LA MAMA
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB
presents

55 SHADES OF GAY

MARCH 7 - 17, 2019
THURSDAY - SATURDAY AT 7PM AND SUNDAY AT 3PM

BY: gendro multimedia (KOSOVO)
55 SHADES OF GAY
BALKAN SPRING OF SEXUAL REVOLUTION

Written by: Jeton Neziraj
Directed by: Blerta Neziraj

ACTORS:
TRISTAN HALILAJ,
BUJAR AHMETI,
SHENGYL ISMAILI,
SEMIRA LATIFI,
ALKETA SYLAJ,
LUAN DURMISHI (vocal)

Press agent: RON LASKO
Stage and Costumes: SEBASTIAN ELLRICH
Music: IRENA POPOVIC
Choreography: FLORIAN BILBAO
Stage Manager: LENDITA IDRIZI
Production Assistant: VERONA KOXHA
Technical Director: FATLUM IDRIZI
Lighting: MURSEL BEKTESHI
Photos: JETMIR IDRIZI
Video: ILIR GJOCAJ
English Translation:
ALEXANDRA CHANNER

55 SHADES OF GAY has been published in the U.S. by Laertes (www.laertesbooks.org) and can be purchased from their website directly.
March 7 - 17, 2019, at The Ellen Stewart Theatre at La MaMa.

Thursday - Saturday at 7pm and Sunday at 3pm with an additional performance Monday, March 11 at 7pm.

Running time is 70 minutes.

The Ellen Stewart Theatre at La MaMa is located at 66 East 4th Street, between Second Avenue and Bowery – closest train is the F at Second Avenue.

Tickets are $25 general admission or $20 for students and seniors + $1 facility fee. Tickets may be purchased at the door one hour prior to curtain. La MaMa also offers ten $10 to every performance through their 10 @ $10 ticketing initiative (advance purchase only with code: 10AT10).

To purchase tickets, call 212-352-3101 or visit www.lamama.org.
Gay clubs do not exist in Kosovo and LGBT life remains largely underground. Same-sex marriage is not recognized, same-sex couples are not allowed to adopt, and transgender people are not allowed to legally change their gender. Lesbians, gays, and bisexuals are allowed to serve in the military, but there are no openly LGBT members of the military in Kosovo.

Produced and performed by an eminent team of theater artists from Kosovo, Germany, France, and Serbia, 55 SHADES OF GAY is directed by award-winning directress Blerta Neziraj, a member of Lincoln Center Theater Lab. Her shows have been successfully presented across Europe in more than 30 international festivals and theatre venues.

55 SHADES OF GAY: BALKAN SPRING OF SEXUAL REVOLUTION is a contemporary burlesque story about LGBTI politics in the Balkans and Europe by acclaimed Kosovar playwright Jeton Neziraj.

As America prepares to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots that ushered in the LGBT rights movement in the US, 55 SHADES OF GAY: BALKAN SPRING OF SEXUAL REVOLUTION pulls back the curtain to reveal the state of gay rights in the Balkans.

In the play, a gay couple applies to get married in a conservative, deeply homophobic provincial town. They make their request at a time when an Italian company has begun building a condom manufacturing factory in the town, a project that is financially supported by the European Union. Intellectuals, artists, politicians, religious leaders and professional grenade launchers try to stop the marriage from happening, despite the fact that same-sex
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marriage is technically permitted by the country's Constitution, signed by the Prime Minister according to a mandate from the EU. This provocative, politically incorrect performance poses the question: “Is sexual liberation possible in the Balkans?”

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Last year Qendra Multimedia premiered 55 Shades of Gay, a play in which a gay couple apply to get married in a small Kosovar town; they are the first to do so. This triggers much bureaucratic hyperventilating and hand wringing, as the town's officials deal with the prospect of two men tying the knot. Blerta Neziraj directed the production in which the stage was festooned with condom balloons and neon.

- The Stage

An explosion of burlesque, music and possibly offensive humor; it is simply a riot.
- Prishtina Insight

Treats the locals' homophobic bigotry and the international community's patronizing attitudes with equal quantities of ridicule.
- The Theatre Times

Perhaps more than any other playwright working in the country today, Jeton Neziraj is constantly pushing the boundaries of what is acceptable subject matter in Kosovo. When his latest outing, 55 Shades of Gay, had its premiere last autumn police were stationed at the door of the theatre.

- Equal Times

Jeton Neziraj, regarded as the "Kafka of the Balkans" - is an innovative playwright from Kosovo whose plays are also staged in Germany. Produced by Qendra Multimedia those plays provoke heated debates and reconcile at the same time in Europe`s youngest country. […]

Following a well-known international erotic story Kosovo's most famous playwright has titled his play "55 Shades of Gay" and has – as always – searched for a socially controversial topic: the widespread homophobia of Kosovar-Albanian society.

- Deutschlandfunk Kultur

Jeton Neziraj's plays are inspired by rock'n'roll, political cabaret and the brazenness of William Shakespeare. […]

Actually, his art disgruntles some people this much, that his latest premiere had to be staged under police protection even in Kosovo.
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QENDRA MULTIMEDIA

Widely considered to be one of the most interesting and provocative theatre companies in South Eastern Europe, Qendra Multimedia was founded in 2002 in Prishtina, Kosovo. Qendra produces and coproduces fresh and innovative theatre performances and other literature events, for local and international audiences. Qendra’s theatre productions have toured in Europe and the USA, in more than 100 international theatre festivals and venues, including Volkstheater Vienna, Odeon Theatre in Bucharest, euro-scene Leipzig, Vie Festival in Modena, Schlachthaus Theater in Bern, and others.

CONTACT: www.qendra.org / info@qendra.org

The U.S. premiere of 55 SHADES OF GAY at La MaMa was made possible with support from:

Qendra Multimedia is supported by:

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
La MaMa, Maud Dinand, Beka Vučo, Marina Pravdić, Mia Vukojević, Fadil Berisha, Nina Kamberos, Anna Di Lellio, Vlora Çitaku, Veton Firzi, Karen Malpede, Michael Lessac, Frank Hentschker, Robert Lear.