

five

January – February 2019

We <3 Tilda Swinton!

AW: Request: Tilda Swinton from ulli.koch@wuk.at
[REDACTED]

Gesendet: Di 08.05.2018 19:26

An: Ulli Koch

Dear Ulli,

Thank you kindly for thinking of Tilda, she was touched but I'm sorry to say that due to being over extended, she will be unable to do this. Please do accept her sincere thanks and apologies, with much love.

Best wishes,
[REDACTED]

Von: Ulli Koch

Gesendet: Montag, 07. Mai 2018 13:11

An: [REDACTED]

Betreff: Request: Tilda Swinton from ulli.koch@wuk.at

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to you with a slightly unusual request.

I work for a theatre in Vienna called WUK performing arts. The WUK is a 12,000-square-metre space of culture, workshops, and social gathering. It sits at the intersection between artistic practice, work, and political engagement. WUK offers a cultural space for contemplation, discussion, and exploration.

WUK performing arts showcases interdisciplinary formats that move between dance, theatre, performance, fine art, choreography, text and video. WUK performing arts has a reputation for risk-taking, for experiment, and for trust in the unknown. We

do co-productions, host guest performances and create formats specifically for WUK performing arts. The offer is for local and international artists to have the time, space, publicity and support to develop and realise their projects.

Our new artistic director Esther Holland-Merten has taken the approach of putting artists at the centre of everything we do. We are now publishing a brochure in which the artists can themselves write about their art, what they do, and why. The brochure is made available to our audiences free of charge.

Our question is, whether Tilda Swinton could write for us a short text – approx. 5,000 characters, including spaces – as some sort of introduction of herself and to her approach to performance and performing arts. We would be very honoured if that were possible.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me. I also can provide further information if needed.

Best regards,
Ulli Koch

Ulli Koch
WUK performing arts | PR & Marketing

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nur eine frage noch...

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(Veranstaltungs)orte

Der (Veranstaltungs)ort spielt eine wesentliche Rolle in unseren Projekten. Die räumliche Beziehung zwischen der spezifischen Architektur des Ortes und den Zuschauer_innen – wie sie sich zu dem Ort und zu unseren partizipatorischen Angeboten verhalten (oder eben nicht verhalten) – stellt ein genauso wichtiges Element des Events dar wie die Performer_innen und ihre Aktionen selbst. Wir entwickeln häufig Projekte für Orte und an Orten, die keine Theater sind. In der Vergangenheit waren das zum Beispiel ein authentischer Luftschutzkeller; eine Krypta unter einer Barockkirche (wobei wir zufällig auf ein Skelett aus dem 17. Jahrhundert gestoßen sind, das dort in einem Sarg lag); und ein modernistischer Büroturm in einem Vorort. Unser Ziel ist es, unheimliche, unbehagliche Atmosphären zu schaffen, die Zweifel provozieren und den Zuschauer_innen viel Raum lassen, um die Bedeutung der Performance zu erspüren und zu erfassen, für sich selbst und mit sich selbst.

Themen

Unsere Projekte drehen sich um Themen wie Individualismus, Selbstbestimmung und ihre Grenzen, die Politik von Raum und Ort, Konsument_innenkapitalismus und den Verfall des Wohl-

fahrtsstaates. Unsere Performances haben zwar einen ernsthaften Unterton, aber wir setzen immer auch Humor und Ironie ein; wir sind in der Lage, extrem sensible Themen (wie zum Beispiel Sterben und Tod in R.I.P. SERVICES) auf eine scheinbar „leichte“ und manchmal sogar amüsante Art und Weise anzusprechen. Wir leisten außerdem eine Menge Hintergrundarbeit – das heißt, wir recherchieren und tauchen in Populärliteratur und andere Materialien ein, die mit der Thematik des Projektes in Zusammenhang stehen, und führen Interviews mit Expert_innen – all das findet letztendlich auf die eine oder andere Weise seinen Weg in die Performance.

