

BRUSSELS, SEPTEMBER 2011

Dear Friends,

While preparing for the Venice Biennale I had a discussion with a collector friend who considered that art subsidies had no effect at all on the quality of the arts and that a lack of such support made them reflect more keenly. Don't spoil them any more, as quality will always rise to the surface. I replied that he was forgetting that we live in a cynical society. And one of the ways of counteracting this cynicism is to stimulate 'thinking time'. For which subsidies really are necessary. I explained to him that new spearhead businesses have long understood that freedom at work is the best stimulus for creative and inventive results. Some companies give their employees total freedom for as much as 20% of their working hours (meaning time that does not necessarily yield a profit). Google has discovered that the most innovations (inventions) occur in these 'free zones'. In fact it is at such moments that 'humans at play' take the lead. This can only occur in an environment where there is a complete lack

of cynicism, because a cynical person would only abuse the situation by using this playtime to amuse or enrich himself. On the free market this reaches 20%, while we are talking about a state subsidy of 1.7%, and even this meagre sum is called into question. Incomprehensible. You would be amazed at the number of American artists who come to rejuvenate themselves on the subsidised European market because their market doesn't allow it.

The collector wasn't convinced, and told me he wasn't concerned with the money but with the mentality. 'The passion for the craft. The passion for life itself. Anyway, artists are always at play. With or without money. Playing Don Quixote against the establishment. And if by chance they become rich and famous they smash the windows of their own villa.' 'But look,' I said, 'what we see here at the Biennale are a lot of mistakes and effects.' 'To be sure,' he agreed, 'But what has that got to do with subsidies?'

'The effects are caused by the free market and the mistakes by the subsidies,' I replied. 'So you think that more mistakes should be made,' he said. I looked at my friend, who was shaking with laughter so much he almost fell into the canal. 'And I think you're probably right,' he said.

A few days later we were at his house talking about what we had seen in Venice. 'We have mainly seen effects,' he said. 'Fashionable frivolity.' A painting by Tuymans hangs on the wall of his dining room. An early work. 'Look,' I said, 'that's one of Tuymans' best works. It's slow. Many-layered. Intense. He did it in a period when he still had time because the market wasn't interested. Didn't put any pressure on him. Didn't force him to yield a profit.' He answered that Tuymans didn't receive any subsidies at that time either. 'What a romantic soul you are,' I said, 'So you think that we should all be night porters or pole dancers so we can do bits of art in our 'free' time?'

Failed priests who paint flowers?' 'Did you know,' I continued, 'that a leading dancer with Rosas earns a lot less than the lowest assistant in a cycling team? That's what I'm talking about.' 'But,' he said, 'if Rosas were run the same way as the cycling team that dancer would earn the salary of a star cyclist.' I gave him a pitying look and said, 'It's quite comical that you, as a passionate collector who seeks out the latest ways of thinking, actually defend the same point of view as that hyper-reactionary new government in the Netherlands.' 'Hey, don't start insulting me,' he replied. 'OK,' I said, 'I take back that last remark. No one could fall so low. But in fact I'm much stricter than you, my free friend: a good subsidy system sees to it that an artist cannot buy a villa, but also that he doesn't die of hunger and has sufficient means to give shape to his 'thoughts'. But I have to agree with you as far as Venice is concerned. There was a lot of tedium. Lots of villas with reinforced glass. But a few superb works too.' 'How many of all the works you saw were good?' he asked. '1.7%,' I replied quite seriously. He nodded. So we agreed on the percentage after all.

When I arrived home I saw that a window in my villa had cracked. A dead crow was lying on the ground. I got out my pricey i-phone and took a photo which I composed so that the bird's broken neck formed a perfect golden section with the crack in the window. I called it 'The spirit of Vincent?' and sent it to my friend. Then I phoned the glazier.

Oh yes, one more thing. In Venice I saw Michelangelo coming out of a chapel. He looked at his muscular hands, sighed, and mumbled 'Jesus Christ...'

