



KAIROS DANCE THEATER and RENAISSANCE MEN
PREMIERE “FOLKTALES, FABLES & FEASTS”
JUNE 24 & 25

A collaboration between the modern dance and vocal groups, in collaboration with the Sound Icon orchestra, the evening mines a century of music and morality tales.

“Fables are a reflection of what’s going on at the time they’re written. We’re giving these still-relevant stories a contemporary spin.” – DeAnna Pellecchia

MAY 17, 2023 – **KAIROS Dance Theater** continues its tradition of intriguing inspirations and collaborations this summer with the premiere of “Folktales, Fables & Feasts,” an evening of dance and live music co-presented with Boston vocalists **Renaissance Men**, in collaboration with the 20-piece **Sound Icon** orchestra. The ambitious performance, a cabaret-style mix of music, song and dance with nearly 40 onstage performers, runs June 24 and 25, 7:30 pm, at the BU Tsai Performance Center at 685 Commonwealth Ave in Boston. Tickets and information at kairosdancetheater.org.

The multi-part evening boasts myriad inspirations from the last century. The opera-ballet “Foxy” is a take on Igor Stravinsky’s 1922 comic opera, *Renard*. **KAIROS Artistic Director DeAnna Pellecchia**’s playful athletic choreography puts a cabaret spin on the Russian farmyard fable of a fox, Reynard, who tries to devour a chicken but is thwarted by a cat and a ram. With the original *Renard*, Stravinsky strived for a new type of hybrid entertainment, including an orchestra supplemented by singers.

Pellecchia’s work with Renaissance Men **Artistic Director Eric Christopher Perry**, aims similarly for a mold-breaking evening of performance. Pellecchia says “Foxy” evokes the timelessness of the *Renard* story, with a contemporary lens on the original’s nod to a 1920s Russia divided by religious, military and social strife. “Fables are a reflection of what’s going on at the time they’re written,” she says. “It’s uncanny how much hasn’t changed in 100

years...war, political discourse and more. We're taking these sadly still-relevant issues from the last century and giving them a contemporary spin."

Renaissance Men had sung in a work Pellecchia choreographed several years before and was impressed by her embrace of traditional music formats and physicality. "It was remarkable to us to see DeAnna take an opera and make it more accessible to audiences," Perry says. "In fully gesturing the music, I think it brings the singing into a fuller light. We loved her work."

Later, when Perry and the Renaissance Men were looking to expand their repertoire and considered the Stravinsky work for its inventive use of voices as instruments, he reached out to Pellecchia. "Working with KAIROS heightened our experience as an ensemble," he says. "It has opened our eyes to the fresh possibilities of working with new collaborators."

Further embracing the cabaret aesthetic for "Folktales, Fables & Feasts," KAIROS's bawdy premiere "Tavernous" remixes the drinking songs section from **Carl Orff's** 1936 *Carmina Burana*, "In Taberna," in which tipsy characters explore the pleasures of gluttony and excess in vignettes that approach the theme of fame meeting fortune. "Tavernous" dances range from besotted solos and duets performed to solo voice, to an eight-dancer performance ("The Revelers") accompanied by seven Renaissance Men voices.

The Sound Icon orchestra is a Boston-based sinfonietta committed to performing significant progressive works of the past few decades. Perry jokingly says **Artistic Director and Conductor Jeffrey Mean** "geeked out" at the idea of revisiting Stravinsky's *Renard*. Sound Icon's ensemble for "Folktales, Fables & Feasts" will comprise 20 players.

Additional performances include KAIROS dancers moving to contemporary music by the Grammy-nominated cellist **Dave Eggar** (who wrote a piece specifically for KAIROS) and performing an earlier, never-before-seen work by Pellecchia called "Seagulls and Phoenixes." Renaissance Men sing a four-voice arrangement of Mozart's comic-opera overture to *The Magic Flute*, and a montage of French and Irish Drinking songs. A performance by guest dance artist **Stuart Meyers** centers gender identity and fluidity.

"This performance is a nice representation of all the things KAIROS does well," Pellecchia says. "I wanted to create a merry performance...there's not a lot of opportunity to just be silly and funny. Stravinsky wanted fun and accessible entertainment with *Renard*...that's what we're going for."

The strive for accessibility is reflected in ticket prices for "Folktales Fables & Feasts," which range from \$5-60 and are available through kairosdancetheater.org. Performances are June 24 and 25 at 7:30 at the BU Tsai Performance Center, 685 Commonwealth Ave in Boston.

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MEDIA CONTACT: For advance information about "Folktales Fables & Feasts," as well as photos, interviews with collaborators and media tickets for the show, contact John Michael Kennedy, jmk@jmkpr.com, 781-620-1761 (o), 212-842-1752 (m/t).