

BARCELONA PRODUCCIÓ

SONG AND DANCE FOR A FOUNTAIN

IRENA VISA

OFFSITE PROJECT

05.10.2024

For all we know, Irena Visa could be deceiving us. In principle, an off-site project falls into a category of the annual Barcelona Producció call for artistic projects that encompasses all kinds of things that can be presented anywhere but with one exception: that it will not be in La Capella. Anywhere in the universe but La Capella. This has been true right up to today. *Cançó i ball per a una font* (Song and Dance for a Fountain) is – historically speaking – possibly the only off-site project sited precisely here in La Capella. This is because what began as totally site-specific project has ended up being time-specific. With a concert by a string quartet and a huge video screening, Irena proposes to describe to us the course followed by the water that emerges – uninterruptedly at a rate of three litres per second – beneath the Teatre del Liceu opera house and from there crosses the Raval and climbs up through Poble-sec before finally reaching Montjuïc, where it emerges triumphantly in the Magic Fountain. She recounts the story of the water's origin, journey and emergence, but not by using data, graphs and documents. Or oral accounts. Rather, Irena tells it through music and dance: 'programmatic' music composed

by Joan Magrané and an aquatic dance she developed using the specific software employed to make the fountain dance. The Magic Fountain becomes an instrument, a medium capable of being used to express something; it is the rediscovery of a new – as well as old – possible language.

Irena sees the fountain as one of the city's public amenities – note that it is enjoyed by 2.5 million visitors a year – and also as a means of expression that can be employed. Even though it may challenge our understanding and be more difficult than imagining the end of capitalism, the Magic Fountain cannot – only – be for foreigners. It is a matter of appropriating the fountain as a symbol to reclaim the city. So, what are we doing here, then? Why aren't we on Montjuïc watching the fountain dance to Joan's music and Irena's choreography? Well, because of the drought. How come? The Magic Fountain's water issues from the Liceu catacombs, it's the clean, fresh water of the mythical Cagalell Lake, where the first Barcelonans of the Neolithic gathered; it's the water that springs forth without interruption come rain or shine! It's a question of context. If we were suddenly to make the fountain

dance every evening, if we had music by Shakira and Rihanna going full blast and if crowds were to come to see the light, colour and water, it would set a very bad example. If there is a drought, it has to be seen. It has to be seen that the city council is crazy, that it is prepared to do anything, even drain the fountain on Montjuïc. This time-specific aspect means that Irena's off-site project has to happen here and now in La Capella, that we will not see the fountain dance, or perhaps we will thanks to a simulation. In fact, it is the simulation that the fountain choreographers use, an image of in-house work, one that is not accessible but that we can now see in monumental form accompanied by live music. Today, in this small chapel, we can raise the possibility of using the city's symbols in a different way, appropriating them, learning to employ them and to speak their language in order to tell other stories which, by being invisible, enable us to flow through the city in our day-to-day lives.

Irena has recently promised me that we will see the fountain dance to her choreography in the future. All we have to do is wait patiently until it rains again and we can meet once more at the fountain to celebrate it. Even though she might be deceiving us, I trust it will be so.

Enric Farrés Duran
La Capella Curatorial Team

Credits

A project by Irena Visa

Musical composition - Joan Magrané and Irena Visa

Fountain choreography design - Carles López and Irena Visa

Musicians - Quartet Gerhard: Lluís Castán (violin) - Judit Bardolet (violin) - Miquel Jordà (viola) - Jesús Miralles (cello)

Space design - Pau Masaló

Project mentor - Enric Farrés Durán

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