Name

In den Fragerunden im Anschluss an Diskussions-Panels bei Konferenzen, Künstler_innengesprächen usw. ist oft eine Person im Publikum, die mit dem scheinbar leicht dahingeworfenen Satz „nur eine Frage noch“ beginnt und damit eine facettenreiche Debatte lostritt, die stundenlang weitergehen könnte. Genau das ist unser Ziel bei onemorequestion – keine vorgefertigten Antworten zu liefern, sondern etwas zu entfachen, schwierige und unangenehme Fragen zu stellen, weitverbreitete Annahmen anzufechten und manchmal auch zu provozieren und auf etwas zu beharren.

Wir

Wir – Joonas Lahtinen, Luzie Stransky, Mikko Niemistö und Eero Erkamo – arbeiten seit 2014 als onemorequestion zusammen. Unsere Geschichte des gemeinsamen Entwickelns von Performance-Projekten in unterschiedlichen Formationen geht jedoch bis auf die frühen 2000er zurück. Jeder von uns ist außerdem in anderen Gruppen und/oder als Solo-Künstler_in aktiv. Wir alle kommen ursprünglich aus dem Theaterbereich – Schauspiel, Bühnenbild, Regie, Dramaturgie, Theorie – dennoch haben die Projekte von onemorequestion in unseren Augen mehr mit Performance und Installation zu tun als mit einem konventionellen Theater-Setting.

Warum

Aus Neugier; um schwierige Fragen zu stellen und mit ihnen umzugehen; aus Spaß daran, an verschiedenen Orten und mit verschiedenen Institutionen zu arbeiten; aus Angst um unsere globale und lokale Zukunft; um mit den Zuschauer_innen potentiell heterothematische Momente und Settings zu erschaffen; um dystopische und utopische Zukunftsszenarien zu entwickeln; in der (naiven?) Hoffnung, alternative Wege zu eröffnen, die Wirklichkeit und unsere Zukunft zu gestalten; in der Hoffnung, dass das, was wir anbieten, Funken sind, die, wie fragil sie auch sein mögen, eine gesellschaftliche Veränderung herbeiführen... all das fließt in unseren künstlerischen Arbeitsprozess und unsere Projekte ein.

onemorequestion ist ein finnisch-österreichisches Künstler_innenkollektiv unter der Leitung von Joonas Lahtinen. Die Produktion „R.I.P. SERVICES“ erlebte ihre Premiere 2016 beim URB 16 Festival in Helsinki und wird im Januar 2019 im WUK zum ersten Mal in Österreich gezeigt.

Circusy performance formats.

Arne Mannott and Elena Lydia Kreusch

We are frequently asked how we are actually organized and what exactly it is that we do. The answer is that the two of us manage an association which we use as a platform for various projects: We produce our own plays (and sometimes those of other artists as well), we curate, we advocate theoretical and practical artistic exchange, we organize feedback seminars and we are active in cultural politics and in European networks – mostly in the field of contemporary circus, but not exclusively. We both have a background in circus but also in dance and theatre and in the academic arena as well. In short: we ourselves like to create, but are simultaneously preoccupied with the conditions of creation.

We both came into contact with circus very early on, and we witnessed at first hand the development of the art form into novel manifestations. Our involvement with circus art and the quest for a contemporary form of the art probably relates back to two causes: first there is our work on different projects in the field of performing arts and hence our curiosity about transdisciplinary creation; and then there is also the deeply felt desire to rethink circus, to try to develop circus performance formats (and support them) which deal in a critical way with pure spectacle-based circus or with the unreflecting presentation of gender issues something we feel we've experienced all too often.

Thus we consider the changes currently taking place in the field of circus to be something positive. In our opinion the old can be rethought and transformed into something new and exciting without thereby discarding our roots entirely. Contemporary circus tries to preserve old techniques (acrobatics, juggling etc.) and to connect them with new approaches and other art forms (dance, performance, visual art etc.). There is space to bring out both personal stories and pressing social questions. In the same way as old techniques in theatre and dance can be used to throw up questions, to provoke or to take part in a dialogue, a long way from pure entertainment. It is only natural that in this process the setting too is subject to change: Contemporary circus productions obviously can take place as guest performances in theatres or at festivals and make use of well-tried production schemas and dramaturgical concepts.