Regards,
JL

PS: Needcompany has existed for 25 years due to your subsidies. For which I thank you.

AGENDA

THE ART OF ENTERTAINMENT

Jan Lauwers

With: Grace Ellen Barkey, Misha Downey, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gob, Viviane De Muynck, Dirk Roofthoof, Eléonore Valère

Production: Needcompany/Burgtheater (Vienna)

15, 16, 17, 18 September 2011

Belgian Premiere

Kaaithheater, Brussels

+32 2 201 59 59

19, 20 October 2011

7e Stanislavsky Season Festival
Teatrium on Serpukhovka, Moscow
+7 495 935 896

24 November 2011

Rotterdamse Schouwburg, Rotterdam
+31 10 411 8110

15, 16, 20 December 2011

Vooruit, Ghent
+32 9 267 28 28

ANALYSIS – THE WHOLE SONG

MaisonDahlBonnema

With: Hans Petter Dahl and Anna Sophia Bonnema

Production: MaisonDahlBonnema, Needcompany & M-A-P | Coproduction: BIT Teatergarasjen (Bergen), in collaboration with BUDA arts centre (Kortrijk), 3D Square/ HOWEST (Kortrijk) and Kaaithheater (Brussels), with residencies at ImPulsTanz (Vienna), PACT Zollverein (Essen) and with the support of the Flemish Community and Norsk Kulturråd.

20, 21 October 2011

World premiere

BIT Teatergarasjen Meteor Festival,
Studio Bergen, Bergen (NO)
+47 55 23 22 35

9 November 2011

Belgian Premiere

CC Maasmechelen
+32 89 76 97 97

21, 22 December 2011

Kaaistudios, Brussels
+32 2 201 59 59

THIS DOOR IS TOO SMALL (FOR A BEAR)

Grace Ellen Barkey

Concept: Lemm&Barkey | Created with and performed by: Misha Downey, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gob, Sung-Im Her, Maarten Seghers

A Needcompany production | Coproduction: ImPulsTanz (Vienna), PACT Zollverein (Essen), künstlerhaus mousonturm (Frankfurt) | In association with Kaaithheater (Brussels)

27 September 2011

Theater aan het Spui, The Hague
+31 70 346 52 72

8 October 2011

Demetria Festival, Theatre of the Society for Macedonian Studies, Thessaloniki
+30 2310 288000

13, 14, 15 October 2011

Domaine d'O, Montpellier
+33 800 200 165

10, 11, 12 November 2011

Théâtre Garonne, Toulouse
+33 5 62 48 54 77

ISABELLA'S ROOM

Jan Lauwers

With: Viviane De Muynck, Hans Petter Dahl, Anneke Bonnema, Benoît Gob, Misha Downey, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Sung-Im Her, Maarten Seghers, Jan Lauwers, Elke Janssens, Lemm&Barkey

A Needcompany production | Coproduction: Festival d'Avignon, Théâtre de la Ville (Paris), Théâtre Garonne (Toulouse), La Rose des Vents (Scène Nationale de Villeneuve d'Ascq), Brooklyn Academy of Music (New York) and welf in basel theaterfestival | In association with Kaaithheater (Brussels)

11 October 2011

La Biennale di Venezia
41. International Theatre Festival
Teatro alle Tese, Venice
+39 041 5218 828

13, 14 December 2011

La Halle aux Grains,
Scène nationale de Blois, Blois
+33 2 54 90 44 00

THE DEER HOUSE

Jan Lauwers

With: Grace Ellen Barkey, Anneke Bonnema, Hans Petter Dahl, Viviane De Muynck, Misha Downey, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gob, Maarten Seghers, Eléonore Valère, Inge Van Bruystegem

Production: Needcompany and Salzburger Festspiele | Coproduction: Schauspielhaus Zürich and PACT Zollverein (Essen) | With the cooperation of deSingel (Antwerp) and Kaaithheater (Brussels)

24 September 2011

Divadelná Nitra
International Theatre Festival
Andrej Bagar Theatre, Nitra
+42 1 37 65 24 872

