

MINT : An Opera on Money

What remains of the working class in late capitalism? Is it really easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism? "MINT: An Opera on Money" deals with the ambiguity, complexity and divisions caused by our relationship to money, social class and labour. Together with four performers and a music ensemble, dancer and choreographer Sheena McGrandles takes on the genre of opera and its formal conventions and overgrows it with the transformative potential of the popular traditions of Irish folk dance and song, personal biographies and anecdotes. "MINT" unfolds at the intersection of choreography, theatre, music and lived history - evoking the shame, guilt, pleasure and darkness connected to our individual and shared relationships to money and class. What lurks behind fortune or misfortune? And what would you really do for money?

Performance by and with: Michelle Cheung, Martin Hansen, Justin Kennedy, Claire Vivianne Sobottke / Direction, choreography, concept: Sheena McGrandles / Music composition: Stellan Veloce, with: Kaj Duncan David, Jana Sotzko, Sabrina Ma / Co-direction, dramaturgy: Mila Pavićević / Guest performer: Mickey Mahar / Text: Sheena McGrandles & Mila Pavićević in collaboration with performers and musicians / Stage, costume design: Michiel Keuper, Julianne Längin / Lighting design: Annegret Schalke / Technical direction: Elliott Cennetoglu / Sound technician: Helen Heß / Choreographic outside eye: Maria F. Scaroni, Kate McIntosh / Production assistance: Vida Zelić / Stage assistance: Mireia Guzmán Sanjaume/ Vocal outside ear & coach Evelyn Saylor/ Voice Coaching: Ignacio Jarquin, Molly Donnery/ Irish Dance Coaching: Constantin Kirsten / Production: ehrliche arbeit – freies Kulturbüro / Distribution: Paz Ponce, Subtitles translation: Elena Polzer, Subtitles: Calvin Lanz

MINT : An Opera on Money is inspired by text and works by Anne Boyer, Kate Bush, Charlie Chaplin, Cynthia Cruz, Philip Glass, Silvia Federici, Mark Fisher, Claudio Monteverdi, Goran Sergej Pristaš

The performance includes text by:

Jean Francois-Lyotard (2015) *Libidinal Economy*, translation Iain Hamilton Grant, Bloomsbury
Revelation and Requiem for Croppies, by Seamus Heaney (1966)

Performance includes songs written by performers, Michelle Cheung, Martin Hansen, Justin Kennedy and Claire Vivianne Sobottke

Production: Sheena McGrandles. Co-production: HAU Hebbel am Ufer, PACT Zollverein (Essen).
Funded by: Hauptstadtkulturfonds. As part of Zeitgeist Ireland 24, an initiative of Culture Ireland and the Irish Embassy in Germany. Thanks to: PSR collective, Uferstudios

Welcome!

Text: Sheena McGrandles & Mila Pavićević

Welcome to our house

It's a beginning of the new beginning

Of an old beginning

From your home to our house

To this one of a kind

Once in a lifetime moment

This time between yesterday's years past and today's present

A no time
A no time disappeared overnight
So enjoy
No nostalgia
Yes, invest
In the moment
Nothing last forever
And *time after time*
Welcome to this slow cancellation of the future
Welcome to our house
To the world of ephemeral
Your tickets are already bought
Your money is already spent
There is nothing more to lose
Only to hunt for and be haunted by
Only to gain
Only to win
Our hope in the intangible
In the community
In the political unconscious
In the spectres of acid communism
In the betterment of the working conditions
In the working class

Cyndi Lauper

Who sings:
*We step out on two feet,
One foot might make it
The other not
And for that foot
There will be no emancipation*

Goran Sergej Pristaš

It is the year
Let time break in
It's a beginning of the new beginning
Of an old beginning
The year is 1769 - the industrial revolution
The first fumes of smoke are released high in the air
The quantity of these particles
Still lingers above our heads
Even in our house
Little shiny particles
Of money, greed and exploitation

Mark Fisher

Like
*Stars caught in our hair
The stars are on our fingers
A veil of diamond dust
Just reach up and touch it
The sky's above our heads
The seas around our legs
In merky, merky waters
We dive down... We dive down
The rivers head down to the sea
That swallows them*

Kate Bush

So let the darkness of our magic
Swallow you too

It's a fish libretto

Sheena McGrandles, Mila Pavićević & Jana Sotzko

PERSON WITH A METAL DETECTOR

Woe to me!
Woe to me!
Golden coin has been carried off
I landed on this dirty beach
I took three days off
today is the third
What I can't find today,
shall be forgotten forever
And where is Fortuna?
Where is Fortuna?
You there,
Snatch with little digging hands
What you can salvage from the ground.

