PERFORMANCE PROSPECTUS

ANGÉLICA LIDDELL
Te haré invencible con mi derrota

OCT 6-7 & 9, 2011

Directed and Performed by Angélica Liddell

Lighting by Carlos Marquerie
Sound by Félix Magalhães
Lighting Technician: Octavio Gomez
Stage Manager: Carmen Menager
Production Assistant: Mamen Adeva
Music: Edward Elgar, Concerto for Cello, performed by Jacqueline Du Pré, and 13th Concerto for Two Instruments in Unison by François Couperin, performed by Jacqueline Du Pré and William Pleeth
Producer: Gumersindo Puche

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Note from OtB ............... 2
Program Note ............... 3
Beginner’s Guide ........... 4
6 Questions .................. 5
Bio .......................... 7
Funder Credits ............... 8
A NOTE FROM OTB

Angélica Liddell is a warrior artist. She sees the stage as a battlefield and employs any means necessary to make something beautiful out of difficult subjects, things most people would rather leave unsaid or unexamined. She describes personal pain and summons the spirit of a famous dead cellist for answers. A ritual unfolds – what she considers to be a séance of sorts – as she dialogues with Jacqueline du Pré.

She inflicts pain on herself so she can feel something since pleasure is too difficult to achieve. While her predecessors – Carolee Schneemann, Yoko Ono, Marina Abramovic and Chris Burden – channeled their disenchantment with society and life into similarly intense statements of protest and differentiation from the status quo, one cannot dismiss Angélica’s investigation because other artists mined similar territory. Hers is a personal statement that could not have possibly been made before. Obviously there isn’t much that is fashionable about putting oneself through such extreme measures. There is a common misconception that many artists partake in such acts on stage and in galleries, that they do so to be seen as sensational and radical, and that On the Boards presents a lot of such work. Many people call such work performance art. In reality, Angélica is a rare breed. Her North American debut in Seattle is probably the first show in 10 seasons at On the Boards that truly qualifies as performance art. It is difficult to go where Angélica goes.

In the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde provides good consul for nervous administrators putting challenging artwork before an audience. His single page of dictums makes a compelling case for the freedom of the artist and the ramifications of judging what an artist makes. In it he writes, “They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only beauty...No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything.”

Welcome to the world of Angélica Liddell.

**Sarah Wilke and Lane Czaplinski**

PS – Angélica has drawn comparisons to Diamanda Galas over the past week. Go to our blog to see a note from Diamanda herself praising du Pré and congratulating Angélica.
Jacqueline Du Pré died at the age of 42 after a long and difficult illness. I identified my own personal demise with Jacqueline’s. Sadness caused me to seek out complicity with the dead; fear of being excluded, as well as pain, led me to and made me seek out complicity with the dead. There was a moment in which I felt the need to communicate with Jacqueline, to talk with her; I wanted her to explain to me the terrifying conflict, embodied in her physicality, between matter and spirit. I did not want to talk with living people. The living had defrauded me, deceived me, terribly.

I recalled Cassavettes’ *Opening Night*, in which Gena Rowlands goes to a séance looking for hope, for an answer, for a bit of compassion that the living lack. That’s what I am looking for among the dead, an understanding of why I (who little by little have become a bundle of anxiety, of fear, of loneliness and of mistrust), why I (who doesn’t want to abandon life, but does want to die), why I continue living while Jacqueline does not.

Angélica Liddell
1. Angélica creates many of her works under the company name **Atra Bilis**. This comes from a Latin expression used in ancient medicine to describe the **black mood**, considered the cause of melancholy. Under these auspices she has written, performed and directed more than 20 original works.

2. One of Angélica’s performance trademarks involves **endurance**. This is most frequently expressed through states of intense physicality by way of a multitude of devices. In the interview for OtB, Angelica stated that: “...in the end, it is trying to transform pain into something beautiful. And I use every means possible.” In *Te haré invincible con mi derrota* this includes the use of beer and razorblades.

3. In Spain, Angélica has gained significant recognition for her writing since beginning to work in 1993. She’s won awards for everything from individual shows to her entire career. In addition to this she is also a noted performer, embodying intense personas and physicality onstage from characters of her own creation to weighty figures such as Richard III.

4. *Te haré invincible con mi derrota* is a performance that invokes the spirit of famed cellist Jacqueline du Pré. After achieving fame as a preternaturally gifted musician, Jacqueline passed away at the young age of 42. In OtB’s interview, Angélica offers that she identified her own spiritual demise at the same age with that of Jacqueline’s and chose her as a focus for this reason. You can read more about the life of Jacqueline in the controversial book *A Genius in the Family* or watch the film *Hilary and Jackie* (available on Netflix instant watch!). Here’s a clip from one of Jacqueline’s most famous concerts.

