

JAN LAUWERS

&

NEEDCOMPANY

IMAGES OF AFFECTION

Produced by Needcompany and coproduced by Brugge 2002,
Théâtre de la Ville (Paris) and Le-Maillon Théâtre de Strasbourg,
in association with the Kaaithheater in Brussels and the Cultuurcentrum in Bruges.
Needcompany is subsidised by the Flemish Community and the National Lottery

Images of Affection is a play created on the occasion of Needcompany's 15th anniversary. In this production, Jan Lauwers will, more than in any previous piece, remove all boundaries and continue to examine his ambiguous relationship with theatre.

After such pitch-black plays as the Snakesong Trilogy and his Shakespeare adaptations, Lauwers is gradually giving more space to a different approach to his highly individual theatre idiom.

His work had already taken a new direction in Morning Song. Death, power and the impenetrable make way for humour and the burlesque.

His intention is to extend the development of this form of theatre in Images of Affection. Affection is the basis, attachment is the main ingredient. Humour as a means of counteracting tragedy. Humour clears a path through tragedy.

By means of study and a questioning of the medium, Lauwers aims to develop an entirely new code, and create a new means of access to his images. To turn the theatre and its conventions upside down and remove all boundaries. The irrepressible urge to cross the line.

GLOSSARY

Rabbitism (Satyriasis)	Fucking till you drop
Carrot	Rabbit food
Silence	The enemy
Snow	The expanse of freedom
War	A permanent state of being, a latent presence in peacetime
Happiness	Dictator, a manipulator, the devil
The Border	Place where a sniper conceals himself
The Seventies	The grand illusion
Chaos Theory	A way of understanding not knowing, from the part to the whole
The Cretan Paradox	If someone claims he is lying, is he telling the truth? (Eubulides)

IMAGES OF AFFECTION

"Love it and trust it and leave"

DON DELILLO

Images of Affection is based on a lie.

A story that is never told.

About perception that is coloured by conceptions.

Conceptions that are no more than a copy of reality.

A reproduction of the truth, and the irrepressible urge to manipulate it.

"They decided to make the undoable doable. And they failed, of course."

JAN LAUWERS

This performance tells the tale of a man who in just a few seconds loses everything he possesses. We follow the thoughts that cross his mind during this crucial moment when everything suddenly becomes nothing.

A reflection on perception: affection, horror, destruction, memories.

The memory of the past unwittingly becomes the future.

A play about war. About all wars. Approximately 400 since the Second World War.

The tragic story of happiness.

But that too is untrue.

What we see is what there is.

"And despite everything she was laughing one more time"

JAN LAUWERS

Blackout.

"Then everything went silent... silent... and this silence... they knew... was their greatest enemy. They knew that this silence should not be. That this silence was not a silence but a threat.

They knew that if they were able to make this silence inaudible... That nothing evil could happen... that they would then be, yes, invincible and would at last be able to reorder the secrets, the mysteries of life.

Reordering, that was the aim.

And with a mathematical precision and a dedication one now only found in very young people, they decided to make the undoable doable. And they failed, of course."

IMAGES OF AFFECTION, JAN LAUWERS

"I don't know where the artificial stops and the real starts. The artificial fascinates me, bright and shiny."

ANDY WARHOL

Mike was with Angie and Lola in the Kebab shop.

That's where Angie was killed.

A few hours later the war started.

Mike thought the first explosion killed his wife, Christine.

But actually, she was already dead.

"Never doing it is very exiting"

ANDY WARHOL

That night when the war started,

Mike was in the kebab shop with his friends.

He thought the first explosion killed his wife,

but she was already dead.

"Wasted space is any space that has art in it."

ANDY WARHOL

Mike lost everything the night the war started.

He thought the first explosion killed Christine (his wife).

Actually she died long before.

"It's not just that it's part of my image not to tell everything, it's just that I forget what I said the day before and I have to make it up all over again."

ANDY WARHOL

HAPPINNES/ HAPINNESS/ HAPPINES/ HAPPINNES/HAPPINESS...