PLAYING CHILD

What do I have to do with it?
Not you with this pursuit of happiness again
Stuck in this forever search...

PERSON WITH A METAL DETECTOR

Today!
Hard work and opportunity
shall show themselves as luck
Tomorrow!
*I'll be so rich that I'll have to be tied to a mast
Or so poor that I'll spend the rest of my life rowing
Rowing, rowing*

PLAYING CHILD

I am only a child
Your actions are pointless;
Only senseless hope makes sense.
What's with these fantastic designs,
These fantastic scenarios?
The *weak messianic* hope
For something new
For the Next Big Thing
For the last big thing –
How many times will you repeat it?

Mark Fisher

PERSON WITH A METAL DETECTOR

Look

Oh look,
Look the machine
The machine
Ah
The machine
Oh

FORTUNA

Who is calling me?
What are you looking for?
Everything is accumulated and divided by me
*Fortune like a painted fire
That neither warms nor shines,
A buried heat remains
In lack of light
Those who profess virtue do not ever hope
To possess wealth, or glory,
If protected, it is not from Fortune!*

PERSON WITH A METAL DETECTOR

A coin, an immeasurable treasure,
Was hidden in the sand
Millions of grains, rough sediment
Could not withhold the prize from me

THE CHOIR OF ACCOUNTANTS

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Philip Glass

MESSENGER:

Beloved fellow-citizens
And all strangers
I am a messenger from highest power
A great threat to you all
Our socio-economic
System is changing
All of this will be different

STAGEHAND

I can not leave my home
Not only out of love,
And I'm also too tired to go
Look around.
Our dreams
They're all gone
There is nothing that
Can not be bought

PERSON WITH A METAL DETECTOR

I can't leave now
But I can hurry up
whoever helps me dig

I will, maybe, consider.
To cut you in

STAGEHAND

So cut me in,
It is only fair that my presence here,
One of giving a hand be only just
I have worked hard on my invisibility
And seamless change.
They say it is love. I say it is unwaged work.
And what difference could more money make to my life?

PLAYING CHILD

These are the days.
When I will not
give up on the ghost
Haunting is a failed mourning.
And I refuse to give up the ghost.
As we glean in a greedy world
This is nowhere
Our dreams are futile
Loss is itself lost

CHOIR OF ACCOUNTANTS

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Philip Glass

MESSENGER

I am messenger
Madness
You have been warned
By the stroke of bell already twice
This value system
And nothing that you own
Will prevail

STAGEHAND

This place is my home.
And what if the celestial palace falls
And if the sand is turned into ashes
Someone needs to be there to sweep the floors
To gather what is left of it
And to tell the story
Again

FORTUNA

Oh, stop your babbling
We heard it
Too many times
But, look a newcomer
What brings you ashore?

FISH

I am a golden fish
I am trope of fairy tales
I am wealth and abundance
the favourite, low maintenance Pet
For Plattenbau kids
Who don't have yards
I am just a passenger
Strong tide left me here
On this dirty beach
She is a good friend
And said that you people
Might need some *deus ex machina* help

PERSON WITH A METAL DETECTOR/PLAYING CHILD

How can a slimy, legless creature help us?

FORTUNA

This is no standard goldfish.
She is the goldest of them all.

CHOIR:

It's a fish! It's a fish.

FATES

Hi, Hi, Hi
We are Fates
And, yes, sorry, we are just a little late
We come in 3
Ha ha ha
Past, present and future
Tellers of such
So much to say about this situation
So let us not delay
As it were, things were not good
As things are, they are not good
As things are, they are really not good
And well as things are to be....

PERSON WITH A METAL DETECTOR

I bought this machine
I came here with a dream
To find the fortune, lives to be changed
But alas, I must continue my chase elsewhere

FATES

Oh oh oh
Should we give a clue to how this will all end?
We'd say, something smells fishy
Rotten
Like old can of
Tomatoes

Like suppressed middle class
Desires
Haunting
But look there is a shape on the horizon
Horizon
We see
Progress! Progress!
For everyone's benefit
Desire
Adventure
Look the mast of the ship is ready
Take your search elsewhere

THE CHOIR OF ACCOUNTANTS:

1874 Jessy James robs a train
1875 a new opera opens in Paris
1876 The Reichsbank opens in Berlin
77
78
79
1880 building of Suez Canal Begins

Tender Green Monster
by: Michelle Cheung

What is this here, a secret love affair?
Disguised as a sweater of mohair
You're a fog over my head
I awaken with shrouded dread

Your aged, disfigured smiling
Is masterfully beguiling

Your green fuzzy complexion
Seeps deep like a rancid infection

I desire you but I loathe you
Humanity will owe you
We have neighbors dwelling low
Neighbors dwelling high
But you don't care if you hear their countless sighs

You call yourself tender
Do you expect me to surrender?

