

Otniel Dance Community  
Present:

## **Amongster: Voyage of Lengger Otniel Tasman**

### **SYNOPSIS**

"A multi-disciplinary show about the identity, journey and "Nyawiji" as a main concept of Lengger's in the midst of change. In three acts, Amongster: Voyage of Lengger will present choreography, movie, and noise music in one collaborative performance that spark dialogue about duality, gender, and how the others define life as a human being. "

### **KEYWORD**

Body Identity

*Our most basic identity is formed and always represented by the body, who we are, what is our purpose for living, where are we going.*

Journey and Dialogue

*Life is a journey, along the journey is a dialogue that constantly builds and dismantles our identity*

Nyawiji

*Nyawiji is the concept of fusing identity in the Lengger tradition. Including the fusion of gender, male and female, feminine and masculine.*

### **PERFORMANCE CONCEPT**

"Amongster: Voyage of Lengger" is a contemporary choreographic performance rooted in the Lengger Banyumasan tradition. This work was created by Otniel Tasman as a celebration of his 10 years of inner and outer journey of exploring the Lengger universe. As with any journey, Otniel's body has experienced so many things that bring up various concepts, as well as questions about identity, gender, definitions, boundaries, resistance, adaptation, and compromise.

Both in the course of Otniel's work, as well as in general, the Lengger Banyumasan tradition is always dealing with changes. Ages have passed with so many things, Otniel realized that building exclusivity and sacred practice will make this tradition faded. So, throughout his work, Otniel made various attempts to dismantle, question again, and negotiate with his Lengger body and concept. At the idea level, he continues to question the position and urgency that Lengger brings in issues of identity, gender and performing arts. He found that Lengger

and the concept of counteracting concessions within it represented survival strategies in the increasingly rigid currents of the times.

In an effort to reconstruct his journey, Otniel Tasman concocted this work with dance films, lighting, and musical compositions that were collaborated in experimental behavior. As his journey is full of unexpected and challenging things. This cross-disciplinary show is an effort to reconstruct, celebrate, and reflect on the Otniel's body of Lengger has been living for so far. For this work, Otniel involved six young Surakarta dancers, film director Zen Al Ansory, music director Bagus TWU, and sound director Mahamboro.

The research process for this work was carried out by Otniel regularly. Prior to "Amongster: Voyage of Lengger", the embryo of this work entitled "Amongster: Body Between" and "Entrance" had already been performed. The dance training process is carried out in Surakarta and Banyumas. Meanwhile, the shooting process for the film was carried out in Surakarta, Banyumas and Makassar. While in Banyumas, we take a walk through the pivotal areas of Otniel Tasman's growth and introduction to Lengger. This includes the house of Dariah, the Lengger maestro who died several years ago.

The trip to Makassar to meet Bissu Bugis is an important stage in Otniel Tasman's research. Since Bissu is an entity that also bears a cross-gender identity in its body, both of them are based on traditional arts which now both have to carry out various strategies in order to survive in the face of modernity. This dialogue is an important chapter because the issue that was originally personal at Otniel has now found a more general context. Previously, Otniel also carried out research by interviewing various people. He tested his role and position, as well as public acceptance of Lengger's identity in him.

This work will take the form of a multi-disciplinary collaborative performance in which a dance performance will appear interspersed with film screenings. The drama of the performance will be formed through the performance of films and dance in turn, accompanied by live music and sound performances. This form is what we feel is the most representative to convey our ideas and feelings in this work.

The following are the details of the stages of the Amongster: Voyage of Lengger show:

#### Chapter I - Born

This chapter tells the life story of Otniel Tasman as a child. This period is when Otniel introduced the art of Lengger in his native Banyumas. During this time, Otniel began to feel that he was destined to become Lengger. Until finally convinced himself to do Lengger as his life practice, Otniel experienced many things. Rejection from his mother because of Lengger's bad image in society, stereotypes from friends, until finally he met Dariah. Dariah is the maestro of Lengger from Banyumas. For Otniel, Dariah was not only a mentor who brought

her deeper into Lengger's soul but also a comfortable close friend to share the burden.

It was at this time that Otniel's anxiety began to emerge regarding his Lengger practice. For example, about a person's gender identity, about differences in perceptions in society, about conflicts within himself, about his relationships with the people around him. This period is important because it becomes the foundation and manifests as a common thread in almost all of Otniel Tasman's works over the last 10 years. This chapter is told through a semi-documentary film and Otniel Tasman's solo dance featuring traditional Lengger.

## Act II - Dialogue

Act two depicts Otniel Tasman's journey and life experience as a Lengger. This chapter is filled with collaborative performances between noise music and contemporary choreography. During his journey, Otniel felt that there was always a dialogue going on his body and soul. These dialogues, in the sense of not just conversations, but also events, interactions, and anything that has been interacting with him. These dialogues are also what always divide and reshape their identity as Lengger.

The noise performance in this act is symbol of the things throughout his life he has encountered. Noise is formless, unpredictable, unrhythmic, sometimes random, representations of life that are always full of surprises. Like the unpredictable noise, the choreography that was danced by these six dancers was done spontaneously. In this round, Otniel breaks down the dancers' feminine and masculine bodies into spontaneous random expressions and movements in response to musical noise. Throughout the 20 minutes, dancers and music complement and respond to each other.

## Act III - Nyawiji

After 10 years of doing Lengger, Otniel realized that there was a point in Lengger practice which would be the conclusion of his journey. That point is Nyawiji. From Dariah, Otniel learned that Nyawiji is a space or practice where everything that is contradictory has come together. Everything has dissolved and broke down the boundaries of definition, so that it can return to its core nature. In the context of Lengger, Nyawiji generally relates as a fusion of male and female gender identities. For Otniel, Dariah is a good example of this Nyawiji.

This chapter is manifested in a film where Otniel has let go of her Lengger appendage and merges with nature, which has become a symbol of the universe. Lengger has brought it back to the core, without having to fuss over the rules and boundaries that humans often dispute. Lengger is also Otniel's tool to translate the world and everything that happens. This chapter may provide answers to the questions he has been raising in the last 10 years through his works.

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

Director & Choreographer : Otniel Tasman

Dancer:

Ahmad Saroji

Mekratingrum Hapsari

Dani S Budiman

Sutrianingsih

Aditiar Anggit Wicaksono

Hana Medita

Music Diretor: Bagus TWU

Sound Director: Mahamboro

Movie Director: Zen Al Ansory

Script Writer : Titah AW

Head of Production: Retno Utami

Managing Production: Hafid Maulana

Coordinator: Hari Ardianto

Assistant Choreographer: Muslimin Bagus Pranowo

Stage Manager: Zanudhimas Safrudin

Artistic Manager: Dea Alfiant Hariyanto Putra & Dwi Wahyu Cahyono

Lighting Designer: Irwan Setyadi

Costume Designer: Suprpto & Felicia Budi

Documentation: Ardyanto Cahyo & Satria Risky U

Videographer: Ruly Leksmana

Publication: Titah AW

Graphic Designer: Mirza Maulana