

# THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Theater Review | 'Moby Dick': Mateys, Call It the Great Leviathan

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By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

Storytelling is elevated to high art at the New Victory Theater, where Theater Triebwerk of Hamburg, Germany, is presenting a luminous and engrossing production of "Moby Dick" through Sunday.

In this version of Herman Melville's epic of deadly obsession and vengeance aboard the ill-fated 19th-century Nantucket whaler Pequod, all of the major characters - the narrator Ishmael, the harpooner Queequeg, the mates Starbuck and Stubb and the implacable Captain Ahab - and some of the minor ones are brought to vivid life by three actors.

What is more, on a stage where the only props are three poles (like the masts of the Pequod), a sea chest with some clothes inside, a bedsheet, a lantern and a double bass and cello, these talented performers - Oliver Hermann, Uwe Schade and Heino Sellhorn - conjure up shipboard life. Mr. Hermann plays Ishamel and Ahab; Mr. Schade is notably Starbuck and Queequeg, and Mr. Sellhorn is Stubb, among others.

Under the thoughtful direction of Erik Schäffler, the power of their gifts extends from the crow's nest to below decks, to instruction in whales and whaling, to illuminating the many moods of the vast seas, and of course to the excitement and perils of the hunt and, in the presence of Moby Dick, the great white whale, to death itself.

Wisps of fog, well-conceived lighting (by Mr. Sellhorn) and music and chanteys color the mood and enhance the atmosphere, and while the production accords the most serious fidelity to the novel Melville began to write in 1850, it is not without occasional humor and some 21st-century references.

Cheers and some shouts of "bravo" greeted the cast at a recent performance of this 75-minute intermissionless show, recommended by the New Victory for audiences 8 and older.

“Geschichtenerzählen ist am New Victory Theater zu großer Kunst erhoben worden. Theater Triebwerk aus Hamburg, Deutschland, präsentiert eine glänzende und fesselnde Produktion. Moby Dick...ist von drei Schauspielern zu unmittelbarem Leben gebracht worden...Unter der durchdachten Regie von Erik Schäffler breitet sich die kraftvolle Begabung der Schauspieler aus vom Krähenest zum Unterdeck, zur Einführung in die Welt der Wale und zum Walfang,... natürlich zu den aufregenden Gefahren der Jagd und - in der Präsenz des Weißen Wales Moby Dick – zum Tod als solchem...Jubel und Bravorufe...” „New York Times“