Your green fuzzy complexion
Seeps deep like a rancid infection

Savings, Karmic Debt, Ghost and Property

Text by: Michelle Cheung, Martin Hansen, Justin Kennedy and Claire Vivianne Sobottke

SAVINGS: Yeah, that's a big day for me. My name is Savings, I have been, um, isolated for my whole life. I actually live only because I have been isolated and protected. I'm very protected. And I'm here because I'm to be used for something very, very, very special and attached to me are a lot of hopes and fears. Also, I'm there for, for – for worst case scenarios, but also for the age. And today is the day where I might be spent. This is why I'm here today. It's my first contact actually with the world, and I'm here to be used and spent and – used and spent and – used and spent and – put into, materialized into something else.

KARMIC DEBT: Hi I'm Karmic Debt. It's also a big day for me. I'm really difficult to measure. Also to, to get rid of. I'm hard to figure out somehow. Bit esoteric. I also have a bit of, I have a bit of a chip on my shoulder. Like, I have a little bit of a revenge fantasy. I like to last, like over lifetimes. I really am into, like, the long lasting. I don't really send bills to people, but I just linger. But I just linger. And sometimes they don't even know, like, they don't even know how old I am or how much I actually am worth, but they feel me. I'm like, I'm kind of a kind of one of these – these presences, one of these insidious presences. I'm kind of a debt that I don't I don't want people to pay per se.

INTERVIEWER: And you're here today?

KARMIC DEBT: And I'm here today to ensure that... I'm here today to ensure that people are constantly like stuck in the past. I'm trying to hold people to the histories. I'm trying to hold people to the histories, haha.

EVERYONE: Hahahahahaha.

INTERVIEWER: Fucking hell.

KARMIC DEBT: Haha, I'm sorry.

Ha-ha. Ha-ha. Ha-ha.

PROPERTY: I'm property. I'm property. I feel like a truth to a lot of people, but I'll let you in on a little secret. It's a trick. It's a trick. I'm the basis of wealth and capitalism, private property, that is. This is a public property. But that part of my personality, I get smaller and smaller. Sometimes I even forget it's the... I love to have a number on me, an exact figure, and I'd love it to go up and up and up. I'd like you to bet on me, speculate on me, me, me, me. Me, me. Me, me. If you...

OTHERS: Hahaha.
Never good enough, constantly villainous.

PROPERTY: If you...

OTHERS: Hahaha.
Never good enough, constantly villainous.

PROPERTY: I am – hahaha. I am – hahaha. My, my more public side is, vulnerable. Like, I do have a vulnerable side. People think I'm this big, strong thing that I'm everywhere, out of reach. But

a part of me is really vulnerable and some... I can't actually protect that part of me by myself. I need others. And I'm here today because I want to make someone very happy.

GHOST: I am Ghosts, I'm a ghost. I am Ghosts, I'm a ghost. I am a lingering remnant of a physical person who was living in a house. And after I passed, my soul was not able to progress into the other realm and the other dimension. So I remained in the house. So I remained in the house. So I remained in the house. I – people are quite afraid of me every time they come into where... and my home actually. And I do actually, eventually, would like to move on, because it gets quite boring. But I do have also a little bit of fun in, um – in, um, deterring people away, out of my house. And I'm here today because I want to keep my house a little bit longer, I wanna wreak some havoc, I wanna ... looking forward to my next victims. Looking forward to my next victims.

INTERVIEWER: Does anyone have something against this? Does anyone want to respond to the Ghosts?

GHOST: Yeah, I think they've tried...

INTERVIEWER: No, no, but the, the – these three.

GHOST: Ah, these three.

INTERVIEWER: Karmic debt, Savings, and Property. Like, because you say that Property is yours. Any objections.

SAVINGS: Yeah, as Savings, I find that you seem to be pretty attached. And...

INTERVIEWER: Haha.

SAVINGS: And...

INTERVIEWER: Haha.

SAVINGS: I'm wondering why it's hard for you to let go.

PROPERTY: They love me. I guess.