Given the focus on circus at WUK - performing arts and the link to the European cooperation project circus re:searched, our hope is to stimulate these developments, to open up spaces and make contemporary circus art better known in Austria and in the German language area.

Arne Mannott and Elena Lydia Kreusch and their association Verein KreativKultur will be curating our focus on "contemporary circus" in January 2019 alongside WUK - performing arts. Within that framework they will be presenting a new production of their own show "Fallhöhe" ("Drop Height").

Sometime more, sometimes less dilettantish.

Blind Date in Collaboration with anulla

"It is not the typology of materials and artistic media which is decisive. Rather, the work builds on specific conceptions of the public arena, of relationships, communication, and politics. Essential in this context is the acknowledgement of differences and of the different and the understanding of diversity as a resource. Movement close to borders is important, the development of crossings. It is vital to uncover these borders, between that which is respectively ours and that belonging to the Other, the stranger; and to get to know them and to work with them. It is vital, too, to avoid over-hasty classifications. Maybe it is really about the acquisition of an "alienated view". And for certain all of the facets of interventionist and participatory practices revolve around a critical and differentiated way of dealing with power and fantasies of power - of the personal and collective kind." (*Putz-Plecko: 2004*)

Or, to put it another way: We believe in collaborations! That is the blind-date-principal.

Naturally this principal makes it complicated to describe the individuals involved (Alisa Beck, Klemens Kohlweis, Anna Lerchbaumer, Marie-Christin Rissinger, Frida Robles, Claudia Tondl, Konstantin Wolf, Andreas Zißler) - their artistic positions, their crafts and tools, the backgrounds and experiences which lurk behind that fusion that is "Blind date in Collaboration with anulla". But it is possible to formulate two basic convictions:

Anti-Valentines* Ball 2019

Sleeping Beauty* / La Belle* Au Bois Dormant
Denise Kottlett

On artistic practice. In the sense of a “conflict-rich participation” (Miessen: 2012) we understand collaboration (as opposed to cooperation) as a form of working together which permits the existence of different interests in a single place, or, more accurately: in a single project – because we are rarely all of us in one place. But we value work structures that take time to grow. We keep them running because we find them valuable – and because Skype is actually better than its reputation. At the same time we share the belief that it is vital to confront the hitherto unknown by constantly working with new partners – whether in the form of methods of working, languages, our view of the world or thematic interests. We see this as a prerequisite for challenging our own practices and keeping them alive.

On artistic medium. Maybe we are easily bored, maybe we are curious, maybe we like to do things for the first time, maybe we find it interesting to assume the role of the Outsider –whatever it is, our work always starts out with this question about content. Although we love to invent old / new formats and to test our abilities in different media in what is sometimes more , sometimes less dilettantish, the decision for example to found a made-up company, to develop an object theatre performance or to publish a publication is based on the question “What do we want (to recount, to enforce, to learn)?” In other words: “Which format is suitable for challenging existing positions on any given issue and for bringing about a re-appraisal of those positions – both for ourselves and for the audience as well?”

Sources: BARBARA PUTZ-PLECKO: Kooperation – Art as a potential space. In: Are they allowed to do that? Art as Social Space. Published by Stella Rollig, Eva Sturm, Turia + Kant, Vienna 2002 / MARKUS MIESEN: Nightmare Participation, Merve, Leipzig 2012

In January 2019 the **Union of Global Artificial Intelligence (U.G.A.I.)** which was founded by intelligent machines and systems will be inviting human beings for the first time in history to participate in their annual convention at WUK performing arts.

Following four successful Anti-Valentines* Balls, and thereby equipped with more knowledge and experience, the time seems ripe for a conceptual overhaul.

Since 2010 we have used, continuously, a film by John Waters as the “motto” for the Anti-Valentines* Ball, as a style guide for performers and our audiences, and also as a template for some of our performances.

