

Johannes Müller / Philine Rinnert

AIDS FOLLIES

Music by Genoël von Lilienstern

24. – 27.05.2018 Sophiensaele Berlin, World premiere

February 2019 Theater Rampe, Stuttgart

Autumn 2019, brut Vienna



In their new project – AIDS FOLLIES – Johannes Müller/Philine Rinnert expand upon a hybrid form of musical theater combining documentary findings, new compositions and pop culture. The media’s repeated and periodic postmortem acquittal of legendary Patient Zero, Gaetan Dugas, is the point of departure for our examination of AIDS and its significance in the perpetuation of stereotypes and national front lines. The work began with international research that included conversations with contemporary witnesses, academics, doctors and activists. The assembled material ultimately culminates in a show that approximates the biography of a virus; the history of HIV encompasses not only “homosexuals” (the victims of a “gay plague”), the 1980s art scene and “Africans” (in a further indulgence of racist stereotypes), but also lesser-known factors such as a European colonial history in which burgeoning major cities and poor hygiene in administering forced vaccinations could have played a role. Contradictory theories, queer activism, medical polemics, political propaganda and projections of societal bogeymen are

components of this hybrid of lecture performance and revue, for which Genoël von Lilienstern contributed the songs. Von Lilienstern distills development phenomena from the cycle of the human immunodeficiency virus into harmonic experience and sets documentary artefacts to music while relating these factors to the musical findings of the research.



with Hauke Heumann, Valerie Renay, Shlomi Moto Wagner, Sirje Aleksandra Viise and Misha Cvijovic, Sabrina Ma, Beltane Ruiz

Direction and concept: Johannes Müller, Set design and concept: Philine Rinnert

Music composition: Genoël von Lilienstern, Music direction: Antoine Daurat

Video: Benjamin Krieg/ Phillip Hohenwarther

Research: Ngefor Akamangwa, Assistance: För Kunkel / Chris Gylee, Internship: Emily Grawitter, Press: björn&björn, Production management: ehrliche Arbeit – Freies Kulturbüro

A production by Johannes Müller / Philine Rinnert in coproduction with SOPHIENSÆLE Berlin, brut Wien and Theater Rampe Stuttgart. With funding from Kulturstiftung des Bundes and the Berlin Senate Chancellery for Cultural Affairs and Europe. This production was supported by the 2017 Frankfurt LAB residency program.

"Video, body art and dramatic scenes are interwoven with electro-acoustic compositions and songs by Genoel von Lilienstern. At times gloomy, spherical, experimental and sometimes humorous in quoting operetta- and musical-sounds. Rinnert and Müller are creating an overkill: Pictures, videos, music, performance and facts - the audience is bombarded without a break. The revue takes on a highly topical issue and it does it smartly. It shows it does not matter how and where the deadly virus first appeared: Everyone is affected, but today the virus is no longer taken seriously enough - the stereotypes are not gone today, they just changed. AIDS FOLLIES always finds original pictures for all of this." (*Nadine Kreuzahler, InfoRadio/RBB*)



„With a collage of video documents, conspiracy theories and eclectic sound and dance performances the director Johannes Müller created a dark hybrid of different theater genres. Aids Follies is not a light-hearted piece. The video segments and testimonies are really intense and seem to come out of a vintage X-Files episode. The musical numbers and weird laboratory performances make the whole piece a real history ride into the 80s and 90s. Between all the vintage fragments there are small glimpses into the situation of now: Statistics and facts proving that the HIV infections are rising in the last years, but also the hope for a vaccine and promising new treatments such as Prep. My favorite fragment was by far an enigmatic poem from the time of the Aids epidemic. Contrary to the otherwise quite brutal dissection of the history of the disease this part was truly intimate

and emotional for me. In the course of the piece gender and shapes seem to not matter less. The future is to become undetectable. Is it?" (*Claudio Rimmele, iheart Berlin*)

„Travelling in 4-D, back and forth through time and space, Aids Follies investigates instead of lecturing. It entertains instead of showcasing. Sound clippings of German commercials and American news of that era, original TV footage and quirky yet daunting compositions in French, English and German language heighten your senses and take you on a crazy trip through stigma wonderland. Half way through it I realized; it must be the boldest approach to HIV since Lady Di.“

(*Thorsten Schwick, Boner Magazine*)

