

PROGRAMME ME, MYSELF AND MISHA

Choreography and Performance: Ana Silvério

Music: Ben Eyes

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Welcome to “Me, Myself & Misha”. This work takes you through Ana’s experience of pregnancy and labour. “Me” is the person who entered pregnancy, analyses it and makes detailed notes. “Myself” is a person in constant transformation. Misha triggers the transformations when developing in a body that now is forced to an extreme of adaptability. The piece is based on notes Ana wrote from early pregnancy, and every movement is inspired by a pregnancy note.

Text: Ana Silvério

Chapter 1: Introduction

Scene 1. The PhD

I arrived in the UK to do a PhD, carrying my backpack of experience and ideas. My ideas, that were accepted with enthusiasm, are no longer appreciated. My passion meets the dryness of the doctorate and a conflict begins. I am a smoker.

Scene 2. Ways to go

Out of the PhD, I have an empty field in front of me. I am free to choose any direction, but this freedom is also frightening. I consider options balancing my love, desire, dreams and money-earning practicality. I am a believer and, in difficulty, a believer looks for help from the divine (whichever). When ideas are becoming clearer, I go to a party with my fiancé.

Chapter 2: Trimester 1, the beginning

Scene 3. Conception

The moment of conception as anatomically described.

Scene 4. Running against time

I wake up suddenly thinking: “I may be pregnant.” Because I was no longer in education, I had to apply for a new visa status in the UK. My fiancé and I decide to

finally sign the wedding papers. A number of documents and translation of documents were necessary to officially get married and, after the wedding, there are even more documents and translations to send to the UK Home Office. It was a marathon! The documents were collected online or physically from Brazil, Holland, Belarus and Russia.

During these weeks, I dealt with symptoms of pregnancy. My suspicion grew every day. I started to pay attention and make mental notes. I smoked less and felt guilty when I couldn't resist the addiction. I decided to only do a pregnancy test once back in the UK, after submitting a new visa application. When it was all done, I relaxed and smoked the last cigarettes in my pack. After, I took the pregnancy test I bought a couple of days before.

Chapter 3: Second trimester, integration

Scene 5. Patterns

I was not surprised by the positive result. I was pregnant and that would define me from that moment on. I experienced an awareness of my body as never before, resulting in the separation of the old “Me” and the transforming “Myself”. I observe Misha’s patterns. I have a burning, itchy, swelling pattern in different parts of my body. I meet old habits and immerse into the

connection with Misha. I ask Misha whether he is a boy or girl.

Scene 6. Aquarium

"I feel like an aquarium," I wrote. Someone was swimming inside, stirring fluids around. This scene is an imagination of Misha's world according to reflections on notes of what "Myself" felt. One of Misha's patterns is a connection of mobility with Me, that is, on days I moved a lot he would take it very easy for a day or two. On days I was quiet, he would become extremely restless.

Chapter 4: Third trimester, pregnancy takes over

Scene 7. The belly comes first

I go to Brazil on holidays and come back to a freezing, snowy UK. By the end of trimester 3, pregnancy took over. When eating, I could not get close enough to the table. I would choke constantly. I felt daily cramps in my legs but could not stretch them because my belly was growing. To cycle became easier than to walk. In one day, I tested all our limits, but the pictures that resulted from it were great.

Scene 8. Monitoring scene

In case of something unexpected, such as my fingers turning yellow or any change in baby's movements, a pregnant woman is advised to monitor the baby's heartbeat and movements at the hospital. I did it five times. The electrodes were always attached with two elastic bands: a light-blue one and a light-pink one. I noted several times during pregnancy that Misha could feel the electronic waves of devices. He always got very unquiet when monitored, moving away from the electrodes and making midwives re-attach them constantly, seeking for him. Pregnancy rules all we do, even how we can enter a shower cabin. Misha finds his final position. My hands are in pain because of how much they have swelled.

Chapter 5: Labour and birth

Scene 9. Labour, a 27-hour process

Early in the morning, I woke up feeling something. I understood that the process had begun. My mucus plug dislodged a couple of hours later and my water broke after a few hours. I went to the hospital and was greeted with great interest, just as when a circus arrives in town due to the amount of luggage. We were monitored and sent back home.

After many hours with regular contractions, the colour of the water turned green and we were rushed back to the hospital. Other long hours passed in which I kept walking in circles and visualising the opening of my cervix and using breathing techniques.

Late at night, I am invited to the labour ward and start to prepare the room my way. It has all I asked for: music, aromatherapy, a birth chair with ribbons, and a pool. I am exhausted. Interval after contractions start getting longer and I am invited to a different room to induce labour. I feel a pain like no other. The baby's oxygen level is measured and I receive an ultimatum to give birth in 40 minutes or I will have an emergency C-section. I pray.

Scene 10. The womb, birth

I pray to my ancestors. I pray to the virgin Mary. Misha is upside down but facing the wrong direction. He needs to turn around. I ask him to turn so that we can finish quickly.

It took Me three days to realise that his name was Misha.