

Life, the universe and everything

This June, Berlin's stages offer space for reflection on life's bigger questions. *By Liv Stroud*



Auslöschung: Ein Zerfall



Geschwister

As the good weather finally settles over Berlin for the summer, the mood is distinctly carefree. So when you're done sitting on the shores of a lake or the banks of the Spree, admiring the blue sky reflection on the water, the city's stages are also game to compete this month with an assortment of plays contemplating life's deeper existential questions.

To kick off the ruminations, HAU will host the international artist's collective and company&Co's **Global Swarming – The Science of the Antz**. It tells the story of the power of ants clubbing together to become a secret world super power tasked with saving the world from fossil fuel capitalism – putting the ant in Antifa. It makes you wonder exactly what we could achieve if humans banded together in such a way.

Over at Schaubühne, the animal theme continues. **War with the Newts** sees a new species of the semiaquatic creatures discovered – and ultimately exploited – as they are forced to work for the benefit of society. The play, based on Karel Čapek's 1936 novel **Der Krieg mit den Molchen**, serves as a warning against capitalism and delves into the rise of fascism too.

Collective responsibility also has to start with the individual, right? **Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall (Extinction. A Decay)** also explores Nazism, as Franz Josef Murau is forced to face the demons of his parents' Nazi past and decades spent living abroad and away from family. The story, Thomas Bernhard's last novel, explores how deep a person's roots go, even if one tries to leave them behind.

Last but certainly not least, native Berliner and theatre wunderkind Ersan Mondtag directs **Geschwister (Siblings)** at Gorki, a look into the positive and negative impact those uniquely lifelong relationships can have on a person. If that doesn't give you food for thought as you cycle around Berlin with the sun on your face, then there's not much that will. ■

Der Krieg mit den Molchen Jun 4, 6-9 Schaubühne | **Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall** Jun 4, 5 & with English surtitles Jun 26 Deutsches Theater | **Global Swarming – The Science of the Antz** June 9-12 HAU | **Geschwister** Jun 17, 18, 26 Maxim Gorki