

Donne Dubbiose Da Capo



Actresses mirror their lives to literature and performing art.

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Remembering or forgetting, that is what it is about. Is something wrong with forgetting something from the past? Or what makes memories so dear? With memories you always can start anew, *da capo*, from the start. Two actresses, Selma Susanna and Carla Delfos, have known each other since the seventies at the Theatre School of Amsterdam. In 1983 the duo made a performance called *Da Capo* in the Shaffy Theatre, now in 20021-2 as *Donne Dubbiose*, the '*hesitating women*', they once again present a performance called *Da Capo*. And again it is serene, poetic and musical.

They play in Amsterdam in the theatre studio of Selma Susanna at the Grote Wittenburgerstraat, which she developed for theatre and cabaret education. Delfos for some time was attached to the feminist cabaret of Natasha Emanuels.

Donne Dubbiose meet in a pub, where Selma is wearing wings like an angel and Delfos is being moved in a wheelchair. They quote from the work of Beckett, Dylan Thomas (*Under Milk Wood*) and Chekhov and there are memory questions like: “*What was the name again of that servant they forgot at the end of that play by Chekhov?*” “*In that servant (Firs!) they could well recognise themselves: are they forgotten as well?*” A small reference is made to the women who once were revue dancers themselves. In a beautiful moment Delfos looks through a binocular and sees herself standing, gorgeously dressed, in the huge Amsterdam theatre Carré. “*No*”, Susanna corrects her, “*it was theatre De Flint in Amersfoort.*” Carré or De Flint, for memory it differs a lot. And through that binocular she looks back in time.

That Susanna is an acting teacher becomes clear through the small corrections she gives Delfos: she should say ‘*grey*’ with an acting school ‘*r*’. They practice remembering games to train the memory and they commemorate the dead. The secret of *Da Capo* is the associative way you can deal with the books you read or the plays in which you acted. There is an important role for the short story ‘*The address*’ (1957) by Marga Minco, in which she describes how a little girl after the war comes to collect the expensive belongings that a woman took from their house, so-called to keep them safe. But the family refuses to give them back. In short and stunning images Minco describes the displacement that overcomes the girl when she sees the familiar things in different surroundings. It is the displacement that is also brought to the Donne Dubbiose.

In this way literature and theatre mirror each other, personal life and what you have read. The style of *Da Capo* is best described as associative literary theatre. Backstage film images by Jitte Hoekstra are projected, fitting to the text: for example a clock turning time backwards or breaking tableware in the sections by Minco. Suzanna Mateysen takes care of the music and has a few strong, revue-like songs.

Performances like this are rare in Dutch theatre because the actors do not hide behind anything: no role, no character. It is sincere and pure. At first sight the ideas and quotes seem to be chosen at random, but gradually they form an increasingly tighter unity, even the terrorist bomb attack in a pub gets a strong meaning in the whole of the performance. It is a symbol of life that from one minute to the next can turn into death and sorrow. Both players depict the explosion by being struck as it were to the floor *in slow motion*, swinging with their arms, in silence. Then the music takes over again (i.e. from Einstein on the

Beach by Philip Glass) and the storyline is continued about what is easier or better: remembering or forgetting.

Kester Freriks