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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Umuko

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Dorothee Munyaneza's umuko, created with Kadidi Company, is a luminous and quietly radical work that entwines concert and dance into a single, breathing organism. Anchored in the image of the umuko tree—a “keeper of stories” with flaming red blossoms—the piece becomes a living archive of memory, resilience, and futurity. Rather than offering a narrative reconstruction of trauma, Munyaneza turns to the tree's capacity

This capacity is to shelter and to witness, crafting a space in which personal and collective histories can shimmer through voice and movement without being fixed or exhausted. As a choreographer, Munyaneza works with remarkable restraint and precision. The quintet structure—herself with four young Rwandan artists—allows for an intricate play of presence: solos emerge from the group and dissolve back into it, as if each performer were both root and branch of the same organism. The movement language is never merely illustrative; it draws from vernacular gesture, ritual, and contemporary dance to create a porous vocabulary where weight, breath and gaze speak as eloquently as steps.

Rhythms accumulate gradually, pulsed by the music, until the stage feels like a shared heartbeat rather than a site of representation. The costuming, echoing the glow of umuko blossoms, is central to the work's affect. These vivid colors do not decorate the piece; they insist on the visibility and vitality of Rwandan bodies and stories in a European performance context. The concert component is equally vital: Munyaneza's voice, in dialogue with the younger performers, moves between lament, invocation and celebration, holding space for grief while steadily orienting toward the future.

The result is a sonic and choreographic weave that feels at once intimate and expansive. Umuko stands out as a model of how politically charged dance can avoid didacticism without abandoning urgency. It honours the weight of history yet refuses to be defined by violence alone, offering instead a vision of continuity, regeneration and shared authorship. In doing so, Munyaneza and her collaborators invite us to imagine a world in which every “keeper of stories”—human or vegetal—is allowed to flourish in full color.

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Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

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V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Dr. Nadejda Komendantova

**Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency**

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
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