

Celebración de las Culturas de Iberoamérica

Grupo Krapp

Contemporary Dance Theater from Argentina

Thursday through Saturday, October 31 – November 2, 8 pm, 2002
The Roda Theatre at Berkeley Repertory Theatre

This presentation of Grupo Krapp is made possible with the support of the Friends of Cal Performances.

Cal Performances thanks the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
and the Zellerbach Family Fund for their generous support.

Cal Performances receives additional funding from the National Endowment for the Arts,
a federal agency that supports the visual, literary, and performing arts to benefit all Americans,
and the California Arts Council, a state agency.

No me besabas?

(Weren't you kissing me?)

Luciana Acuña, Luis Biasotto, and Gabriela Caretti, artistic direction and choreography

Performers

Luis Biasotto, Gabriela Caretti, Luciana Acuña,
Gabriel Almendros, Fernando Tur, Edgardo Castro

Agustina Sario, assistant
Cristian Parasole, wardrobe
Marcelo Álvarez, lighting design
Damián Desmarás, photography
Fun-da-men-tal, Compay Segundo, and Rosamel Araya, music
Mariana Tirante, production

INTERMISSION

Río Seco

(Dry River)

Luciana Acuña and Luis Biasotto, artistic direction
Luciana Acuña, Luis Biasotto, and Agustina Sario, choreography

Performers

Luciana Acuña, Gabriel Almendros, Luis Biasotto,
Edgardo Castro, Agustina Sario, Fernando Tur

Gabriel Almendros and Fernando Tur, music
Gabriel Caretti, assistant
Marcelo Álvarez, lighting design
Grupo Krapp, wardrobe
Ariel Vacaro, artwork
Mariana Tirante, production
José Luis Carracedo, Daniel Vergani, and Inés Sanguinetti, acknowledgements

No me besabas?

An exploration of the vast and varied subject of violence, *No me besabas?* is set to musical fragments from Argentinean singer-songwriter Rosamel Araya, renowned Cuban composer/musician Compay Segundo, and the England-based Iraqi group Fun-da-men-tal. The piece interweaves acrobatics, boxing, acting, and playwriting to display arresting physicality and a delightfully absurd sense of humor.

A striking series of vivid tableaux and a driving musical score of boleros, Cuban son, and techno-house rhythms set the tone for this piece. *No me besabas?* dramatically manipulates concepts of space, time, and movement to portray hypothetical aspects of what is characterized as a “violent” state of mind—such as desire, exhaustion, and love. The company creates an underworld of psychotic, yet hauntingly endearing Kafkaesque characters by exacerbating everyday circumstances and rituals with a deft theatricality and physicality comprised of body holds and slams that take contact improvisation to another, highly visceral level.

Río Seco

This piece premiered in Buenos Aires in the summer of 2002, and draws its inspiration from “images of family vacations in the mountainous rivers” of the Argentinean countryside. As one can infer from the title, *Río Seco* is anything but bucolic. Set to original music by Gabriel Almendros and Fernando Tur, *Río Seco* features rich imagery and heightened abstraction, which convey feelings of isolation, “otherness,” profound loneliness, marginalization, and desperation in a surreal environment. The dancers’ mechanical and brusque movements underscore this tense interplay of sensations, images, and actions that—ultimately—attest to the fragile condition of the human soul.

Grupo Krapp was created in 1995 by Luciana Acuña, Luis Biasotto, and Gabriela Caretti, three young choreographers who received their training at the prestigious Contemporary Dance Workshop of the National University of Córdoba. They also pursued studies in the Contemporary Dance Workshop of the San Martín Theater in Córdoba and at the Theater School of the National University of Córdoba. In 1999, Argentina’s Antorchas Foundation and National Arts Fund awarded individual dance and theater training grants to Acuña, Biasotto, and Caretti.

An ironic, corrosive sense of humor and intense, explosive energy rarely seen in Latin American contemporary dance are the distinguishing characteristics of this innovative, young Argentinean company. The ensemble’s nine members include critically acclaimed Argentinean actors and musicians Gabriel Almendros, Edgardo Castro, and Fernando Tur. Grupo Krapp is one of the very few companies in Argentina that works with the natural intersection between dance and theater, blending them into a new discipline. The company’s extremely physical corporal language, masterfully curated musical selections, and non-linear storylines deal primarily with difficult themes such as violence, seduction, desire, hypocrisy, and social norms and taboos, among others.

Grupo Krapp’s signature piece, *No me besabas?*, which is being presented as part of the company’s current North American debut tour, premiered at the Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas in November 2001. The piece was also selected to be featured in the “New Choreographers and Young Directors” showcase at the Teatro del Sur in Buenos Aires. This work has been presented at prestigious international festivals in Argentina, including the La Red de Promotores Culturales de Latinoamérica y el Caribe 10th Anniversary Festival; the Mercosur Festival in Córdoba; and the Third International Festival Buenos Aires. Grupo Krapp also premiered the piece in Uruguay at the international winter festival Enlace Montevideo.

Integral to the company’s mission are the ongoing theater, music, and dance workshops that its members conduct for students, youth, and adults throughout Argentina. Additionally, Grupo Krapp conducts an ongoing series of multidisciplinary workshops for youth in the low-income, disenfranchised sections of Buenos Aires.

Grupo Krapp recently received commissioning support from the Antorchas Foundation and Prodanza, a branch of the Ministry of Culture of Buenos Aires, to develop a new production scheduled to premiere in 2003.

November 2002 marks the company’s US debut, which is especially significant given that, in recent years, very few Argentinean music, theater, or dance companies have been able to tour the United States and present their work to American audiences. The exceptions are the very well-known, classic tango music and dance ensembles and ballet companies that have American arts managers and tour to the United States consistently once every two or three years. This has not been the case in the contemporary dance and music fields, where the most compelling interdisciplinary exploration and new work is occurring. These areas have been overlooked by presenters and producers in the United States until recently, when they realized these companies’

high level of artistry and potential to draw a broad cross-section of their Latino and non-Latino music, dance, and theater constituencies.

Grupo Krapp will present a two-part program of the works *No me besabas?* and *Río Seco*, as well as dance/theater improvisation workshops for intermediate and advanced students, during a three-week tour to venues in Berkeley, California (Cal Performances, in association with the Berkeley Repertory Theater), Santa Monica (Highways Performance Space), Austin, Texas (Dance Umbrella), and San Antonio, Texas (Carver Cultural Center).

Acknowledgements

The presentation of Grupo Krapp is one of a national series of such programs designed by the National Performance Network (NPN) to increase traffic and creative opportunities for contemporary, experimental performing artists of all cultural backgrounds in dance, music, theater, performance art, and puppetry. The NPN is an independently incorporated organization, originally founded by Dance Theater Workshop in cooperation with similarly dedicated arts organizations across the United States. The NPN is comprised of artists and arts organizations in 40 cities in 25 states across the country that play an important and innovative role in nurturing innovative work.

Performing Americas, a National Performance Network/La Red de Promotores Culturales de Latinoamérica y el Caribe/Arts International partnership, is a program designed and supported by Arts International to increase artistic exchanges in the western hemisphere. This partnership is made possible with major funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.