

# SYLVIA CAMARDA & SASCHA LEY MI FRIDA



Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg

# SYLVIA CAMARDA & SASCHA LEY

## **MI FRIDA**

A DANCE THEATER PERFORMANCE

**World premiere** May 6, 2014 at the Théâtre des Capucins, Luxembourg

**Duration** 1 hour

**Artistic director & performance** Sascha Ley

**Choreography & performance** Sylvia Camarda

**Costumes & Stageset** Ulli Kremer

**Assistant director, artistic advice & videos** Jérôme Konen

**Light design** Patrick Winandy

**Sound & studio recording** Patrick Floener

**Tour technician** Romain Stammet

### **Texts**

*Frida Kahlo: Song Of Herself* (Solomon Grimberg, Prestel, 2009)

*The Diary Of Frida Kahlo* (Frida Kahlo, Kindler, 2005)

Sascha Ley

### **Music**

*Feeling Good* (Newley/Bricusse), Andy Bey & His Sisters

*Chuncho* (Moises Vivanco), Yma Sumac

*Jarabe Tapatío* (Jesús González Rubio)

*Los Tiradores* (Teodoro Chavez)

*Song Of The Volga Boatmen* (Glenn Miller/Russian Army Choir)

*Paloma Negra & Cucurruccú Paloma* (Tomás Méndez)

*Diego-Diego, Frida, La vida, la muerte, Niños & Zapatos rojos* (Sascha Ley)

### **Note of thanks**

Raoul Henri **for filming the videos**

Colleen Blake, Tara Donnell, Larisa Faber, Antoine Lemaire, Fátima Luna, Paca Rimbau-Hernández and Raoul Schmitz **for the interview statements**

Joachim Engelke **for the leg supports and prostheses**

**Production** Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg, Kulturhaus Niederaanven

**In collaboration with** the CERMM-Circle of mutual assistance and rehabilitation for the mentally ill

### **Further performances**

**Théâtre des Capucins** on May 6 & 12, 2014 at 20h

**Mierscher Kulturhaus** on May 23, 2014 at 20h

**Kulturhaus Niederaanven** on May 23, 2014 at 20h & 25 May 2014 at 17h

Yo quisiera xxx xx xxx  
xxxxxxxx = xxxxxxxx  
- XXXX-  
xxx poder hacer lo que  
me dé la gana –  
detrás de la cortina de  
"la locura"  
Así: arreglaría las

Flores, todo el día, pin-  
taría, el dolor, ellen,  
amor y la ternura,  
me reiría a mis  
anchas de estupidéz de los otros.

*I wish xxx xx xxx  
xxxxxxxx = xxxxxxxx  
- XXXX-  
xxx I could do whatever  
I liked –  
behind the curtain of  
„madness“*

*So: I would arrange flowers,  
all day long, I'd paint  
the pain, the love, the  
tenderness,  
I would laugh as much as I feel  
at the stupidity of the others.*

**From „The Diary Of Frida Kahlo“ (Frida Kahlo, Kindler, 2005)**

## **FRIDA KAHLO - MI FRIDA**

### **The Icon**

The painter Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), artistic epitome of the ancient Mexico and its modern 20<sup>th</sup> century equivalent alike, still radiates a unique poetic glamour and authenticity. Mexico's most famous artist, already having achieved cult status in her own days, still sparks off enthusiasm today. Time and time again her work gets rediscovered and enjoys a remarkable popularity not just due to her paintings, but also evoked by her colorful and intriguing personality.

There exists a genuine myth surrounding the persona of this freethinking, nonconformist woman. In life, she overcame death. She embedded her pain in an exotic context and turned her spectators into witnesses of her struggle for survival. Kahlo remains unfathomable, but still holds a remarkable potential for identification.

*Mi Frida* is conceived as an investigation into the myth and the fascination it causes, as a play with the poetry of ambiguity, i.e. how it feels to live between extremes, between pain and extraordinary fulfillment: a fundamental theme for any artist.

### **“Tragedy is the most ridiculous thing” (Frida Kahlo)**

The artist Frida Kahlo, disabled and constantly suffering, developed her own flamboyant style in painting as well as in her private life. She liked to appear sophisticated, energetic, funny and erotically fragile, sometimes making vulgar jokes or delivering daily private performances in fancy clothes. She loved to pose.

### **“My reality”**

André Breton described her work as a "colored ribbon around a bomb". She eagerly joined the avant-garde of the day, but resisted the appropriation of her art by the surrealists, who thought of her as one of them. Instead she insisted: "I do not paint a dream, but my own reality!"

*Mi Frida* takes Kahlo's *own reality* as a starting point and ventilates the question whether the process of artistic creativity arises from a need to overcome pain, conflicts and obstacles of all kinds, whether tragedy can be reinterpreted or resolved through humor.

**„I hope the end is joyful, and I hope never to return.“**

Kahlo's aura has an elusive quality and will probably bear its mysterious ambiguity forever. It may well be, that we tend to see our own longings and aspirations embodied by this extraordinary lady: her inner strength, passion, unconditional love and distinct individuality.

### **An interdisciplinary collage**

Using their own talents – dance, voice, singing and performance - Sascha Ley and Sylvia Camarda dive into Kahlo's extraordinary universe.

