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For Immediate Release



Three Critically-Acclaimed, U.S. Premieres

"Freetown," "Othello (Bye Bye)" and "Answer Me," Highlight New York Return of Dood Paard

Presented by La Mama, Performances Take Place at the First Floor Theatre, November 28-December 9

Dood Paard, one of Holland's leading and spunkiest theater companies, will return to American shores, November 28-December 9, with three critically-acclaimed U.S. premieres —"Freetown," "Othello (bye bye)" and "Answer Me," each of which examines the dangers of xenophobia with great wit and imagination. Presented by La Mama, the plays, under the umbrella title "STOCK XENOPHOBIA," take place in the First Floor Theatre.

With a name that turns heads (Dood Paard translates to dead horse), the innovative Amsterdam-based company works as a collective with no director, stage manager, set designer or dramaturge; its members make all artistic decisions. Engagement is key to the company culture; sets are built on stage as each show unfolds, inviting the audience to visually engage in the process. All of its themes are drawn from issues of current concern, with xenophobia certainly one presently infecting cultures world-wide in obvious and subtle ways.

Rob de Graaf's award-winning play "Freetown" tells of three female European tourists who meet in Venus Beach, a West-African resort, in search of fun including a romp or two with a gorgeous dark-skinned African man available for a not-unreasonable price. For the vacationing women, the island is one of freedom and gorgeous scenery. Invisible to them, however, is the haunting poverty, oppression and despair suggested by the thousands of tin cans that litter the stage. What happens when one of the women naively decides to bring her African fling back to her own country? For her role in "Freetown," Dood Paard actress Lies Pauwels won the award for "Best Actress in a Theatre Production" from the Association of Dutch Theatres and Concert Halls, one of the highest honors in Dutch theater.

"Othello (bye-bye)," described as a "slap stick tragedy," is performed by two actors and a technician. The show plays loosely with Shakespeare's tragic tale, modernizing the action and demonstrating the contemporary relevance of the play's original themes of love, racism and jealousy. The multi-layered work takes place on a stage that evolves into a sailing ship and Pandora's box, constructed of loose wooden planks that progressively fall asunder.

The actors turn to the audience for responses in "Answer Me." In a bleak, faceless space that eerily suggests a jail, camp or constantly shifting place of confinement, semi-clothed performers hurl an endless series of questions at the audience before turning these questions onto one of their own. Throughout, words and thoughts run together, hang listlessly in the air or ricochet off each other, resulting in confusion, entrapment and eventually, a deeper understanding of what it feels like to be cornered, tortured and defenseless. Gerardjan Rijnders, acclaimed as one the most important playwrights and directors in the Netherlands, wrote the script, which Paul Evans translated into English.

MORE

PERFORMANCE TIMES

Freetown

November 28 at 7:30pm
November 29 at 7:30pm
November 30 at 7:30pm

Othello (Bye Bye)

December 1 at 7:30pm
December 2 at 2:30pm
and 7:30pm

December 4 at 7:30pm
December 5 at 7:30pm

December 6 at 7:30pm
December 7 at 7:30pm

Answer Me

December 8 at 7:30pm
December 9 at 2:30pm
and 7:30pm

Tickets are \$20, with student and seniors at \$15, and available by calling the La Mama box office at 212-475-7710 or online at LaMama.org. The First Floor Theatre at La Mama is located at 74A East 4th Street.

ABOUT THE COMPANY:

Lifted from a poem by the Dutch poet Gerrit Achterberg, the name Dood Paard (“Dead Horse,” in Dutch) embodies the double vision of the company itself: the darkness represented by death, in contrast with bright vitality and life represented by a horse. The group was founded in 1993 when its members were about to graduate from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Arnhem. Integral to its philosophy is a commitment to operate as a collective with no single voice of authority. Nearly two decades later that idea still reigns with company decisions still made through discussion among its members, which include actors, directors and technicians. At the heart and soul of Dood Paard’s work are the questions, which they are constantly asking themselves: What do we know; what is our situation; and what do we think? The company regards the world from a critical stance, but one infected with good humor and an optimistic belief that man’s intellect and creativity can transcend tragedy.

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Dood Paard’s “Stock Xenophobia” performances are supported by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York.

Front photo of “Freetown” by Sanne Peper.