5. What does the title translate as? **I will make you invincible with my defeat.**
SIX QUESTIONS FOR
ANGELICA LIDDELL

--Ruth Wikler-Luker, Boom Arts

Why Jacqueline Du Pré? What about her story, persona, and/or music intrigued or inspired you in developing this piece?

Jacqueline Du Pré represents the terrible conflict between body and spirit, showing the brutal paradox of a body that triumphs over one’s will. One of the best cellists in the world dies due to a brutal illness at 42 years of age. I identified my own spiritual demise with Jacqueline’s demise. She died at the age of 42, the age in which my life blew up, the age in which I entered true adult life, alone, in which I couldn’t bear the idea of growing old, the idea of losing my youth, in which my body triumphed over my will, my body drew me away from love and pleasure, and towards a terrible anxiety, towards panic. I felt the same as Jackie, the same. And I used her as an interlocutor with hell, not from a hagiographic perspective, but from a supernatural, demented one.

What does it mean to you-- artistically, psychologically, physically-- to experience (and self-inflict) real pain onstage?

In this piece the artistic, the psychological, and the physical go hand in hand. In the end, it is trying to transform pain into something beautiful. And I use every means possible. The aesthetic choices are absolutely linked to a bestial necessity to place one’s suffering in front of another; yes, any aesthetic choice is connected to a base psychological mechanism, the necessity of the sick person to create a self-portrait, to examine his or her own pain, to observe him or herself like a rat, taking in each of his or her own movements.

In Te haré invencible… you interact with many objects, most notably a series of cellos lined up dramatically in the center of the stage. How did you find these objects and discover how to interact with them as you developed the work?

It was evident that the cello had to be present if Jackie was present, but I turned them into coffins, into objects where hate for worldly things, disgust for life, and terror could be discharged. I wanted the sounds that came out of those boxes to be as rough as existence itself. Faced with Elgar, when Elgar is playing, it becomes a concert against the cello.

In an interview with Spain’s El Mundo newspaper, you called your work “pornography of the soul.” Could you delve deeper into this concept? What does it mean about your relationship to your audience?

To speak of the human, we have to break the barrier of modesty. To muddy ourselves in awareness, in the human condition we have to undo ourselves from correctness, from the social pact. We have to work as if we are closing the door to our bedrooms and are alone. That’s pornography of the soul.
Te háré invencible… is a solo performance (not counting the ghost of Du Pré). You are currently developing a large-scale work with a massive cast including five Chinese acrobats. What’s it like to go from the intimacy of Te háré invencible… to such an enormous project?

However many people are onstage, I work from the same place, from intimacy. Intimacy doesn’t exactly mean being alone onstage, it means breaking with modesty as I described before, with 5 cellos, or 5 acrobats. The important part is the immodest revelation. Of course the rehearsals are very different, but the idea and the ultimate feeling are identical.

This is your US debut. How do you anticipate American audiences might react to this piece, and to your performance?

I have no idea.
Angélica Liddell was born in Figueres, Girona, in 1966. In 1993 she founded the Atra Bilis Theatre Company. Her plays have been translated into French, English, Romanian, Russian, and Portuguese. Liddell received the Casa de América innovative playwriting prize in 2003 for *La pasión anotada de Nubila Wahlheim* (*The Annotated Passion of Nubila Wahlheim*); the SGAE theatre award in 2004 for *Mi relación con la comida* (*My Relationship with Food*); the Ojo Crítico second millennium award in 2005 for her entire body of work; and the Notodo audience award for best show in 2007 for *Perro muerto en tintorería: los fuertes* (*Dog Dies in a Laundromat: The Strong*). Liddell was runner-up for the 2007 Lope de Vega award for Belgrado (*Belgrade*). In 2008 she received the Valle-Inclán award for *El año de Ricardo* (*Ricardo’s Year*). Her most recently produced Works are entitled *Te haré invencible con mi derrota* (*I Will Make You Invincible With My Demise*) and *La casa de la fuerza* (*The House of Force*); both are currently touring. In May 2011 Angélica Liddell premiered a new work entitled *Maldito sea el hombre que confía en el hombre: Un proyecto de alfabetización* (*Cursed be the Man who Trusts Another: A Literacy Project*).
Te haré invencible con mi derrota is a co-production of Citemor, Iaquinandi S.L. and Atra Bilis

Seasonal support for OtB is provided by

ARTSFUND

This production is sponsored by

THE PAUL G. ALLEN FAMILY foundation

real
RealNetworks Foundation

Te haré invencible con mi derrota photos by Susana Paiva