But in 2018, in the light of the global strengthening of repressive, recidivist, and in many places fascistoid political systems, our approach – to use filmic satire and last century’s biting humour – no longer seems in solidarity, no longer contemporary.

Since its inception, the basis of the Anti Valentines* Ball – and indeed its name – has been the dissection of the concept of romantic love, implicit in which is the barring of women from access to their own sexuality and creative strength.

Romantic love is merely another commodity in a world full of commodities, and Valentines Day is the day when other commodities are traded for this commodity.

The ANTI in romANTic seems very apparent.

Are other forms of love, in undomesticated, non-pre-structured forms – as free and malleable as possible, and not exclusively limited to two people – in effect the living expression of communism within a capitalist system?

And from what materials is such love made, what are its properties, if they are not romantic? And how should it be celebrated?

The Anti-Valentines* Ball creates a queer-feminist* contemporary platform, narrated and formed by feminine* and suppressed perspectives, out of love for each other in its manifold forms.

To rediscover alternative narratives for love to the “normal.” To make space for other versions of love.

Painstakingly to peel away the scabs of centuries, letting love grow organically again.

Myths, sagas and fairy-tales are adapted over the centuries to dominant social systems, and have in the process been transformed into exceptionally physically threatening versions of themselves, opposed to love, ever so “natural.”

The fifth Anti-Valentines* Ball is therefore the start of a new series with the “submotto”: Fairy-tales – transformed and told from queer-feminist* perspectives.

Sleeping Beauty* (in German: Die Schöne* Die Im Walde Schlieft, French: La Belle* Au Bois Dormant, also known as Dornröschen and Maleficent) is a story about leave-taking, transformation and the awakening of consciousness.

The hosts* of this witches' sabbath will be fairies* and witches*, spirits and animals who inhabit the spaces of the forest.

The power relationships from the classical tale shall be revolved to suit our* wishes.

Darkness is our accomplice as we* shake off our own rigidity, made visible as performances, with music and with dance.

The Anti-Valentines* Ball conceives of itself as a safer space, one in which a coming-together of a variety of queer persons* and communities is intended to be possible. Everyone* interested in celebrating – and in not missing this party-time journey towards consciousness is invited to join the festivities.

Anti Valentines* Ball 2019: Sleeping Beauty*/ La Belle* Au Bois Dormant takes place from 9pm on February 16, 2019 at WUK performing arts/performance, show and party/detailed programme to be announced/please save the date!

Phantom Power.

Concert Performance as Exorcism

Camilla Milena Fehér und Sylvi Kretzschmar

Concerts are hard work. The product of sweat-inducing movement and cables soldered with your own hands. A machine of musical linkages is constructed on stage which seems always to contain a ghostly element. And it is never entirely clear if it is us controlling the things, or the things controlling us.

We slave away in an electrical field made up of instruments and instrumentalizations.

The older a synthesizer, the more capable it is of transporting us directly into the present. An analogue synthesizer has its own temperament, temperature dependencies, tempo variations. The sounds that it makes is not at any given moment 100% reproducible. They diverge. At every moment that we play, we must take account of these divergences: devotees of a machine we do not control. Unlike with digital samples, analogue synthesising takes place in the here and now of the musical performance. Our focus is to deliver live electronic music as performance: music via the means of performance.

Our first concert performance together as a duo took place in 2006 (UNDER CONSTRUCTION / WORKING TITLE: WORK) and was a musical reflection on the purpose of work in our lives, on our sense of being driven, on Fordist residue that sits there in our muscles, on the principals and rhythms of the factory in our

bodies and thoughts, on the uselessness and efficiency of that which we produce. Somewhere between routine and ritual ecstasy we engaged with our electronic instruments, with amplifiers, sound effect devices and sound machines. Like tools of work. At the same we sang our to-do-lists to the audience. With our very different artistic backgrounds (Camilla from the field of dance/choreography, and Sylvi from the field of conceptual performance, following her applied theatre studies degree) our meeting point was our desire to make music. We were wannabe-musicians in the best sense of the word and flung ourselves into our role as musicians – enthusiastic about punk and DIY. Beyond that we supervised all of the onstage technology – everything brought to bear on the performance – ourselves, and live onstage as performance itself, as part of the composition. The acoustically amplified interference noise from the lighting dimmer became a crucial musical element. In this first collaboration we transformed the stage into a factory which made nothing but music, which produced nothing but the choreography of the generation of music. The factory/building site became the content-related, musical and artistic principle of our work. And it has remained so to this day.