It is the horror that returns a friendly smile, it is the devil that slowly insinuates itself and pretends there is nothing wrong. It is 'happiness' that wants to be so happy, and is so obsessively in search of an expression of it that there is something compulsive about it. Happiness is dominant.

We are happy because we should be, because happiness is a familiar concept. Because happiness is set in stone and one can do nothing against it. Because we are always in search of it. Because we think we had it

yesterday but no longer today. Because tomorrow it may run away. Because we stubbornly hang on to it. Because happiness has no freedom. Because happiness is a lie. Because happiness has no breathing space for too tight an embrace. Because happiness pounds against the sides of our eye sockets. Because happiness is a dictator that determines who, where and when it will be our turn. Because happiness is very lonely. Because happiness should be very unhappy.

It is this age-old quest by man for the ultimate freedom that ties the straitjacket ever tighter, because we obstinately try to define this freedom but cannot find the right language.

'The rabbit has a round, childlike face with a flat nose, enormous earflaps and eyes that have a somewhat helpless expression. People like looking at rabbits because their faces remind us of a child's.'

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A RABBIT, R. LOCKLEY

The history

Wild rabbits have been known for some years. All our present-day rabbits stem from a small wild primal rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). They are first mentioned in written history in about 1500 BC.

Several times in the history of the rabbit they have multiplied so copiously that it was possible to call it a plague of rabbits. When no method of controlling them was of any further help, the disease myxomatosis was spread among them. The result was the death of huge numbers. Now this is the most feared disease in rabbits throughout the world.

Males differ from females in that they sometimes stamp hard with their back legs and rub the underside of their chin over all manner of objects. In this way they mark out their territory by means of their scent.

Some rabbits may bite as a consequence of their urge to mate. Females are much calmer in this respect. Reproduction is in general very successful.

UIT DE GESCHIEDENIS VAN HET KONIJN

Text Vjera Somers unless otherwise stated

CREDITS

Writer, director,
concept and design

Jan Lauwers

In collaboration with,
and performed by

Grace Ellen Barkey, Anneke Bonnema, Einat Tuchman/ Gabriela Carizzo, Julien Faure (replaces Timothy Couchman), Benoît Gob (replaces Dick Crane), Hans Petter Dahl, Misha Downey, Kosi Hidama, Tijen Lawton, Maarten Seghers

Music

Hans Petter Dahl, Maarten Seghers, Ray Davies, Fennesz

Lighting Concept

Jan Lauwers, Joris De Bolle

Sound Concept

Dré Schneider

Costumes

Lot Lemm

Assistant Director

Alyse Leigh

Subtitles

Inge Ceustermans

Masks and vases

Philippe Crépain

Photography

Maarten Vanden Abeele

Production manager

Luc Galle

Producer

Needcompany

Coproducers

Brugge 2002, Théâtre de la Ville (Paris), Le-Maillon Théâtre de Strasbourg, in cooperation with Kaaitheater (Brussels) and Cultuurcentrum Brugge

The performance lasts 80 minutes

Given the fact that the actors are of eight different nationalities, the performance is played in English. With subtitles.

Needcompany is subsidised by the Flemish Community and the National Lottery.

