

FEATURING PLAYWRIGHT DULCINEA LANGFELDER

CENTAUR STAGE

Dulcinea Langfelder, the internationally acclaimed and award-winning multidisciplinary artist, explores the realm of dreams in the world premiere of her latest creation, *Pillow Talk*, an essay on dreaming. A spelunker of the unconscious, Dulcinea and her team sifted through more than one hundred of her own dreams, weaving together absurd, nostalgic, funny, and sexy stories to illustrate how dreams keep us sane through laughter, drama, horror, beauty and poetry. *Pillow Talk* contends that we are all artists when we dream!

CENTAUR STAGE: what was the first art form that turned you on?

DULCINEA LANGFELDER: At the co-op in Brooklyn, NY, where my mother still lives, there was a community room where dance classes were given by a certain Miss Ronnie. (I never knew her full name; I was 4 years old.) She taught us Martha Graham modern dance technique and I loved it. She had us perform for the neighbours on the lawn every spring, like Isadora Duncan's girls, and she gave me a love of movement that will never die. Later in life, I knew I wanted to tell stories as well as dance, so I studied mime with the master, Étienne Decroux, in Paris. I'm always quick to add that I'm not a mime. I'm in the closet and I won't come out until people stop making nasty jokes, like: how do you kill a mime? You have to use a silencer!

CS: who or what inspires you?

DI: Charlie Chaplin got under my skin. I hated it when people told me I reminded them of Chaplin- especially since I hardly knew his work and certainly didn't try to imitate him- until I saw myself on video! One of my most memorable dreams was about 40 years ago, when I dreamed he was my grandfather. I once did a very bad audition for Jacques Tati (France's version of Chaplin). He gave me a long speech about how to learn the trade and told me to go the airport, the park, the supermarket. I became a people watcher, which is where I get a lot of inspiration.

CS: how would you classify your work?

DI: everyone asks me to define what I do in terms of a discipline, everyone except my audience. During a performance it becomes obvious. The human imagination does not categorize; the proof is in the dreaming! We don't have speaking dreams, musical dreams or movement dreams. We don't have traditional dreams or experimental dreams. When we dream we mix everything up. What I do on stage simply reflects the normal functioning of the imagination. *Pillow Talk* is a multidisciplinary work for the stage. I'm proud to be among the pioneers of this approach, along with people like Robert Lepage, Michel Lemieux, Victor Pilon, and other Quebec artists that have made this kind of performance as prized as maple syrup around the world!

CS: You used your own dreams for this show. Can you describe the process?

DI: I've always paid attention to my dreams, writing them down when I could but it's so hard. At one point I bought a Dictaphone, thinking it might be easier. I'd mumble into the machine during the night, and then completely forget I'd done it. A few years ago, I listened to a huge collection of forgotten dreams and was struck by the tone of voice and richness of the material. It occurred to me that I had the makings for a piece, which I wrote without even trying (which is pretty cool). The hard part was finding a dramatic curve with these very incoherent texts! My closest colleague, Vincent Santes, and I listened to ALL of the dreams, sorting them into three large categories of human instincts: Survival ('performance anxiety' is the most frequent theme in dreams), Procreation (love, desire, family), and Spirituality (our place in the cosmos). Even my silliest dreams could fit into one of these categories. Through trial and (much) error, we staged each dream, like jigsaw puzzle pieces, trying to fit one to the other. Everyone on the team contributed to this challenging work. My intention is to encourage the audience to look forward to their own nightly adventures and to better appreciate the importance of the artist within us all.

CS: what prompted you to use animation?

DI: I love animation. I used to make 'flip books'. Several people helped me with the animation, which I like to do by myself but my expertise is limited. Benjamin Broche became my right arm, and as he came to understand the artistic direction of the work, he took on more and more. He can do a lot more sophisticated animation than I can and I came to trust his eye.

CS: what drew you to the subject of dreams?

DI: I was looking to discover something about dreaming itself, which is a subject we all know but know very little about. The piece isn't about me. I am a lab rat; using my own dreams to study this thing we all do and then forget. I gave up on trying to make sense of individual dreams; rather, my intention is to celebrate this fundamental creativity that we ALL are born with and develop throughout our lives ... lest we forget!