The stage as factory/building site is an improbable and temporary space in which it is possible to think WITH material, THROUGH material and IN material. The form of the concert allows us to construct a live thought space right there before the eyes and ears of the audience. Because the performance can at all times be perceived as a concert, it is dramaturgically independent of narrative rigour, dramatic or indeed essayistic logic. Everything can at all times be perceived simultaneously as a concert, even though the content starting point and the engine for the work both lie outside the music.

The impetus for our concert performances is usually a concrete political event (for example WELCOME TO HELL, named for the demonstration which took place at the 2017 G20 summit in Hamburg, and which was forcibly broken up by the police). Documentary material is both transformed and rendered alienated

using musical principles. By means of the musical intercutting of documentary video and audio, or again by transforming the text of interviews into songs, it is processed as pure concert and worked over. The starting points are always events which provoke in us a dual unease – on the one hand because, as past events, they spread some sort of phantom pain into the present, and on the other because there is a fundamental problem with their representability.

Phantom Power is a sound engineering term for the remote supply of signal sources with electrical voltage – for instance a microphone that is powered through the microphone cable itself. It's about overcoming distance; yet at the same time it's a transformation, a conversion. All artistically productive approaches to concrete documentary audio, visual or text material embody a conversion.

In his documentaries, his “factual films,” Dziga Vertov investigated principles for the anti-realistic composition of documentary material that sought to achieve not recognition but realisation. They aimed to be more production than representation. His theory of a creative approach to documentary material that targeted the „kinoki“ (the “film eye”) should not cause us to overlook the fact that his compositions were radically musical. If one looks at his work “Enthusiasm: Donbass Symphony” (1930) today, one recognises with astonishment a sort of anticipation of techno music in his avantgarde cutting together of factory scenes. We ourselves are equally fascinated by Vertov's sonic handling of documentary material, and by how the propagandistic intent of this film, and its disregard for the vulnerability and mortality of the human body, provoke a natural gas reflex.

This may explain why our musical practice in the handling of documentary material often consists more of form of exorcism than a form of knowledge production. The dictionary defines exorcism as “a conjuring out” and as direct communication with the unwelcome spirit, with the goal of freeing or reintegrating the possessed person. Certainly, it seems we need to assume the role

of musicians when on stage, in order to find ways to take on the burning issues of the day. As musicians we can behave as mediums. To make music for us is an act of driving out, a practice which allows us to open up a space in-between, a space of resonance in which that which is absent and that which cannot be represented both echo. Beneath the skin of images and beneath the skin of language.

Why my concert performances are so fucking good.

Otmar Wagner

1. Musical Socialisation

When I was a child, luckily, they didn't do Early Years Music – no singing dwarves, no dancing mice, no twanging cloudlets, no musical frog lessons. Instead we got cultural mash-up 70s-style: Mireille Mathieu and Nana Mouskouri on family TV of a Saturday night. And obviously also we got village brass – the “Youth Orchestra of the Königshofen Kolping Society.” In those days it wasn't so much “would you like to” or “could you?” Rather more: “You must” and “You are allowed to.” I was allowed to play the tenor horn, quite my parents' little offshoot. Good memories: year-end concerts featuring Johann Strauss and Beatles medleys, not to mention the Imperial Army March on Remembrance Day, played in front of the war memorial outside the village church to those who had fallen in the First and Second World Wars. Equally unforgettable – the singular smell of “Sidol,” which I employed before each performance to polish my tenor horn to its sparkling best. Much better than petrol.