PERFORMANCE DATES

OPENING NIGHT	STADSSCHOUWBURG BRUGGE,	28 February 2002
	STADSSCHOUWBURG BRUGGE	1, 2 March 2002
	KAAITHEATER, BRUSSELS	6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15 March 2002
	THEATRE DE LA VILLE, PARIS	4, 5, 6 April 2002
	STADSSCHOUWBURG, LEUVEN	3 May 2002
	DESINGEL, ANTWERP	23, 24, 25 May 2002
	DEUTSCHES SCHAUSPIELHAUS IN HAMBURG	28, 29 May 2002
	KAAITHEATER, BRUSSELS (THEATERFESTIVAL)	30 August 2002
	STADSSCHOUWBURG AMSTERDAM (THEATERFESTIVAL)	7 September 2002
	KUNSTENCENTRUM VOORUIT, GHENT	27, 28 September 2002
	LE-MAILLON, THÉÂTRE DE STRASBOURG	29, 30, 31 January and 1st February 2003
	CENTRE DRAMATIQUE NATIONAL, CAEN	25, 26 March 2003
	PACT ZOLLVEREIN, ESSEN	9,10 May 2003
	KÜNSTLERHAUS MOUSONTURM, FRANKFURT	29, 30, 31 August 2003
	INTERCULT, STOCKHOLM	10, 11, 12 September 2003
	BLACK BOX, TEATER, OSLO	8, 9 October 2003
	TEATRE LLIURE, BARCELONA	14, 15 October 2003
	THEATERFESTIVAL SPIELART, MUNCHEN	31 October 2003
	THEATRE 71 / ILES DE DANSE, MALAKOFF	28 November 2003
	THEATRE DE L'AGORA / ILES DE DANSE, EVRY	2 December 2003
	MAISON DE LA MUSIQUE / ILES DE DANSE, NANTERRE	5 December 2003
	DE VELINX, TONGEREN	23 January 2004
	ROTTERDAMSE SCHOUWBURG, ROTTERDAM	5 March 2004
	NEW DRAMA ACTION FESTIVAL, VILNIUS	23 May 2004
	THE NEW THEATRE INSTITUTE OF LATVIA /	
	NEW RIGA THEATRE RIGA	13 June 2004
	BALTOSCANDAL INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL,	
	RAKVERRE	16 June 2004

CURRICULUM VITAE

Jan Lauwers & Needcompany

Jan Lauwers (b. Antwerp, 17th April 1957), dramatist and artist, studied painting at the Academy of Art in Ghent. At the end of 1979 he gathered round him a number of people to form the Epigonenensemble. In 1981 this group was transformed into the Epigonentheater zlv collective which took the theatre world by surprise with its six stage productions. In this way Jan Lauwers took his place in the movement for radical change in Flanders in the early eighties, and also made his international breakthrough. Epigonentheater zlv presented direct, concrete, highly visual theatre that used music and language as structuring elements. Lauwers' impact within the group increased, and in 1985 this led to its break up and the formation of Needcompany. Both its operations and its company of actors are distinctly international. Every production is performed in several languages. Needcompany did not have to wait long for international success. Its first productions, *Need to Know* (1987) and *ça va* (1989) – which for Needcompany received the Mobiel Pegasus Preis – were still highly visual, but in subsequent productions the storyline and the main theme gained in importance, although the fragmentary composition remained. Lauwers' training as an artist is decisive in his handling of the theatre medium and leads to a highly individual and in many ways pioneering theatrical idiom that examines the theatre and its meaning.

One of its most important characteristics is a transparent, 'thinking' acting and the paradox between acting and non-acting. This specific approach is also to be found in the plays from the classical repertoire (all Shakespeare) that he has staged: *Julius Caesar* (1990), *Antonius und Kleopatra* (1992), Needcompany's *Macbeth* (1996), Needcompany's *King Lear* (2000) and, at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg, *Ein Sturm* (2001). After directing *Invictos* (1996), the monologue *SCHADE/Schade* (1992) and the opera *Orfeo* (1993), in 1994 he started work on a large project called *The Snakesong Trilogy*: *Snakesong/Le Voyeur* (1994), *Snakesong/Le Pouvoir* (1995) and *Snakesong/Le Désir* (1996). In 1998 he staged the reworked version of the whole *Snakesong Trilogy*.

In September 1997 he was a guest in the theatre section of Documenta X, for which he created *Caligula*, after Camus, the first part of a diptych called *No beauty for me there*, where human life is rare. With *Morning Song* (1999), the second part of the diptych *No beauty...*, Lauwers and Needcompany won an Obie- Award in New York. In May 2000, at the request of William Forsythe, Lauwers created, in co-production with the Ballett Frankfurt, the piece entitled *DeaDDogsDon'tDance/DjamesDjoyceDeaD*. In 2001, Jan Lauwers directed *Kind*, a co-production with Needcompany and Het Net.

