

[Skriv her]

SUNNIVA NOW



Sunniva

- the only female Saint in Norway, and the first boat refugee.

The folk dance performance «Sunniva now» is based on the legend of Sunniva, the Irish Saint.

In the ninth century, as the national state of Norway was about to emerge, the legend of Sunniva was born. As daughter of a king and as a good Christian she fled to avoid marriage to a viking. She went aboard with fellow believers, not knowing where the boat would drift, and ended up at the coast of Norway, in the island of Selja. The inhabitants were suspicious of Sunniva and her people. This finally led to her death, followed by her sanctifying.

Sunniva now is an interactive performance of Norwegian folk music and dance, highly relevant to modern life. The production challenges the limits/borders between stage and auditorium and enables the audience to experience dance and music at close range. The performance reflects upon the legend of St. Sunniva. The Norwegian version of the better known legend of Ursula, it stretches back to the Middle Ages when Norway converted from Paganism to Catholicism.

Duration: 50 min

[Skriv her]

70-100 audience members per performance

Target group: Aged 13 upwards

Performers: Gro Marie Svidal, Silje Risdal Liahagen, Vetle Springgard, Martin Myhr.

Stage director: Mette Brantzeg

Music composer: Gro Marie Svidal

Scenographer: Erik Annar Evensen

Light designer: Atle Øydvin

The ensemble offers a **free interpretation of the legends**, addressing the many modern-day issues paralleled by the legend of St. Sunniva. Questions **concerning** fanaticism, faith / doubt, use of force and interpersonal relationships are discussed. St. Sunniva's boat journey from Ireland to Norway put her life at risk, as do the journeys of thousands of people, who try to cross the Mediterranean ~~is striking~~. The same can be said of her martyrdom and the act of sacrificing your life for your faith. In the Middle Ages, the clergy and the monarchy deliberately used the fictional story of St. Sunniva as propaganda in order to unite Norway around one king and one religion. Propaganda and questions regarding the truth of the media are highly present and relevant nowadays...

About the production:

The performance is based upon the boat journey and looks both backwards and forwards throughout the course of history. The audience will be silently guided by the professional performers into the action and led around the room in roles as if they were living scenography. The professional performers will be completely responsible for the performance and the action will be expressed through their artistic communication.

The ensemble will facilitate deep, tactile experiences within the audience, and the contemporary aspect of the historic material will be reflected upon. As a consequence of the interaction with the audience, a meeting will arise between professional and amateur folk dance. No prior knowledge of dance is required of the audience members.

The ensemble will explore, and play with, the rhythmic variations of Norwegian folk dance, formations and steps. The music is newly composed and builds upon stylistic ideals of folk music.

More Background

The Legend of St. Sunniva:

Sunniva was a pious Irish princess who refused to marry a certain heathen suitor. Instead, she and her followers set out in three ships, without oar or sail, to land at Selja, an island to the west of Norway, where they lived in a cave. After a while, the local people, logically assuming that the cave-dwellers could be the cause of a spate of recently-missing sheep, appealed to the king, Håkon Jarl, a heathen, to kill Sunniva and her followers. Sunniva and her people drew further back into the cave and prayed to God that they should never be taken, whereupon the slate roof of the cave collapsed, and they never were found.

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Later, strange things began to happen at Selja. In the year 996, King Olav Tryggvason arrived at Selja and found Sunniva intact and unharmed. She was immediately declared a source of miracles, and became a saint.

A religious centre of power was formed on Selja. One of the first churches in Norway was set up here, the first diocese was placed on the island, and pilgrims crossed from far and wide.

The performers:

Silje Risdal Liahagen (dance) is one of Norway's foremost young traditional couple-dancers and singers. She has graduated from the Bårdar academy in Oslo studying musical and dance. She has worked as an actress in different stage performances, and is a singer in the well known Norwegian acapella group Kvedarkvintetten.

Vetle Springgard (dance) is one of Norway's foremost young traditional couple-dancers and *halling* dancers. He has performed with the dance company, FRIKAR, and has theatre experience from The Norwegian Theatre and Västanå Teater in Sweden. Springgard is also much in demand as a dance instructor.

Martin Myhr (dance) is one of Norway's foremost solo *halling* dance performers. He has won Norway's national competition, *Landskapleiken*, in *halling* dance a total of seven times, and performs in the tradition from Trysil and Hallingdal. In addition to being an excellent solo dancer, he is also a solid couple dancer. Myhr has worked as a dancer since 1980 and has contributed to several theatre performances and productions by Västanå Theatre in Sweden, Sogn og Fjordane Theatre, Hedmark Theatre and The Swedish National Theatre. He is also a highly sought-after folk dance educator.

Gro Marie Svidal (Hardanger fiddle) is an educated musician, holding qualifications from Ole Bull Academy and The Norwegian State Academy of Music, from which she gained a masters degree in performance in 2010. In 2014, Svidal became Norwegian solo Hardanger fiddle master. She is one of the country's finest purveyors of traditional music and dance to children and youths. Svidal has performed numerous school concerts since 2003, has contributed to several theatre productions at Sogn og Fjordane Theatre, and has also worked as a project manager and producer. Svidal is a highly experienced educator and performer and has performed extensively both at home and abroad.

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