Then of course there was also the twin-turntable record-player with built-in loudspeakers, and the accompanying amusing record collection of my parents: Slavko Avsenik & the Original Oberkrainer, the obligatory golden boy Heintje (Simons) (for me, the beaming exemplar and musical equivalent of the kid on the Ferrero Rocher children's chocolate box), but above all there were

Camilla Milena Fehér (Berlin) and **Sylvi Kretschmar** (Wien) are SKILLS. They make music by means of dance and performance and will be presenting the Austrian premiere of their new production “WELCOME TO HELL” as first-time guests of WUK performing arts in February 2019.

all those FORGETMENOT records and records from the TV show THE BIG PRIZE, eight deutschmarks a shot and two deutschmarks for “Aktion Sorgenkind” (a charity). Featuring hits by Roy Black, Alexandra, Wencke Myhre, Katja Ebstein, Freddy Quinn, Cindy & Bert, Rex Gildo, Tony Marshall, Peggy March and many more. The pick of the bunch was the 1975 release from THE BIG PRIZE. The first track featured Wim Thoelke commentating on a motor race with three separate finishes, on which one could place bets. Made possible by the existence of three separate record grooves interlaced with each other like snails – depending on which groove you lucked into with the needle at the start, you got a different race result.

My first real passion was reggae – and in my case the whole shebang: Roots Reggae by Dennis Brown and Black Uhuru, Dub-Reggae by Prince Far I, Mikey Dread und Dub Syndicate, Ras Michael & the Sons of Negus, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Burning Spear, Yellowman; and Psychedelic Dub by African Head Charge. That sort of stuff. We didn't smoke joints. Instead I drank apple wine and coke mixed with beer with my white male heterosexual mates. Thereafter came the usual: Supertramp, Gustav Mahler, Einstürzende Neubauten, Johann Sebastian Bach's cello suites, Sonic Youth, Zbigniew Penhersi, Toure Kunda, the opening of the first movement of Antonio Vivaldi's L'Inverno (op. 8, RV 297), Nine Inch Nails, 'Rut' by Nox (work at both 33 and 45 rpm), PJ Harvey, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Yma Sumac, 'Child in Time' by Deep Purple live in Osaka, Somei Satoh, the legendary drawing of breath by Mario del Monaco shortly before the end of the despairing aria 'Vesti la giubba' from the 'Pagliacci Performance' of 1961 in Tokyo, John Zorn, Chilly Gonzales. And then all that arty nonsense: La Monte Young, John Giorno's early stuff, John Cage's 'Mushrooms et Variationes' reading in Cologne, 'Fly' by Yoko Ono, Die tödliche Doris. Nowadays it's more: the humming of the refrigerator in my flat's kitchen, the whispering of electric pylons in the fields, scraps of long-distance conversation from outside on the pavement.

2. The Performative Production of Sounds

I developed an interest quite early on in the sound machines of baroque theatre (wind cylinders, thunder waggons, rain drums and so forth), and in mechanical and electro-mechanical sound objects – 'Fluxus' concerts, George Brecht's 'Drip Music', Milan Knizak's 'Broken Music', Tom Marioni's 'Piss Piece,' in the wayward process, both destructive and constructive, inherent in the relationship between body and object (= instrument). I dedicated whole lectures and one long performative night to the History of the Destruction of Guitars. I have developed pedal-powered record-players for my installations and performances, tape players coupled to my body, and a MIDI-driven sound system smashed up into its constituent buttons, switches and sensors. All of which was not so much about discovering an artistic style, as about my interest in Play.

3. Somewhere along the line, I started singing...

...that is to say, I began to develop texts and to work on texts – alien to song – by singing them. I was most inspired by Bruce Chatwin's description of the Aborigines and their “Songlines” – he describes how aboriginal peoples mark out their physical territory by means of song, whatever that may mean.

From this beginning evolved my idea of “TERRITORIES WHICH MUST BE SUNG”: my territories are texts, themes and utopian cartographies by means of which I think through my own self, or through which I place myself in thinking motion. They are not physical spaces but mental ones, “virtual” rooms. I stake them out, or rather: I incorporate them into myself by singing them, or indeed exorcise them in song.

