

PRESS RELEASE | – SYMPHONY OF SILENCE – A SOLDIER RETURNS HOME

"... In other words, there is anything but silent in Pernille Gardes Symphony of Silence. The bullets whistles and the bombs are still exploding inside the head of the soldier. And this perverted show continues obviously. A brave and straightforward statement from a choreographer who has something important to say."

Dance performance about the consequences of war is coming on Tour

Denmark's participation in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has set focus on the consequences of war, not just on our society's self-image, but in particular on the human consequences. Soldiers return home with scars on their souls. This is the theme of Pernille Gardes narrative dance performance "Symphony of Silence– a soldier returning home".

Starring among other is award winning dancer and performer Bo Madvig.

We find ourselves in a hotel room. A soldier is trying to find peace and silence, but the senses are sharpened. The sound from the city penetrates him, including notes from a composer who insistently is working to create a new symphony. A cabaret dancer emerges from the dark, seductive and threatening. The soldier is overwhelmed by sounds and impressions. Memories from the trenches. Reality and dream melts together in intoxication, anxiety, nightmares and hallucinations. The soldier experiences the horrors of war with the cabaret dancer and composer; distorted bodies, a dying friend, bombs exploding and ice cold rain.

– "Symphony of Silence" is a show about losing control, grounding and identity when everything you know, is teared apart. The show might as well have been a story of today, but I have deliberately chosen to turn back in time and let a soldier with shell shock return home from World War I, says Pernille Garde and continues:

– The inspiration for the show came several years ago when I watched some old, rough and dusty footages of soldiers with shell shock from World War I. The physical tremors, tics and mental harm the soldiers had contracted made a powerful impression. The footages was shown without sounds and to watch so brutal images in complete silence made the experience even stronger. It happened then and it happens now ... I had to tell a story about that.

World War I became a turning point and a trauma for modern man. The world lost its innocence between chemical weapons, machine guns, barbed wire, an incredibly large number of bombs and strategically used trenches in a hopeless and disillusioned war. The soldiers were exposed to an unprecedented psychological pressure in the trenches. And for the first time in history thousands of soldiers returned home from war with serious mental problems. At that time the term was shell shock, today Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD.

During her research for the show Pernille Garde among other things spoke to a soldier who had been in Yugoslavia. He expressed his experiences as follows: "All normality is destroyed, it's surreal, extreme, a death experience and survival ... I'm not the same as I was before, I have basically become someone else."

- I tell stories through dance and in my performances there is often a concrete story to follow. The force of dance is that it can tell about things, we can hardly express with words. Dance can touch the audience in other ways than the spoken word and therefore a dance performance can be at least as intense and rewarding an experience as a Theater play, says Pernille Garde.

Also Weekendavisen review Majbrit Hjelmso featured the performance: "As the traumatized soldier Bo Madvig is incredibly good. Everything is readable in his emaciated face and tortured body. Anxiety, paranoia, nightmares, shell-shock. (...) The pathological precision uncovers Bo Madvig in the same bed scene both all the horrors of war and the mental damage that is indelible in the soldier's mind. "

ON & BEHIND THE STAGE – SYMPHONY OF SILENCE

Idea, choreography and staging Pernille Garde

Dancers and choreographic material Bo Madvig, Tiziana Fracchiolla and Alexandre Bourdat

Dramaturgic consultant Kristoffer Møller Hansen

Soundscape Great Music / Tin Soheili and Niklas Schak

Set and costume Julie Forchhammer

Lighting design Michael Breiner

Video Mikal Bing

Technician Jonas Corneliussen

PR Photos Natascha T. Rydvald / Freddy Tornberg

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Project Management Projektcentret i Dansens Hus/ Hanne Svejstrup og Jens Christian Jensen

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PERNILLE GARDE

Pernille Garde was born in 1973. She is educated at The Danish National School of Contemporary Dance 1995–1999 and has created a series of dance performances since, including About Brothers, A Wedding Night, Step into the darkness into the light, Unfold, Silent Flows the Night and Fall. She has received working grant from The Danish Arts Foundation in 2007 and was among the winners of the dancecompetition Dansolution in 2001 Dansescenen. www.pernillegarde.dk

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