

Dance theatre classic "Swan Lake" turned into hauntingly imaginative story for modern times (with photos)

The dance theatre production "Swan Lake/Loch na hEala" will be staged in the New Vision Arts Festival (NVAF) this month at the Kwai Tsing Theatre.

A depression sufferer was shot dead in Ireland during a stand-off with the police in 2000, prompting a widespread public outcry. Deeply touched by the incident, acclaimed Irish choreographer Michael Keegan-Dolan turned the classic "Swan Lake" traditions into a story for modern times.

Drawn by this case and other stories of people on the margins of society, Keegan-Dolan brought together the Irish myths of "Children of Lir", magical realism and dark desolation to turn "Swan Lake" traditions into a ferocious, heart-rending reinvention. A depression sufferer replaces the prince while the cursed swans are silent victims of sexual abuse. Alongside such weighty themes and a searing original score, flashes of light and life shine through, taking viewers on a roller-coaster quest to transcend fate and find the redemption made possible through love.

Performed by Teac Damsa of Ireland, "Swan Lake/Loch na hEala" features live music by Slow Moving Clouds and the contributions of an array of artists such as set designer Sabine Dargent, costume designer Hyemi Shin, lighting designer Adam Silverman and performers including Elizabeth Cameron Dalman, Zen Jefferson, Anna Kaszuba, Alex Leonhartsberger, Mikel Murfi, Erik Nevin, Keir Patrick, Rachel Poirier and Carys Staton. The production won the National Dance Award for Best Modern Choreography and Irish Times Theatre Awards for Best Production and Costume Design.

"Swan Lake/Loch na hEala" (in English with Chinese surtitles) is one of the programmes of the NVAF. It will be performed at 8pm on November 16 and 17 and at 3pm on November 18 at the Kwai Tsing Theatre Auditorium, with a meet-the-artist session to be held after the performance on November 16. Tickets priced from \$160 to \$420 are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). For credit card telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999.

Organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the NVAF is celebrating its ninth edition this year and is being held from October 19 to November 18. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2370 1044 or visit www.newvisionfestival.gov.hk.

"Swan Lake/Loch na hEala" is a co-production by Michael Keegan-Dolan; Sadler's Wells Theatre London; Colours International Dance Festival, Theaterhaus Stuttgart; Dublin Theatre Festival; and Theatre de la Ville, Luxembourg. International touring is supported by Culture Ireland.