Images of Affection (2002) the play created for the 15th anniversary of Needcompany, was selected for the Theatre Festival. Jan Lauwers is presenting three monologues and a dance solo under the title No Comment (2003). Charles Mee, Josse De Pauw and Jan Lauwers have written pieces for Carlotta Sagna ('Salome'), Grace Ellen Barkey ('The tea drinker') and Viviane De Muynck ('Ulrike') respectively. Six composers – Rombout Willems, Doachim Mann, Walter Hus, Senjan Jansen, Hans Petter Dahl and Felix Seger – have written a musical composition for the dance solo by Tijen Lawton. Broadly speaking the themes of this performance are those that Lauwers has reformulated and redefined ever since the start of his work with Needcompany: violence, love, eroticism and death. A collection of several thousand ethnological and archaeological objects left by Jan Lauwers' father provides the impulse to tell the story of Isabella Morandi in Isabella's room (opens 9 July 2004 at the Avignon theatre festival). Nine performers together reveal the secret of Isabella's room with as central figure the monumental actress Viviane De Muynck.

Jan Lauwers also has a number of film and video projects to his name, including From Alexandria (1988), Mangia (1995), Sampled Images (2000) and C-Song (2003). During summer 2001 Lauwers shot his first full-length film with the working title Goldfish Game. At the request of the curator Luk Lambrecht, Jan Lauwers subsequently also took part in the Grimbergen 2002 exhibition, for which nine artists created a work in situ (including Thomas Schütte, Lili Dujourie, Job Koelewijn, Atelier Van Lieshout and Ann Veronica Janssens).

JAN LAUWERS & NEEDCOMPANY

- 1987 Need to Know
 Opening: 24 March, Mickery, Amsterdam
- 1989 ça va
 Opening: 18 March, Theater Am Turm, Frankfurt
- 1990 Julius Caesar
 Opening: 31 May, Rotterdamse Schouwburg
- 1991 Invictos
 Opening: 18 May, Centro Andaluz de Teatro, Seville
- 1992 Antonius und Kleopatra
 Opening: 14 February, Teater Am Turm, Frankfurt
- 1992 SCHADE/schade
 Opening: 21 October, Theater Am Turm, Frankfurt
- 1993 Orfeo, opera by Walter Hus
 Opening: 23 May, Bourschouwburg, Antwerp
- 1994 The Snakesong Trilogy - Snakesong/Le Voyeur
 Opening: 24 March, Theater Am Turm, Frankfurt
- 1995 The Snakesong Trilogy - Snakesong/Le Pouvoir (Leda)
 Opening: 11 May, Dance 95, Munich
- 1996 The Snakesong Trilogy - Snakesong/Le Désir
 Opening: 6 November, Kanonhallen, Copenhagen
- 1996 Needcompany's Macbeth
 Opening: 26 March, Lunatheater, Brussels
- 1997 Caligula, No beauty for me there, where human life is rare, part one
 Opening: 5 September, Documenta X, Kassel
- 1998 The Snakesong Trilogy, reworked version with live music
 Opening: 16 April, Lunatheater, Brussels
- 1999 Morning Song, No beauty for me there, where human life is rare, part two
 Opening: 13 January, Lunatheater, Brussels
- 2000 Needcompany's King Lear
 Opening: 11 January, Lunatheater, Brussels
- 2000 DeaDDogsDon'tDance/ DJamesDjoyceDeaD
 Opening: 12 May, Das TAT, Frankfurt

- 2001 Ein Sturm
Opening: 22 March, Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg
- 2002 Images of Affection
Opening: 28 February, Stadsschouwburg, Bruges
- 2003 NO COMMENT
Opening: 24 April, Kaaitheater, Brussels
- 2004 Isabella's room
Opening: 9 July, Cloître des Carmes, Avignon

