



WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS

2022/23 SEASON THE WORLD IN OUR CITY



50 Years

MUMMENSCHANZ

SATURDAY, OCT. 22, 8 p.m.

LISNER AUDITORIUM



WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS

2022/23 SEASON

THE WORLD IN OUR CITY

Start A New Holiday Tradition!

Celebrate the festivity of the season with exuberant events that are fun for the whole family.



NORWEGIAN CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Nov. 28 at 5 p.m. • Union Station

This beloved holiday event kicks off the holiday season with festive music, special guests, and the lighting of the magnificent Norwegian Christmas Tree at Union Station. No tickets required. Event is free and open to the public.

Special thanks: Mars, Incorporated, Jacqueline Badger Mars, Royal Norwegian Embassy



TENTHING BRASS ENSEMBLE

Tine Thing Helseth, trumpet & founder

Nov. 29 at 8 p.m. • Sixth & I

Enjoy a sizzling, toe-tapping start to your holiday season with the energetic sound of the internationally acclaimed 10-piece, all-female brass band, tenThing. Tickets and information at WashingtonPerformingArts.org.

Special thanks: Her Excellency Ambassador Anniken R. Krutnes, Ambassador of Norway



Season of Hope

THE U.S. AIR FORCE BAND

Guest Artists: The Children of the Gospel Choir

Dec. 10 at 3 p.m. & 7 p.m. • Dec. 11 at 3 p.m.

DAR Constitution Hall

With Washington Performing Arts's own Children of the Gospel Choir, The U.S. Air Force Band is excited to return to DAR Constitution Hall to present "Season of Hope," an annual holiday concert tradition. Free tickets available at WashingtonPerformingArts.org.

Special thanks: Jacqueline Badger Mars and Mars, Incorporated, the Edith Glick Shoolman Children's Foundation, Susan S. Angell

TICKETS AND INFORMATION:

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WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS WELCOME

Welcome to Mummenschanz, on the auspicious occasion of the company's 50th anniversary! I'm so glad you're here.

It's been quite a long time since I've seen Mummenschanz, so I am quite excited about tonight. As a child, I was captivated by the television ads for New York-area performances of Mummenschanz, and by the performances which bore no resemblance to anything I'd ever seen on a stage. Even then, the uniqueness of the art form was unforgettable. In my mind, it was a perfect blend of puppetry, dance, evocations of Picasso, and visual lyricism that played with perception. At a time when the differences between art forms seemed so delineated, the fluidity and uncategorized quality of Mummenschanz made an impact upon my very young self.

Fast-forwarding to the present day, I freely confess that during the early months of the pandemic I enacted a few "Mummenschanz moments" at home as my family and I, perhaps like nearly everyone here this evening, made frenzied efforts to gather a great deal of toilet paper when supplies dwindled. Belly laughs were rare in March and April of 2020, and I remember our antics pretty vividly, and might chuckle during tonight's performance for that reason.

The arts always have the potential to surprise and transform us, weaving history, humor, beauty, and joy together in unique ways and at unexpected moments. Certainly, this is the case with Mummenschanz, for people of every age. I'm so glad that you have joined us tonight.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Bilfield', written in a cursive style.

Jenny Bilfield, President and CEO



WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS

Jenny Bilfield, President & CEO

Presents

50 Years

MUMMENSCHANZ

SATURDAY, OCT. 22, 8 p.m.

LISNER AUDITORIUM

This performance is made possible through the generous support of Lyn and Barry Chasen. His Excellency Ambassador Jacques Pitteloud, Ambassador of Switzerland, is the honorary patron of this engagement.

This is one of twenty 2022/23 season performances included in Washington Performing Arts's The World in Our City initiative, which promotes cross-cultural understanding and cultural diplomacy via the presentation of international visiting artists, globally inspired local programming, and the award-winning Embassy Adoption Program, a partnership with D.C. Public Schools.

