

Review from the newspaper *Adresseavis* Monday 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2011:



Caption: Drinking pressure: Vodkashot 'till you drop for the two Brits.

## Ukrainian for an evening

**The hangover of a civilization is served by two entertaining British football tourists with an edge and an undertone of well known social criticism.**

**The season opening** at Teaterhuset Avant Garden is of the light and jovial kind. The stage is set around the bar in the café. We, the audience, is for one evening heavy made up and corrupt Ukrainians. On two barstools sit the British Dave and Dave, eager manchester United-fans, on vacation in Odessa, Ukrain's famous harbour city by the Black Sea. With a self content British gaze they are on a "slum vacation" in an eastern low cost country. Loud and proud they comment on the surroundings: The supposedly always horny Ukrainian women and their less beautiful men, prostitution, vodka access, national sentiment and corruption. Under the surface, their own shortcomings, aggression and erectile dysfunction are lurking.

**The last time** the Dutch group Wunderbaum visited Trondheim, it was with the surrealistic and religion critical performance *Camp Jesus* in 2009. The same year they were invited to make *Beer Tourist* as part of the European artproject *Black/North SEAS*. Even if the piece is not totally "fresh from the oven", it is still relevant: Who are "we" when we go on vacation abroad, in "their" country? Dave and Dave show little interest and receptiveness toward the culture they meet, instead they worship their own country, culture and excellence, meeting the foreign in their Rooney and Ronaldo shirts. The *male* is ritualized and soaked in beer, male chauvinism, a real ball grabbing followed by a trip out on the street and assulting comments, with a wide smile from the first slide show of snapshots to the Ukrainian national anthem. Their self-building complaining is not unlike what you can hear when Norwegian tourist gather abroad, and therefore unfortunately becomes predictable and not that provocative. It is entertaining, self critical and fun, but it could do with a little more bite and a surprising and new persepective.

**In the end** of the show they leave the Eastern Bloc and turn their simple football minds to the Norwegian. They conclude that Norwegians are Europe's Sarah Palins, before our lack of patriotism is pointed out by rubbing their arses with the Norwegian flag. We have seen that one before. It smells of an old party and the show appears to be the civilization's hangover. Won't Europeans ever get better than this? Are there rests of old colonial power in our reflexes? The banner of arrogance is held high, and with these two drunken football tourists spearheaded, this is a promising opening of a new season.