Grace Ellen Barkey

Grace Ellen Barkey, born in Surabaya in Indonesia, studied dance expression and modern dance at the theatre school in Amsterdam and afterwards worked as an actress and dancer. She has choreographed several productions. In 1986 she joined Needcompany as a choreographer and actress. She did the choreography for *Need to Know* (1987), *ça va* (1989), *Julius Caesar* (1990), *Invictos* (1991), *Antonius und Kleopatra* (1992) and *Orfeo* (1993). She also acted in several of these productions, as well as in *The Snakesong Trilogy - Snakesong/Le Voyeur* (1994), *Needcompany's King Lear* (2000), *Images of Affection* (2002) and *No Comment* (2003). She was also a member of the cast of *Goldfish Game* (2002).

Since 1992 she has been steadily and successfully building an international career with her own stage creations. Her first pieces, *One* (1992), *Don Quijote* (1993) and *Tres* (1995) were coproduced by Theater AmTurm in Frankfurt. These were followed by the Needcompany productions *Stories (Histoires/Verhalen)* (1996), *Rood Red Rouge* (1998) and *Few Things* (2003). *Few Things* was received very enthusiastically both at home and abroad. *(AND)* (2002) is the sixth of her pieces to enjoy the infrastructural backing of Needcompany. In this piece she transcends all the boundaries of theatre, dance and music with an irresistible flair.

Anneke Bonnema

From 1982 to 1986 the Dutch Anneke Bonnema studied at the theatre school in Amsterdam. She staged several plays and also wrote a great many, including *De bomen het bos*, staged with the Nieuw West theatre company, and *Tegenmaat*. Since 1995 she has worked with Hans Petter Dahl in the L & O Amsterdam performance group. They have created several pieces including the love show *Tantra & Western*, the *Sing-Dance* series (1, 2 & 3), incorporating among other things the meditative happening entitled *Made in Heaven – Sing-Dance #2* and the multidisciplinary performance *Post coitum omne animal triste est*, with a different improvising dancer every night. On these projects they worked with people from several disciplines such as Liza May Post (artist), Oyvind Berg (writer), Tom Jansen (actor) and improvising dancers including David Zambrano, Laurie Booth, Eva Maria Keller and Michael Schumacher. In 1997 they did a coproduction with Bak-Truppen called *Good Good Very Good*. They made a duo performance from which *Nieuw Werk* and *Shoes and bags* (2003) developed. The occasion for *Shoes and Bags* was the opening of their virtual fashion, art and concept house, *Maison Dahl Bonnema*.

Needcompany's King Lear (2000) was Anneke Bonnema's first production with Jan Lauwers. Since then she has also appeared in *Images of Affection* (2002) and *Goldfish Game* (2002). In *No Comment* (2003) she replaces Carlotta Sagna. She has already written several things including pieces for *Needlapb* and short passages for *Isabella's Room* (2004).

Gabriela Carrizo

Gabriela Carrizo originates from Argentina, where she studied dance at the Ballet Universitario Cordoba. She then went to France, where she worked with Caroline Marcade on *Elan noir*, Alain Francon on *La vie Parisienne*

and Jean-Luc Boutte on Adrienne Lecouvreur. In 1994 she appeared in Enzo Pezzella's production *Si par une nuit*. Since 1997 she has worked with Alain Platel and has appeared in several productions by Les Ballets C. de la B., including *La Tristeza Complice* and *Bartime*.

In *Images of Affection* (2002) she will be working for Needcompany for the first time.

Hans Petter Dahl

From 1987 to 1995, Hans Petter Dahl worked with the Norwegian company Bak-Truppen. In 1995, together with Anneke Bonnema, he founded the L & O Amsterdam performance group. They have created several pieces including the love show *Tantra & Western*, the Sing-Dance series (1, 2 & 3), incorporating among other things the meditative happening entitled *Made in Heaven – Sing-Dance #2* and the multidisciplinary performance *Post coitum omne animal triste est*, with a different improvising dancer every night. On these projects they worked with people from several disciplines such as Liza May Post (artist), Oyvind Berg (writer), Tom Jansen (actor) and improvising dancers including David Zambrano, Laurie Booth, Eva Maria Keller and Michael Schumacher. In 1997 they did a coproduction with Bak-Truppen called *Good Good Very Good*. They made a duo performance from which *Nieuw Werk* and *Shoes and bags* (2003) developed. The occasion for *Shoes and Bags* was the opening of their virtual fashion, art and concept house, *Maison Dahl Bonnema*.