In my essay and concert performances I have “exorcised” philosophical, political, sociological and military texts: Donna Haraway, Slavoj Žižek, the political defence guidelines of the German Army, Ludwig Feuerbach, the transhumanists, Friedrich Schlegel's differential principle, press releases from the German motorcar-manufacturing industry, Alexander Schuller, Jean

Baudrillard etc.. I do not need to sing Martin Heidegger, though: he sings in his own lectures when he speaks.

In the strictest sense it is not really about singing for me, but about transformation, pitiless corporealisation and aesthetification, and alongside those also about a fundamental artistic attitude: about a strategy of “WILFULNESS,” which I regard as more politically charged than an art which is expressly political.

4. So what exactly is a Concert Performance?

When I consciously engage with structures of song, or of the concert, I do it not as a musician, which I am not, but rather as a person recognising the plasticity of space. Frequently I will perceive a song that I've heard as a sculptural unfolding in time before my inner eyes, that is therefore as a form of a performative act, which might cautiously be compared with Roman Signer's or Paul Cealis' “little events.”

In this sense my songs have little immediately to do with musically harmonious work; rather, they are about working on a plastic-scenic event contained within a short unit of time. If I combine a series of these time units and compose them dramaturgically, then that is what I mean by a Concert Performance. That is different from theatre evenings or performance evenings that follow a story, a theme or a red thread. Then again, I also give myself the freedom to ignore the conventional templates for songs and concert recitals, even while making use of some of their aspects.

The song/concert structure allows me to think in the smallest, self-(en)closing units, both in terms of content and form. Each song for me is about the consolidation of a theme, a scenic moment, or a performative act. I'm interested in the field of tension between the repetitive structure of the song (melody, refrain) and its complement, that which relates to the “little event”: the tipping point of surprise, the sudden plot-twist, falling down, or over, or away.

If a concert is initially the sum of its self-(en)closing songs, it is also the case that its assembly is subject to an internal logic, one which for example is built from and frequently intuitively results from musical structures, scenic action, potential thematic relationships and so on.

What most interests me here is the associative bridge-building between the units, which can be imagined in a significantly freer and more radical way in a hypothetically assumed concert structure than it could for instance in the structure of a themed evening – it's often the case that something else is going on (a piece of text, of action) in between the songs in my Concert Performances, which initially perhaps appears to be a bridge, or an excursion, but which then itself suddenly mutates to be “song”.

At heart this is not for me about the performance or presentation of artistic virtuosity, but about working oneself to the death at a chosen form – that is, making space in the performative act for openness, fragility, contradictions. My term for this is “Professional Dilettantism.” And if someone tries to be funny about that, I respond merely that: THE ILLUSION OF PERFECTION IS A CONCERN OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, AND NOT OF ART.

Otmar Wagner was a guest performer at WUK in 2017 with his “Wunde Welt Zyklus” (Weary World Cycle), followed in 2018 by “Wunde Welt #Ende” (Weary World #TheEnd) and his sound installation “FORTUNA. Sport Kunst Politik” (FORTUNA. Sport, Art, Politics). In February 2019 you can catch him again in the WUK programme with a new work.

Theatre's Primordial Fear.

God's Entertainment

How come there is even such a thing as representational art? How come we have dance? How come theatre? How come it is not enough for us to witness, on the seven o'clock news, all the events which we will then pay good money to watch at eight o'clock in the theatre? How come we exchange reality for fiction? How come we prefer play death, play rape, staged choreography to military parades and shots fired in the trenches.