KARMIC DEBT: They're also stuck to you. I don't think they can go anywhere, you know?

GHOST: it was my dream house. I've spent my entire life earning money, working hard, accumulating savings, so that I could eventually buy this house. And when I did, it was a very proud and milestone moment for me. So that's why I'm so attached.

KARMIC DEBT: And then you died. And then you died. So now – this is my homie, first of all, so we're friends

GHOST: Exactly, we're friends I'm a bit of a pest to you, though.

PROPERTY: I mean, maybe not. I can pass you off as a charm. I've done it before, I'll do it again.

GHOST and KARMIC DEBT: Hahahaha.

KARMIC DEBT: You. You actually – for me, you're a thief. You represent theft. And for me, you're just like, just like, make-believe. And you Ghost, you're the most concrete thing in my life. But just because of the circumstances of this scenario. But I came before all of y'all.

PROPERTY: Hey, Karmic Debt, well, who were your friends before we were here?

SAVINGS: I have a question too...

KARMIC DEBT: My friends were... My friends were like... My friends were unquantifiable. My friends were not able to have these these quantities, these things that you speak of, these, these – money, this – these amounts, these measurements, you all in your measurements. You all in your measurements. I mean, I'm, I'm thinking more about, like, the unquantifiable.

PROPERTY: Hmm. Hmm. Hmm. Interesting.

KARMIC DEBT: I'm thinking about spiritual materials. I'm not even thinking about how to sum up—

PROPERTY: Say...

KARMIC DEBT: Sum up...

PROPERTY: Say...

KARMIC DEBT: How much...

PROPERTY: But some of me are incredibly spiritual. Have you visited those aspects of me?

KARMIC DEBT: Ah, no, I haven't seen that side of you because I feel like there's so much.

PROPERTY: Oh, you must, I can take you.

KARMIC DEBT: Yeah?

PROPERTY: Yeah. I'm dotted around in various manifestations, deeply spiritual places.

GHOST: He wants to rob you.

KARMIC DEBT: Yeah!

PROPERTY: Oh!

KARMIC DEBT: I want it like, like I want reparations, because I think you're a thief.

PROPERTY: I'm a thief?

KARMIC DEBT: Yes!

PROPERTY: But I'm more of a...concept.

SAVINGS: I had a question. Yeah. Why do you think I'm make-believe? And aren't you also akribisch writing every little shit down that happened in the history of humankind, unable to forget it, aren't you also accumulating value in some kind of way?

KARMIC DEBT: Well, not these quantifiable values. Yes, I do write down everything. Yes, I hold a grudge. And yes, I'm here for some revenge. And yes I'm here for some revenge. But I don't need to look at some account, or get some bill, and have these make believe numbers.

SAVINGS: But why is it make believe? I'm here to, um... I'm here to make something possible. You're here to destroy?

KARMIC DEBT: No, I'm here to make people pay.

PROPERTY: I mean, me too. I mean, me too.

SAVINGS: Oh!

GHOST: You're like a bitter, resentful God.

SAVINGS: Oh!

GHOST: You're like a bitter, resentful God.

And that's why I love you, because you keep me here, but I also hate you at the same time, because you won't let me go. Pass on.

PROPERTY: I mean, you and me, we are a fixture of the cultural imagination.

KARMIC DEBT: Hey, don't come for her...

PROPERTY: I mean you and me, we are a fixture of the cultural imagination.

KARMIC DEBT: Hey, don't come for her.

PROPERTY: How many films have we done together? You remember?

GHOST: I had to it.

PROPERTY: We are an archive, a repository of images, associations, like...

GHOST: Yes, I know, but...

PROPERTY: We are fun. Fun Fun Fun.

GHOST: But I have to admit that it is all reminiscent.

PROPERTY: You. Love. Me!

GHOST: But it's never the same – It's never the same as it was before.

PROPERTY: Of course not! Everything changes.

SAVINGS: Who else would like to spend me? Is there someone here who'd like to spend me? Is there someone here who'd like to spend me?

PROPERTY: I mean, I could take you.

SAVINGS: No, not take me, spend me.

PROPERTY: Oh, I can't do that.

SAVINGS: Do you want to spend me? Spend me spend me, spend me.

One eye
Justin Kennedy

The world is a vampire (So full of rage)
I'm so sick and tired (of being sick and tired)
I sleep with one eye open, open

Despite all my rage, I'm still just a human engaged
My Rage, my rage, rage ...my gaze, white gaze
Despite all my rage, white gaze

If I rest in deep sleep, who'll do the work?
If I really go to sleep, who'll do the work?