SONRISA  
TERNURA

gota, sota, mota  
MIRTO, SEXO, roto  
LLAVE, SUAVE, BROTA  
LICOR mano dura  
    AMOR silla firma  
    GRACIA VIVA  
        VIVA PLENa  
        LLENA  
            SON ..

SMILE  
TENDERNESS

    drop, jack, speck  
MYRTLE, SEX, broken  
KEY, SOFT, SPROUTS  
LIQUOR hard hand  
    LOVE tight fit  
    LIVING GRACE  
        FULLY ALIVE  
        FULL  
            THEY ARE ...

**From „The Diary of Frida Kahlo“ (Frida Kahlo, Kindler, 2005)**



## **CONFRONTATION WITH THE PAIN – THE TRAGEDY OF A GREAT MEXICAN PAINTER**

As a student, Frida Kahlo is severely injured in 1925 in the collision of a bus and a tram in Mexico City. She must stay in bed for months. For an enterprising 18 year old like Frida, this is particularly agonizing. Desperate, she searches for an activity and comes up with the idea to try out painting. The mother has an easel made for her bed, so that she can try painting lying on her back.

When she is finally able to stand up and walk again by help of a special corset she stays with painting and asks the famous Mexican painter Diego Rivera in 1928 to give an opinion of her talent. He responds enthusiastically.

In 1929 they both marry: A petite young woman and a man twice her age, with baroque corpulence, an eccentric who loves to shock others through hair-raising stories and unpredictable behavior. The tabloid press reports about his infidelities, while at the same time he threatens to shoot any lover of his wife. That does not stop her from claiming the same sexual freedom for herself, and to seduce – to take one example - the revolutionary Leo Trotsky, expelled by Stalin, when he finds refuge (1937-1939) at their house.

In November 1938 a New York gallery shows the first paintings by Frida Kahlo, the following year she travels to an exhibition in Paris, and in 1940 participates in the International Surrealist exhibition in her hometown.

In 1939 Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera divorced, but a year later remarried in San Francisco.

Although Frida Kahlo has to undergo several serious operations and cannot stand the pain without a bottle of brandy the day at times, she does not stop painting and teaching students. She also gets involved in politics, because she wants to contribute to the "fight of the people for freedom and peace".

On July 13, 1954, six days after her 47th birthday, she dies.

Excerpt: © Dieter Wunderlich , <http://www.dieterwunderlich.de/Kahlo.html>

## REVIEWS

Sylvia Camarda and Sascha Ley get surprisingly close to the heroine.

Always changing, always new, always surprising. Who is the dancer, who is the singer, who is the actress? The boundaries are blurred. (...) Sometimes there is also a tinge of absurdity. (...) At the end the songs are sad, the fight becomes a dance of death. And yet we see no victim, rather a strong *and* desperate woman. Even in these terms, the performance is incontestable. Strong. **Trierischer Volksfreund (D)**, *DIL*

A ribbon around a bomb - "Mi Frida" a dance theatre performance

The performance succeeds with humour and seriousness to immerse ourselves in the ambiguous world of this artist. (...) Composed of a set of small paintings, Mi Frida is more like a puzzle. In fact, each piece : dance, voice, singing, video projection, reading, testimony, light, music ... reflects a facet of this charismatic character. The interest of Frida Kahlo, to associate the macabre beauty, but also create extreme tensions between disability and intoxicating femininity is reflected accurately in this play. The sensual, intriguing and tortured artist is unveiled by Sascha Ley and Sylvia Camarda in a face to face with the pain, but also with herself and the audience (...) "Mi Frida" gives us a glimpse on this endless struggle with pain. (...) Without ever falling into caricature, Sascha Ley and Sylvia Camarda are able to translate the artist individual inner strength. A latent force that gradually comes to life, sparkling, then escaping with more or less violence, whether through a hesitant gait, spasms or larger and faster movements. Using the image of the duo as the two personalities becoming one and the same individual, Sascha Ley and Sylvia Camarda play on the duality of Frida Kahlo. **Luxemburger Wort (L)**, *Mireille Petitgênet*

Two women in one. A more than singular universe, completely recaptured in the course of an evening by Sascha Ley and Sylvia Camarda (...) A strange and disturbing reinterpretation, appropriate to that particular artist. Two women in one, both with a strong personality and a high fragility, constructed and deconstructed by identity transfers, in different bodies, drawing close to the artist's autobiography. A suite of obsessions, fears, frustrations in a maze of sets, accessories, and a large work image, video and interrelated testimonials; the audience is immersed in two worlds. A first world full of boundless joy and inspiration, and a second world: the loneliness, the margin and the difficulty to fit into a system, playful in an irreversible shift to fear, terror and aspiration in life and its calamities, contained in her self-portraits' metaphors. (...)

" Mi Frida " explores the complexities of life and an artistic entity, always in the eye of the storm and on the razor's edge. Passion, controversy and duality of soul and body (...) A performance, that leaves nobody indifferent. **Tageblatt (L)**, *Céline Agnes*

The reality of Frida Kahlo is depicted by Sascha Ley and Sylvia Camarda through their arts: singing, dancing, sounds, playing, to show her accident, her suffering, her love affairs - all part of her life. The mixture of arts and rhythms creates a magical harmony in a performance both tough and funny. Connoisseurs and curious, I recommend you see this show come and share this reality! **Grrrrr (F)** *Lucie Jeannot*