It was in Needcompany's *King Lear* (2000) that he first worked with Jan Lauwers. Since then he has also appeared in *Images of Affection* (2002) and *Goldfish Game* (2002). In *No Comment* (2003) he is one of the six composers. He also composes music for *Needlapb*.

Misha Downey

Misha Downey was born in Leicester in England. He trained at the London Contemporary Dance School from 1989 to 1992. Afterwards he co-founded the *Bedlam Dance Company*, which was led by the choreographer Yael Flexer. Misha Downey worked with the *Adventures in Motion Pictures* dance company on *The Nutcracker* and danced for the *Harlemations Dance Company* led by the choreographer Bunty Matthias. In January 1994 he joined the *Rosas* dance company in Brussels, where he took part in the creation of *Kinok* and *Amor constante más allá de la muerte*, as well as being involved in the revival of *Toccata*. Before he joined Needcompany, he also danced *Swan Lake* for the choreographer Matthew Bourne (performances in London and Los Angeles).

The first Needcompany production Misha Downey danced in was Grace Ellen Barkey's *Rood Red Rouge* (1998), later he also appeared in *Few Things* (2000). His collaboration with Jan Lauwers started when he acted in the rerun of *Caligula*. Later he appeared as an actor and dancer in *Morning Song* (1999), Needcompany's *King Lear* (2000), *Goldfish Game* (2002) and *Images of Affection* (2002).

Julien Faure

Julien Faure, born in France, studied performing arts at INSAS in Brussels from 1995 till 1998. After his studies he worked with Pierre Droulers on *Multim in Parvo* a creation for the *KunstenFESTIVALdesArts*. As from 1998 he worked with Karin Vyncke, Julie Bougard, Jean-François Duroure and Cie Osmosis. In 2001 he created his first choreography *Stamata #1-Et si demain voit le jour*.

(AND) (2002), by Grace Ellen Barkey, was his first production with Needcompany. He replaces Timothy Couchman in *Images of Affection* (2002).

Benoît Gob

Benoît Gob studied painting at the academy of art in Liège and then continued studying at INSAS in Brussels. In 1998 he joined Wim Vandekeybus' dance company *Ultima Vez* and danced in several productions including *The day of heaven and hell*, *In spite of wishing and wanting* and *Inasmuch as life is borrowed*.

He collaborated for the first time with Needcompany in (AND) (2002) by Grace Ellen Barkey. He replaces Dick Crane in *Images of Affection* (2002).

Kosi Hidama

After a 6 years career in the Tokyo Ballet, Kosi Hidama came to Belgium to join in the Company Michelle-Anne De Mey. He danced in *Sonata 555* and was involved in the creation of *Pulcinella*. In 1994 he started dancing in *Rosas*, the company of Anne-Teresa De Keersmaker. He took part in the creation of *Amor Constante Màs alla de la Muerte*, *Verklärte Nacht* and *Woud*. He also danced in the revivals of *Kinok* and *Mozart Concert Arias, un moto di gioia*. In 1998 he danced for the Company Pierre Droulers in *L'air, du vent*.

As a choreographer, Kosi Hidama started in 1995 with 3 pieces for Clarinet Solo. The last years he works basically in Yokohama, Japan. In the frame of the workshop A.S.K., organized by the prestigious Kanagawa Arts Foundation, he created his first group choreography *Present Present* (1997). Soon after he made *L.S.D.S.*, with music of George Van Dam and Ryoji Ikeda written to the performance. From this project he originated a second one with *Violence of gravity, elegance of fall* (1999) as a result.

