

NEWS RELEASE



UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center

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CONTACT: Shawn Farley at 413-545-4159 or sfarley@admin.umass.edu
or Erin Kearney at 413-545-4482 or ekearney@admin.umass.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 27, 2007

WHAT: UMass FINE ARTS CENTER Center Series presents:

Kassys: *Kommer* (Grief)

WHEN: Thursday, September 27 and Friday, September 28, 7:30 pm

**WHERE: Bowker Auditorium
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or
go online to www.fineartscenter.com/tickets**

**IMAGES: To download images relating to this press release please go online to
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(Humor, Sadness and Touch of the Absurd are Hallmarks of Kassys Theater Company)

How can something be deeply, profoundly sad yet hilarious at the same time? Somehow Dutch theatre company Kassys has created a performance which is just that in this sly and surreal work. Half stage show and half film, *Kommer* is a pointedly humorous and poignant look at how people cope with loss. Kassys will be performing Thursday, September 27 and Friday September 28 at 7:30 pm at the Bowker Auditorium with a post-performance Talk-Back with the cast immediately following both performances.

Using few words, precise physicality and humor, *Kommer* captures the sadness and accompanying awkwardness inherent in moments of grief and stress. The performance also highlights, in moments of hilarity and insightfulness, the differences between the often stoic Dutch culture and the American cultural need to “express yourself.” In the opening section, the actors portray a group of people gathered after a nameless tragedy. A series of small scenes reveal their well-meaning attempts to connect and comfort each other. The film that follows uncovers the inner emptiness of the cast members' offstage lives, creating an image of quiet precise physicality and humor, *Kommer* captures the sadness and accompanying awkwardness inherent in these moments of grief and stress.

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Kommer gets its inspiration from the modern day soap opera. Limited to lines from Dutch subtitles of *As the World Turns*, characters in the performance contrast this dialog with subtle yet sharp physical movements of angst and powerlessness. Rather than presenting a tragic vision of loss, this contrast offers a highly humorous and absurd look at grief and what happens when people attempt to sublimate their feelings through the used of modern media. A scene in which a group of mourners alternately push the selection button on a CD player with increasing rapidity as they argue over which sentimental popular song should be playing at the wake they are attending exemplifies this.

Kassys, which emphasizes movement in its performances, was founded in Amsterdam in 1999 by Liesbeth Gritter and Mette Van der Sijs, both of whom have backgrounds in dance. This is a young performance group that is equally comfortable with theatre and media and who effectively demonstrates that in an era dominated by media live performance still holds much relevance. Technology and theater interweave to create a more contemporary view of the world and address the question of how has our behavior been shaped by commercial media.

Kassys will perform at the Bowker Auditorium, Thursday, September 27 and Friday September 28 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$35, \$25, and \$15; youth 17 and under are \$10 and Five College Students are \$15, \$10, and \$7. For tickets and information, call the Fine Arts Center Box office at 413-545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS, or go online to www.fineartscenter.com/centerseries. This performance is sponsored by The Valley Advocate, Juster Pope Frazier Architects and 93.9 The River

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