The answer lies in setting: we want to feel safe. We are safe in the theatre. Safe from reality's bombs, safe from violent criminals in the street, safe from all the hungry people out there. We sit in our nice safe bubble on seats arranged in rows, at a safe distance from the guy in front, in a carefully measured number of people permitted in a specific space. The ground will never crumble beneath us, the ceiling above our heads will never collapse. Everything's been figured out and approved by technicians and structural engineers, and declared to be right and proper, and important, by producers and dramaturges. It also tells us who we are. The top layer of society. There's no reason, really, to dip our toes in the darker water. We can afford, after all, to prefer the staged to the real. Then too, theatre journalists and dance critics also always stay safe in the theatre. Indeed they can only feel safe in the theatre. Were they to venture forth into the real world, they would come to a most unfortunate end, perishing rather rapidly and tragically. We

all know how it goes: that was nicely resolved, interestingly staged, well choreographed... we all know it goes. But as soon as a projects venture into the real, such well-formed criticism is dead. Has to die. And should. Because then the second level of meaning is suddenly missing, things are not nicely resolved, the play becomes politically incorrect. Too real all of a sudden. Why is a punch-up in real life never nicely resolved, but can be in a theatre? Why do people fuck in real life without seeking a second level of meaning? Why do performers get flowers at the end, or drinks tokens? For what accomplishment? For learning movements or text by heart? Theatre and reality will always be at war. Theatre's aim is to simulate reality for us, to act as moral apostle, and it fails – daily. Theatre will never understand reality because it does not want to. Because it can only handle the problems of the world if it's wearing silk gloves from the costumier's. So as not to get itself dirty. That is theatre's primordial fear.

Self-iconoclastic art for money as a superficial simulation of self-denunciation

Contemporary post-Christian* and post-psychoanalytical art – and media activity – always produce the same specific expectation in their recipients as to how truth should look. For that indeed is the cardinal question for every civilisation: how should truth look, so that the civilisation may recognise and accept this truth as truth? The hermeneutical information mechanism of western civilisation which seeks truth*** in every piece of information** in order to reassure the observer is subject to the conventional picture painted by the mass media, which is just itching to bring to light the truth of any regular transgressive-subversive everyday culture. The more shocking anything is, the bigger the hit. This western vision of the perverse laying bare of truth, without boundaries of shame, of what is private – for the fulfilment of our dirty fantasies and the affirmation of our sado-masochistic sensibilities – is not some Baudrillardian symbolic economy of the modern world (whose truth, viewed another way, is just a consumer

factory seen through the magnifying glass of globalisation). Rather, it is the West's incapacity to recognise of its own accord the truth and to accord it its own value. At the same time this is a media-driven war over a truth that is no truth, but merely a report of the truth – and what it should look like. Which of course in turn raises another question: to what extent is it important for us to make public the avowal of truth?

And based on what principles? In this respect, this “reporting on truth” is just hanging out on some corner prostituting itself for money, except that such prostitution requires the most advanced possible technologies and mediums of transmission be put at its disposal. In return, whatever is transmitted offers us continuous access to the continual documentation of a loose, aestheticized, everyday culture, which presents us in perpetuity with a sort of naked reality. Thus the reasoning of the media-consumer has reached the following point: the more remarkable and violent a given photo or video clip is, the more it corresponds to our interpretation of life. We should not forget, when it comes to representing the reality of a human existence, that our photographic or video material needs to carry the stamp of a documentary snapshot, so as to sharpen and make more personalised the awareness of the recipient. Like films “based on a true story.” In the light of our past and of the generation that has grown up with such material, we can no longer be either surprising or shocking. Especially when we consider the resources at the disposal of western contemporary art. It's important to point out here that when it comes to contemporary art, we are talking about “staged reality,” even when it is really taking place. This staged character is always present – in all practices of art. Where then does photographic or video material which corresponds with reality differ from staged material? Which is more shocking, or is in any way still shocking? Put another way, which do we prefer, which is more interesting to watch? The question remains open. Despite all the experimental possibilities, we have still not seen the emergence of a reality versus reality, life versus life – only video versus video, image versus image.

* post-inquisitorial

** whether on the internet, in TV shows or in the tabloid press

*** not scientific truth, or the truth of empirical description; rather a subjective truth.

Following the Austrian premiere of „Convakatory Konak” in 2018, **God's Entertainment** will be appearing again as a guest of WUK performing arts with their new production “New European Tragedy — Part III” in spring 2019.