He joins Needcompany in 2000 and appears in Grace Ellen Barkey's *Few Things*. He is a dancer and an actor in (And), by Grace Ellen Barkey, and in *Images of Affection* (2002), by Jan Lauwers.

Tijen Lawton

Tijen Lawton was born in Vienna to a British father and a Turkish mother. She was raised in Austria, Italy and Turkey, and finally ended up in Great Britain. In London she studied dance and music at the Arts Educational School from 1984 to 1988 and at the London Contemporary Dance School from 1988 to 1991. In 1989 she spent

a year at the prestigious Juillard School in New York. She participated in various dance workshops in Paris and Istanbul.

In 1991 she co-founded Foco Loco, a company that concentrated on research and development in every area of dance. In 1992 she joined Emma Carlson & dancers and toured Great Britain and Germany with the performance Inner Corner. In 1996 she came to Brussels to work on several productions by Pierre Droulers: Les Beaux Jours (1996), Lilas (1997) and Multum in Parvo (1998), followed by international tours. In the meantime she worked on the first choreographic pieces of her own: Les petites formes (1997) which contained Je n'ai jamais parlé, Les Beaux Jours and Plus fort que leurs voix aiguës (1998).

Her collaboration with Jan Lauwers started with her work as an actress and dancer in the revival of Caligula (1997) and in Morning Song (1999). Since then she has been a constant presence in Needcompany productions. She has appeared in Needcompany's King Lear (2000), Images of Affection (2002), Goldfish Game (2002) and No Comment (2003). She also appears in Few Things (2000) and (AND) (2002) by Grace Ellen Barkey and Needcompany.

Maarten Seghers

He studied stage directing at RITS (Brussels). In the meantime he continued his own work (theatre and music compositions). In 2001 he created the stage production Angel Butcher with the theatre company d a e m m e r u n g .

His collaboration with Needcompany started with the production Images of Affection (2002). He wrote the music for No Comment (2003). In Grace Ellen Barkey's (AND) (2002) he acts, dances and plays music. He composed the music for Unauthorized portrait (2003), a film about Jan Lauwers by Nico Leunen.

Einat Tuchman

Einat Tuchman was born in Israël, where she trained as a dancer at the Kibbutz Dance Company. She then travelled to the Netherlands where she studied at the Rotterdam Dance Academy and to Germany where she collaborated with the Tolada Dance Company. Since 1997 she has worked with Alain Platel, and has appeared in Iets op Bach. In the meantime she has also created her own choreographic works, entitled Retro Stries, Gumia and also Caravan and Bartime in collaboration with Gabriela Carrizo and Franck Chartier.

She replaces the pregnant Gabriela Carrizo in Images of Affection (2002).

REVIEWS

De Morgen, 1st of March 2002

JAN LAUWERS AND NEEDCOMPANY BRING 'IMAGES OF AFFECTION' IN BRUGES

Relentless Rabbits Attack Reason

Needcompany's new production was unanimously announced as a performance that was to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the company around Jan Lauwers (DM 28/2). No wonder that it turned out to be a production full of references to Lauwers's earlier theatre work.

Bruges / Theatre review by Tom Rummens

For instance, at one point, a female dancer assumes exactly the same pose as the woman in *Caligula* (1997). There are the familiar images of the stacked vases and of the hat covered in fruit. And then there is the very brief but very literal visual quote from *Morning Song* (1999) in which a male dancer clasps the head of a female dancer on points.

In its balance between dance, theatre and music too, this performance is reminiscent of *Morning Song*. Especially the dance scenes are uncommonly sophisticated. There is a very short but extremely energetic duet that takes place on the dividing line between the stage and the wings. A literally 'marginal' scene that is, as such, illustrative of the way Lauwers's dramatic idiom works: with very little unity and a very great sensitivity to the subtlest detail. A fragmented idiom which subjects the status of perception and of reason to continuous cross-questioning.

The performance is structured around an ostensibly thin story about a man whose wife was killed in an explosion in a kebab shop, just before the war. But it's never clear whether it was the explosion that killed her, or the first bomb of the war. In the course of the performance, the story is told from different points of view. What remains, is mainly an attack on the reason of the spectator, who cannot help but look for some unambiguity and consistency in the performance.