Special thanks to the following lead supporters of Washington Performing Arts's mission-driven work: Jacqueline Badger Mars and Mars, Incorporated; the National Capital Arts and Cultural Affairs Program and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts; D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities; and the Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts.

MARS



ART THAT REMINDS US OF OUR HUMANITY

In a world filled with overstimulation and 12-second attention spans, the brilliantly strange simplicity and imagination of Mummenschanz is balm for the soul. The troupe's inventive, often poignant, and humorous non-verbal sketches garner attention from and appeal to all generations. The company was founded in Paris in 1972 by Bernie Schürch, Andres Bossard and Floriana Frassetto. Floriana Frassetto is now the company's artistic director and the sole remaining active founding member. Today, the group consists of seven performers who appear on stage in different combinations. There is no pretension in Mummenschanz's work or artistic philosophy. They're just brilliant people doing wonderfully wacky things that speak to a full range of human emotion and curiosity. Their skits are novel and engaging, and remind us that no matter our differences in age, culture, language or otherwise, we are all part of a universal human family.

For its 50th anniversary production, Floriana Frassetto has devised a show that takes audiences on a journey through beloved sketches from the foundation's repertoire. Tonight we'll experience the troupe's legendary characters such as the Clay Masks and the Toilet Paper Faces. We will see the delicate air-filled Giants, the Pipe Creature and plenty of other bizarre objects and shapes brought to life. The show also includes new sketches with surprising forms and characters that capture the signature Mummenschanz spirit. Sit back and get ready to laugh through this fantastical journey into the world of Mummenschanz.



ABOUT MUMMENSCHANZ

Mummenschanz has enchanted audiences worldwide with its poetic non-verbal performances for half a century.

The company was founded in Paris in 1972 by Bernie Schürch, Andres Bossard and Floriana Frassetto. Floriana Frassetto is now the

company's artistic director and the sole remaining active founding member. Today, the group consists of seven performers who appear on stage in different combinations.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Floriana Frassetto

Floriana Frassetto studied at Academia Alessandro Fersen in Rome from 1967 to 1969. She completed her training as an actress while attending a school for mime and acrobatics at Roy Bosier's Teatro Studio. She then worked with the company of Roy Bosier in several school productions that toured Italy. The idea of founding MUMMENSCHANZ resulted from meeting, in late 1970, Andres Bossard and Bernie Schürch – two young Swiss clowns called "Before and Lost" that performed a partially spoken show. Floriana became the third member of the new company in 1972 and together they co-created the repertoire of MUMMENSCHANZ, converting the spoken numbers to masked visuals. Floriana has performed on tour worldwide for the last 47 years. She feels herself an artisan of fantasy and has always been motivated to construct new shapes along with Bernie. Since Bernie's departure

in 2012 she has been tormented by the challenge of creating a new show, which she has now done with plenty of new ideas. That has been possible thanks to the collaboration with Tina Kronis and Richard Alger. Other notable experiences include the choreography and the costumes for Giancarlo Sbragia's *Faust* and André Heller's musical *Body and Soul*, and an artistic collaboration with Isabelle Baudet for the children musical *Oliver Twist* in Lausanne (Switzerland). She is the artistic director of MUMMENSCHANZ.

Tess Burla

Tess Burla was born in 1981 and grew up in Murten, Switzerland. After completing her studies in Psychomotor Therapy, she trained as a dancer in Barcelona and Berlin. In 2009, she completed a master's in dance education at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). She has been a member of Cie Chapeau (and formerly Paula fliegt) since 2015. She gained experience working

with Marcel Leemann, and as part of Brigitta Schrepfer's Somafon, human kinetics movements arts, and Collectif de Marchepied. Burla works as a freelance dancer and is a founding member of cie deux plus. In addition to dance performances in collaboration with live musicians (Simone Abplanalp and Ursula Hofmann), she also made an appearance as part of the clown duo Nasva and Ravu in 2018. Her journey with MUMMENSCHANZ began in 2019.