The world is a vampire (So full of rage)
I'm so sick and tired (of being sick and tired)
I sleep with one eye open

'Cos if I really fall asleep, deep sleep .Who'll do the work ...
The work of the frivolous
Frivolous works

All the riches we ever had, were stolen or burnt to the ground
the enfleshination (enfleshed nation) of riches. Stacks and stacks of riches
The enfleshed stack extending far far above

Na, Na, Na the world is vampire
Despite all my rage, I'm still just a human engaged

There's this little lazy song in me now.
A little lazy one. The one who doesn't try too hard.

Still I sleep with one eye open
I still sleep with one eye open

How do I put little monsters to sleep?
Like a little lullaby for eternal sleep

Requiem for Croppies (1966)

Text: Seamus Heaney

The pockets of our greatcoats full of barley...
No kitchens on the run, no striking camp...
We moved quick and sudden in our own country.
A people hardly marching... on the hike
We found new tactics happening each day:
We'd cut through reins and rider with the pike...
Terraced thousands died, shaking scythes at cannon...
The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave.
They buried us without shroud

Libidinal Economy, Jean Francois-Lyotard (2015)

translation Iain Hamilton Grant, Bloomsbury Revelation

Why, political intellectuals, are you inclined towards the proletariat? In commiseration for what? I realize that a proletarian would hate you; you have no hatred because you are bourgeois, privileged smooth skinned types, but also because you dare not say the only important thing is: and that is, that is, that one can enjoy swallowing the shit of capital, its materials, its ships, its metal bars, its polystyrene, its gold, its books, its flat whites oat milk, its perfect ice cubes, its sausage pates, swallowing tons of it till you burst – and because instead of saying this, which is also what happens in the desire of those who work, those who work, those who work, with their hands and arses and heads, ah, you become a leader of men, what a leader of pimps, you lean forward to divulge: ah, but that's alienation, it isn't pretty, hang on, we'll save you from it, we will work to liberate you from wicked affection for servitude, we will give you dignity. And in this way, you situate yourselves on the most despicable side, the moralistic side is the most despicable side where you desire that our capitalized desires be ignored, forbidden, brought to a standstill, our servile intensities frighten you, you have to tell yourselves: how they must suffer to endure that! And of course, we suffer, we the capitalized, but this does not mean that we do not enjoy, nor that what you think you can offer us as a remedy – for what? And who is here? And who is not here? Who is not here? And with whose fortune? And with whose misfortune?

Justin's Diner

by Justin Kennedy

I was walking into a dinner
At the gallerists house the other night
And I sat across from a collector
Who was smiling at me in plain sight
I tried to flash my most intellectual thoughts
In order to get a benefactor

I was crushed when he told me
You can't be part of my gallery

I was in New York at a deli
When I ordered a hot pastrami
And he told me it costs 45 dollars
And I told him you can fuck off with your inflated price

And I went down to the movie theatre
To watch another picture yeah yeah
Then that shit costs 15 dollars
Made me want to scream and holler

Inheritance
by: Martin Hansen

Visit a friend's house and pretend you live there
Look what I've done with the furniture
Remember when I got that picture?

*The harm will come
It never doesn't
It will open our chest
And enter there
To live well
To live at all*

Anne Boyer

We tiptoe around each other in the kitchen,
Talk tomatoes, gentle hand at the back
Reach for the tea towel
Is the oven too hot? Fan Forced?
Ah, this plate, yes, this plate!
We are surface dwellers, deeper.
I want to shake her.
Scream some sense
Why are you doing this?
Please don't do this
Instead, we do our little kitchen dance
The beyond is the beyond

No magic, no gimmick
No smoke and mirrors
Could I conjure or sustain
Everything remains as it was

*The harm will come
It never doesn't
It will open our chest
And enter there
To live well*

Anne Boyer

To live at all

Monsoon, power outages
Little dog running
Electrical storm
Total failure to stop time
Anxiety at Berlin non-responses
Subletters, accountants, institutions,
Screaming void
Many dreams, all terrifying
Many fantasies of future lives
Phantoms from past ones
Soft touches on hurting bodies

*The harm will come
It never doesn't
It will open our chest
And enter there
To live well
To live at all*

Anne Boyer

I won

By: Claire Vivianne Sobottke

I won, I won another time by losing everything again
I won, I won a second time by losing everything again
I won a plastic heart that can be bought
I won a metal soul that can be sold
happy get lucky