Images of Affection is about the offhand way people often treat death and violence. On the stage, when a 'living' character asks a 'dead' character whether he doesn't miss anything now that he's dead, the answer he eventually gets is "Yes, I do. Pockets in my trousers. It's a strange sensation to be without trouser pockets." Lauwers is on a quest for a disturbing but blood-curdling balance between the leaden pessimism of violence, war, adversity and death on the one hand, and the unbearable lightness in reply to that pessimism on the other. The two components are inseparable.

The best example of this duality in *Images of Affection* is the image of the rabbits. The rabbit stands for the affection in the title. But the rabbit-head masks are made from the same rock-hard material as nuclear warheads

and bullet-proof vests. In that respect too, ambiguity has the upper hand. And that way, every detail in this performance is a representation of lying, deceit, the hoodwinking of perception.

“Love it, trust it and leave it” is the quote from Don DeLillo’s *Underworld* which Lauwers selected as the leitmotiv for this production. Whoever dares to adopt this hardly self-evident attitude towards his theatre, will realise that, in spite of all its fragmentation, it is a particularly consistent way of making theatre.

De Standaard, Wednesday 6 March 2002

A Two-faced Head Tells His Story

Theatre review by Geert Sels

Needcompany tries to make friends with life in ‘Images of Affection’

When is a liar lying? It’s difficult to catch Dick Crane at it in *Images of Affection*. From the moment he comes in stage, the actor tries to win over the audience, but he constantly undermines his own credibility by calling himself a liar. Does that mean that his story about an attack in which he lost his loved ones is a fabrication? It could be a true story after all. Or is it rather the separate scenes that are doubtful, in which he jumps, like a head with two faces, from thesis to antithesis?

Only five minutes into this new production of Needcompany, and you already find yourself on thin ice.

And yet, the fact that the light is still on suggests a great deal of complicity between the people present, the performers address the audience in a friendly tone, and you are entertained from time to time by popular songs. Director Jan Lauwers plays a perfidious game of first seducing you and then slamming the door in your face. By creating an atmosphere of bonhomie, but never releasing you from a smouldering sense of unease.

This production expresses a chastened view on mankind. Cheerful spirits don’t seem to mind that any budding sense of well-being is promptly crushed. In the same way, performers keep rebuilding towers in the wings, as soon as the previous one has collapsed. The myth of Sisyphus could be a key, but instead of a trial, what we see here is more like a reconciliation with earthly existence.

The extremes of that existence are the framework in which Lauwers has placed this production. The opening scene is that of a man and a woman locked in an ardent embrace. Love, yes, the beginning of life, but in Western culture, also the beginning of sin. Even the smallest seed contains two opposing halves. In the closing scene, the eleven performers take off their rabbit-eared jesters’ helmets and place them in a row before the audience. Ultimate resignation. No more battle, no more movement.

Light-footed and with a mildness that Needcompany has never displayed before in its fifteen years, this production would seem to mark the start of a new course for the group, for the years to come. Formerly, Lauwers made a name for himself as the absolute aesthete or the radical until ruin. His most recent productions were mostly performed in darkness and ended in cataclysm. But with today's light and glow, a glimmer of hope has crept into his work, even though it is always ward off by those who are too sceptical to admit it. The situation is hopeless but not serious.

Using a skilful mixture of music, dance and text, the makers have succeeded in bringing variation to the rhythm, force and perspective of the production. The audience also gets a few extras in the form of quotes from earlier work, such as the recital of dates and wars, the building of ingenious towers, Grace Elle Barkey in an oriental dance, and the references to 'my dead wife'. Even the use of the music, some of the softer hits of The Kinks mixed with disharmonic sound effects, contain a reference to what The Residents made of King Lear.

Images of Affection is an attempt to make friends with life. Even though life kicks sometimes. It's happy, it's vicious, and you never know how things will turn out.

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