Sarah Lerch

Sarah Lerch was born in 1983 and grew up in Bern, Switzerland. She studied acting at the Accademia Teatro Dimitri before going on to create her own dance and theater productions. From 2009 to 2011, she toured throughout Europe with the Czech company Continuo Theatre. She then returned to Switzerland and completed a master's degree in Physical Theatre at the ATD. She is a two-time winner of the Migros Kulturprozent competition and a member of the Swiss Study Foundation. In 2014, she co-founded the international company Wakouwa Teatro and gave birth to a baby boy. She is a versatile performer and choreographer working on a variety of major stage projects, with collaborators such as Volker Hesse, and regularly teaches acrobatics and aerial silks. From 2019 to 2020, she was co-director of the Theaterzirkus Wunderplunder with Kevin Blaser. Sarah joined MUMMENSCHANZ in 2021 for its 50th anniversary production.

Kevin Blaser

Kevin Blaser (Swiss), born in 1990, is a young artist from Ticino. In his early age he showed a strong interest in movement and art. He stood out in gymnastics and in skateboarding in which he found a companion with whom he travels the world. Passionate about music, he perfected his skills in percussion and drums, with which he continues to play in various bands. Through theatre he discovered the means for full expression of himself and entered the school for physical theatre Accademia Teatro Dimitri, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in 2015. He played in different theatre and cinema productions as "Gilgamesh" (from Patrizia Barbuiani), "Gotthard 2016" (from Volker Hesse), "Tutti Giù" (from Niccolò Castelli). In July 2016 he started his journey with the MUMMENSCHANZ company.

Manuel Schunter

Manuel Schunter was born in Munich (Germany) in 1985 and has lived primarily in Switzerland since 2007. He completed a bachelor's degree in Physical Theatre at the Accademia Teatro Dimitri and a master's degree in Expanded Theatre at the Bern University of the Arts. He has since given numerous performances and toured as a clown in the world of circus and vaudeville (with Circus Monti, Circus Roncalli, Das Zelt, Circus Sarrasani and at Circus Knie's centenary celebrations, among others). He was a permanent ensemble member with the Theater Madame Bissegger and

the Origen Festival. Manuel's theater engagements have included performances with the Stadttheater Freiburg, LAC Lugano, and Espace Nuithonie. Besides his activities as a performer, he also directs various stage productions and lectures at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. Manuel has been a member of MUMMENSCHANZ since the summer of 2022.

Eric Sauge

Eric Sauge (Swiss) is the Technical Director of the company. With more than 10 years of experience in the entertainment business, he now specializes in lighting and machinery effects. Employment by large organizations provided him with world-wide travel. Through his experience and many trips abroad he acquired solid knowledge in technical and team management. Back in Switzerland he continued to train in the field of lighting for events such as theater and television, in which he mainly occupied the roles of console operator and project manager. In 2014 he met MUMMENSCHANZ in Lausanne, and wishing to return to the theatre scene, he joined them as their Technical Director.

ABOUT WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for more than half a century with artists, audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: for decades, in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we have presented a tremendous range of artists and art forms, from the most distinguished symphony orchestras to both renowned and emerging artists in classical music, gospel music, jazz, international genres, and more. Washington Performing Arts also has an ever-expanding artistic and educational presence on the internet, addressing the programming challenges of this time of pandemic while envisioning ongoing opportunities for online connection and community in a post-COVID world.

Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts

institutions. Through events online and in a myriad of performance venues and neighborhoods, Washington Performing Arts engages international visiting artists in community programs and introduces local artists to wider audiences. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through residencies and education programs.

For its achievements, Washington Performing Arts has been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with three Mayor's Arts Awards from the D.C. Government. We have now embarked upon our second half-century, ever inspired by the motto of our founder, Patrick Hayes: "Everybody in, nobody out."

For more information, please visit washingtonperformingarts.org.

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