

International Arts Initiatives and Chan Centre for the Performing Arts
in association with LIVE Biennial of Performance Art presents

DIRECT FROM MEXICO CITY

Astrid Hadad y Los Tarzanes
Saturday 22nd October 8:00pm
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

"... one of the most provocative stage acts since the Weimar Republic was in bloom. It's a swirl of old songs turned inside out, performance art, political barbs and clothes so surreal they make Salvador Dali look like Norman Rockwell" – NY Times

Cabaret diva-comedienne and performance artist, **Astrid Hadad**, already a legend in her native Mexico City and in hip urban centres across the world, is known for her ravishing voice and outrageous stage presence. Astrid's show is a fusion of song, theatre and cabaret with powerful musical arrangements from her band "Los Tarzanes".

Hadad's wild cabaret is a little like a Frida Kahlo painting come to life. Like Frida, she draws from the rich mother lode of images offered up by Mexican history and culture: Catholic saints, Aztec and Mayan iconography, revolutionary heroes, exuberant flowers and plants, *campesino* and indigenous folk art, the golden era of Mexican cinema and so on. Astrid is the creator of a new style that she calls "Heavy Nopal" - successfully combining elements of *ranchero*, *bolero*, *samba*, *rumba*, rock and jazz, while humorously encapsulating the social and political realities of the world in which we live.

Subversively turning upside down the symbols, stereotypes and traditions of Mexican and Latin popular culture, Astrid Hadad's act has its origins in the Berlin cabaret of Brecht and Weill. In the 1920's and 1930's Mexico City clubs were also filled with performers who skewered the powerful in their acts. But no one since has stuffed all of Mexican political and cultural history into a dress and laced it up in feminist attitude quite like Astrid Hadad.

Besides the affinity with European cabaret tradition, Hadad explains that her style is also linked to the Teatro del la Revista, a popular theatre movement performed in small circus-like tents in revolutionary Mexico that both entertained and informed great segments of the Mexican population, most of whom had no other source of news. "It was very popular and very critical of the government, of course. It was so successful that some performers were persecuted and had to go into exile in Cuba," Hadad says. This theatre eventually became apolitical, "just crude jokes for joking's sake," a state of affairs that is inimical to Hadad's sensibilities.

Nevertheless, she insists that her work is not political *per se*. "That's not the intention. I talk about politics and social problems, but this is cabaret. The point is to entertain." Hadad's success, both internationally – she tours Latin America and Europe frequently and in Mexico City, where clubs such as La Bodega and el Habito support a vibrant cabaret scene with many politically oriented female cabaret artists – is more evidence that Mexican culture, far from clinging to its past, is churning with new ideas and open to new influences.

"Her body is her stage, and she flaunts it," said Roselyn Costantino, a professor of Spanish and women's studies at Pennsylvania State University. "She becomes a walking representation of Mexico's history, folklore, symbolic systems and dominant discourses."

Astrid Hadad y Los Tarzanes is a comic fusion of music and theatre innovatively drawing upon traditions of Mexican and Latin popular culture that creates an all-too-funny, unforgettable and heart warming evening of contemporary stage surrealism. Unless you're planning a trip to Mexico City anytime soon, you don't want to miss this show!

"Ms. Hadad could be called a cabaret artist, but it would be a little like calling a peacock a pretty bird." NY Times

Info: **www.mundomundo.com** / Tickets available online at Ticketmaster.ca / phone 604 280 3311
Or at the Chan Ticket Office (in person only) \$28 - \$45 plus charges / *Sponsored by the Georgia Straight*

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