

## **Trip Away to Genderfuck**

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*Orlanding the Dominant* (presented at brut Konzerthaus in Vienna, January 2008)

On the surface, *Orlanding the Dominant* is nothing more than a musical comedy that employs innumerable clichés and risqué sexual innuendos, or, in short: *Orlanding the Dominant* is something between a burlesque striptease and drag performance. The piece is based on Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, a story in which the main character changes her/his gender and does not age over hundreds of years. Here, Orlando becomes a deed or an act. "Orlanding" is thus a way of performatively transgressing and transforming dominant ideas. In its staging, the piece is refreshingly consistent in incorporating genderfucking in many ways; and the part of Orlando is not played simply by one single person, as each of the performers who enact/perform Orlando, add something special to the character through their features and costumes, engendering an Orlando who is a butch, a femme, a sissy boy, and a fair maiden. No motion is made to hide anything. It's all there: a dominant fem(me)ploitation heroine, a collective at work on crocheting Orlando's entanglements who all chime together in a madrigal choir in singing the anti-hymn "*Ich bin fertig mit den Menschen!*" ["*I am done with mankind!*"] These appropriations and continuations are precisely what keep the passion flowing in *Orlanding the Dominant*. For instance, there's Orlando in Constantinople leaning back, consuming the pleasures of the Oriental clichés, enchanted by a belly dancer performing a dance of the veils--referencing Orientalism of the British Empire with a queer, deconstructivist nudge and wink. Orlando is fully transformed into a woman in a bondage performance/*Titanic* persiflage with Orlando on the bow of the ship, arms open wide, off to new

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(gender) horizons, only to be shaken by a rude awakening as s/he realizes all the forms of dispossession that come with the change in gender. A venue for escaping this dilemma is presented in a revue presenting a myriad of (feminist) artists displayed freak-show style, referencing a part of art history that has been systematically marginalized, as they proceed fish remarkable figures out from the underbelly: gender(queer) troublemakers—rise up together and live (gender) confusion and disorder!