./30.11.2017	Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn
Solothurn	CH	08./09./20./31.12.2017	Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn
Biel	CH	10./11.11.2017 + 27./28.12.2017	Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn
Biel	CH	02.01.2018	Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn

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## BIOGRAPHIES

### Max Merker – Concept/Director/Performance

Max Merker was born in 1976 in Munich and now lives in Zurich. He studies philosophy at the FU Freie Universität Berlin, and Acting and Physical Theater at Folkwang-Hochschule Essen. From 2007 to 2010 he was an actor at Theater Oberhausen and at Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn. 2011 he started his free-lance career as an actor and director. He produced the play „Tristan – A Cocktail Called Love“ and won the Jury's Award at the „100 Grad Festival in Berlin, the Public's and Jury's Award at the ARENA festival of young artists. In 2013 he did „Authentizitätsprothesen – Jetzt aber echt“ with Malte Schlösser. In 2015 this was followed by „Lachen verboten! – Eine Hommage an Buster Keaton“, which was performed at Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn, Fullspin-Festival Essen, Kleintheater Luzern, Kurtheater Baden and Staatstheater Saarbrücken. In 2016 he directed and performed „Before I Speak I Have Something to Say“ at Fabriktheater Rote Fabrik in Zurich, Kleintheater Luzern, Theaterdiscounter Berlin, and Thik (?) Baden. In 2015 and 2016 he was responsible for the productions „perfekt defekt“ and „Du Da Da Ich“ at Zirkus Chnopf.

### Matthias Schoch – Concept/Music/Performance

Matthias Schoch was born 1968 in Winterthur. He finished his BA in Acting 2010 at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste. Before his acting studies he played the lead in the movie „Jeune Homme“ by Christoph Schaub. In the following years he regularly played roles in short films and was a moderator for several events of the Swiss film scene. In 2008 he won the „Studienpreis“ awarded by the „Migros Kulturprozent“. A year later he had his debut at the Theater Biel Solothurn in the play „Bunbury“. He also played King Solomon in the Dance Theater production „Die Königin von Saba“ at the „Origen Festival“, and played all four male roles in „Medea“ at „Werkstatt Chur“. Right now he is participating in different productions at ZHdK, Zürcher Hochschule der Künste. From 2011 to 2014 Matthias Schoch was also part of the ensemble at the Theater Biel Solothurn. In 2013 he received the „Förderpreis“ (an „encouragement and support“ award) from the Armin Ziegler Foundation. In the same year he took on the musical direction of several projects, „Die Vögel“, „Mit wem soll ich jetzt schweigen?“ and „Don Camillo und Peppone“ („im selben Haus, wo?) at Theater Biel Solothurn (?). He also plays the piano in the band „Dear Helmut“. Since 2015 he has been the Artistic Director of „Zirkus Chnopf“.

### Martin Bieri – Dramaturgy

Martin Bieri was born in 1977 in Bern. He lives and works mostly in Bern, where he also studied Contemporary Theater and Landscape Theory. He was responsible for the scenic design/dramaturgy from 1999 to 2002 at the Luzerner Theater. Lately he has also served as the artistic director of Lucerne's second playhouse, the „UG“. In 2009 he was a scenic designer at Theater Neumarkt Zürich. From 2002 to 2014 he was a member of the group of directors of the „Freie Gruppe Schauspiel International“, consisting of the theaters Hau Berlin, Kammerspiele München, Schauspiel Essen, Theater Neumarkt and several theater festivals). Since 2012 he has been working as a scenic director/dramaturg at the „Performancegruppe ultra“ (wo??), which was nominated for the Swiss Performance Price in 2016. Martin Bieri has worked with Max Merker extensively. Since 2002, he also has been a free lance author and journalist, writing about art and sports for newspapers like „Der Bund“, „Tages Anzeiger“, „WOZ“ and „Schweizerische Depeschagentur“. He also appeared in ? various plays, some with Andri Beyeler. In 2015, his „Europa – Tektonik des Kapitals, Gedichte“ won the „Literaturpreis Kanton Bern“.

### **Martin Dolnik – Stage Design**

Martin Dolnik was born in Brünn and grew up in the Czech Republic, Yugoslavia, Austria and Germany. He studied Stage and Costume Design at the „Akademie der Bildenden Künste“ in Munich, where took courses with Ursel and Karl-Ernst Herrmann.

After serving as an assistant at Schauspielhaus Bochum and the Nationaloper Prague Martin Dolnik worked as a stage and costume designer at different theaters in Bochum, Zürich, Stuttgart, Kiel, Madgeburg, Göttingen and Solothurn. In addition to his work in the theater he developed design concepts for exhibitions, like „Bochum – das Fremde und das Eigene“ at the center of city history at Bochum, within the project „Kulturhauptstadt Europa RUHR.2010. Dolnik has often collaborated with Max Merker. The last collaboration was „Lachen verboten! – Eine Hommage an Buster Keaton“ at Theater Biel Solothurn.

### **Ramun Bernetta – Production**

Ramun Bernetta was born in Chur in 1994. Since 2015 he has lives in Zurich, where he also works and studies. After gaining his Commercial Diploma in 2013 and his Federal Professional Baccalaureate Certificate in 2015, including an 18 month practical at the Graubündner Kantonalbank, he did an EFL course in the US. He is currently studying towards a Bachelor of Science in Communication at Hochschule für Wirtschaft in Zurich. He has been in the committee of „Kulturraum Chur“ since 2014 and was responsible for the program at „Kulturplatz-Festival Chur“ in 2016. In 2015 he joined Bernetta Theaterproduktionen, producing for several free theater groups and directors, such as Thom Luz, TRIAD Zurich, Theater Konstellationen, Fabian Alder, Ensemble Fiorenza and Max Merker/Christoph Rath/Martin Bieri. Since 2016 he has also been responsible for marketing and communication for the upcoming National Festival „Jungspund – Theaterfestival für ein junges Publikum“ (Theater Festival for Young Audiences) in St. Gallen.

**Translated by** Ursula & Rob McCormack, May 2017

## PHOTOS



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