

Saturday, November 10, 2018

Mount Olympus: To glorify the cult of tragedy (a 24-hour performance)

Company: Jan Fabre

Venue: NYU Skirball

Location: Manhattan, NY

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Belgian director Jan Fabre's monumental masterpiece, *Mount Olympus: To glorify the cult of tragedy* (a 24-hour performance), will have its North American premiere with a one-day-only performance at NYU Skirball from Saturday, November 10 at 5pm through Sunday, November 11 at 5 pm. This is the only chance for U.S. audiences to experience *Mount Olympus* - there are no other performances scheduled this year.

Mount Olympus is a graphic, Dionysian orgy of madness, murder and that invites audiences to join its 27 performers in a transformative, 24-hour catharsis. It is not a modernization of Greek tragedy, but rather a hallucinatory vision of Homeric themes and characters, blending dance, poetry, and music with stories of murder, bloody battles, rampant sexuality, death and raving madness. Jan Fabre takes the audience to the marrow of the tragedy.

Over the course of 24 hours, the Gods, heroes and demons of Greek mythology spring to life: Dionysus, Odysseus, Ulysses, Phaedra, Hercules, Jason, Agamemnon, Oedipus, Medea, Electra and Clytemnestra appear, wrenching open their flaws until they are left in tatters, smashed by violence, hubris, laughter and ecstasy.

Mount Olympus is performed without intermission, for 24 hours straight, allowing audiences and performers share a vivid, emotional connection. The outside world is shut out, and time plays a leading role. The performers wake and sleep on stage, and rest areas will be set up in the NYU Skirball lobbies for audience members who wish to nap. Coffee, food, yoga, Tarot readings, relaxation activities and other special events will be ongoing throughout the 24-hours.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for New Yorkers to experience a monumental and exhilarating work," said Jay Wegman, Director, NYU Skirball. "People who have been lucky enough to attend one of its rare international performances report a transformative, cathartic experience, unlike anything they have experienced before. We are thrilled to present its first and only North American performance."

Jan Fabre, acclaimed multidisciplinary artist and author, is known as one of the most innovative and versatile artists of his time, pushing the boundaries of art and performance. The body in all its forms has been the subject of his investigations from the early 80s to the present. Metamorphosis and the transition into another stage (through repetition) are two of his major themes. He makes a clean break with the conventions of contemporary theater by introducing the concept of 'real-time, real-action performance' - sometimes called 'living installations' - and explores radical choreographic possibilities in order to bring renewal to classical dance.

"*Mount Olympus* is set in a dreamlike landscape in which the alternately waking and sleeping performers act and dreams about their utopian desires, fears and visions," said Jan Fabre. "It is theater as a place to heal the wounds in our heads. Theater as a possibility for empathy to beauty and life. Theater as a weapon against the cynicism that pervades the outside world. Theater as a space in which we achieve ecstasy."

In the 1970s, Jan Fabre caused a sensation as a performance artist, shaking the foundations of the European theater establishment and received international attention with his large-scale exhibitions, including *Heaven of Delight* (2002), a fresco on the ceiling of the Mirror Room at the Royal Palace in Brussels made up of jewel-beetle wing cases. He was the first living artist to present his work at the Louvre, Paris, and was the first living artist to create a large-scale exhibition at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, in 2016.

Mount Olympus was conceived and directed by Jan Fabre, choreographed by Jan Fabre and performers, with music by Dag Tældeman and text by Jeroen Olyslaegers and Jan Fabre. www.mountolympus.be

TICKETS

Tickets range from \$75 - \$200 (\$200 tickets include meals), and can be purchased online at www.nyuskirball.org, by phone at 212.998.4941, or in person at the Box Office, Tuesday-Saturday, 12:00-6:00 P.M. NYU Skirball is located at 566 LaGuardia Place at Washington Square, New York, New York 10012. www.nyuskirball.org

ABOUT NYU SKIRBALL

NYU Skirball, located in the heart of Greenwich Village, is one of New York City's major presenters of international work, and has been the premier venue for cultural and performing arts events in lower Manhattan since 2003. The 800-seat theater, led by Director Jay Wegman, provides a home for internationally renowned artists, innovators and thinkers. NYU Skirball hosts over 300 events annually, from re-inventions of the classics to cutting-edge premieres, in genres ranging from dance, theater and performance arts to comedy, music and film.

NYU Skirball's unique partnership with New York University enables it to draw on the University's intellectual riches and resources to enhance its programming with dialogues, public forums and conversations with artists, philosophers, scientists, Nobel Laureates and journalists.

Jay Wegman is the Director of NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts. Prior to Skirball, he served as Director of the Abrons Art Center for ten years. During his tenure, Abrons was awarded various honors, including a 2014 OBIE Award for Innovative Excellence and a 2015 Bessie Award for Best Production. He was also a Fellow at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and for over a decade served as the first Canon for Liturgy and the Arts at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. He is the recipient of the 2015 FRANKY award for "making a long-term, extraordinary impact on contemporary theatre and performance in New York City." While not a performer, he has appeared in Brian Roger's film "Screamers" (2018), Sibyl Kempson's "12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens" (2017), and "Romper Room" (1969). Jay is a graduate of Yale University. www.nyuskirball.org.

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