GOLDFISH GAME

A film by Jan Lauwers

With: Grace Ellen Barkey, Anneke Bonnema, Timothy Couchman, Dick Crane, Gonzalo Cunill, Hans Petter Dahl, Viviane De Muynck, Misha Downey, Victor Lauwers, Tijen Lawton, Carlotta Sagna, Simon Versnel

Production: Needcompany and De Filmfabriek | With the support of the Fonds Film in Vlaanderen, Canvas, Canal+ and Brugge 2002

13 December 2011

Filmplateau, KASKcinema, Ghent
kaskcinema@hogent.be

THE HOUSE OF OUR FATHERS

Jan Lauwers

Performers: Grace Ellen, Barkey, Hans Petter Dahl, Anneke Bonnema, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gob, Maarten Seghers, Inge Van Bruystegem, Jan Lauwers, Elke Janssens

3, 4, 5, 6 November 2011

Museum M, Leuven
+32 16 27 29 29

THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AT NEEDCOMPANY

Needcompany will be coming up with plenty of surprises in the coming season. We are starting off in festive mood with the Belgian premiere of Jan Lauwers' latest creation, **The Art of Entertainment**, with Dirk Roofthoof, Viviane De Muynck, Grace Ellen Barkey and the Needcompany ensemble. After 25 years, Jan Lauwers asks this pertinent question: when is art entertainment, and when is entertainment art? What better way of examining this question than putting it to Dirk Roofthoof? Having first led several leading German actors to their doom on stage, we are taking on this masterly actor in a production that goes right against the cynical era in which it was created.

After the premiere and initial performances at the Kaaithheater it will also tour to Rotterdam, Moscow and Ghent.

"But there is more than just the irony with which Lauwers examines reality TV: he also sheds light on the ultimate motivations of the performing artist. The characters talk about the actor's craft, politics, sex and art itself. Certain characters fall completely flat while being eaten up by the media. If a moment of silence occurs, it must immediately be filled with sound. Jan Lauwers and his extraordinary Needcompany create an emotionless absurdity that barely moves us, but which certainly strikes home, like a slap or a custard pie in the audience's face."
El Mundo, May 2011

During the summer, MaisonDahlBonnema gave a presentation of their work-in-progress as part of their residence at the celebrated ImPulsTanz in Vienna. This first glimpse of their new work certainly met with a very

warm and promising reception. It will premiere at the international METEOR Festival in Bergen (Norway) at the end of October and then goes on to Maasmechelen cultural centre and the Kaaistudios.

Analysis – The Whole Song is the last piece of a trilogy on contemporary opera. Its form and content are stripped right down and the protagonists, Ricky and Ronny, enter into dialogue with historical and virtual figures who appear in an animated film. Ricky and Ronny will make their analysis on this journey through time and space.

The surrealist world that Grace Ellen Barkey and Lot Lemm have brought into being in **This door is too small (for a bear)** will have its Dutch premiere

in The Hague in the autumn and will also be performed at several places in France.

Over the next few months there are also quite a few visual art projects on the programme.

The opening of the Theatre Festival at the Kaaithheater is accompanied by the opening of an exhibition called **2**, showing work by four duos of theatre photographers and artists, including Maarten Vanden Abeele and Jan Lauwers. Four double interviews will be published in an issue of Rekto:Verso under the same title as the exhibition. After the Theatre Festival the show will go to the C-mine cultural centre in Genk and De Warande in Turnhout.

We would also like to announce that the **OPEN AIR #5** residence project, with Nicolas Field, Idan Hayosh, Pontogor, Mind Over Mirrors, Fritz Welch, Michael Fliri, Roberta Gigante and the American band Peeesseye, resulted in a radical and explosive evening.

"Strong performances based on raw poetry and primal sounds – and out of the darkness an educational 'explosive' talk with fireworks that would reduce Handel to jealous nail-biting as he viewed them from one or other dark corner"
Luk Lambrecht

On 25th September Champ d'Action and M HKA are organising the **8th Time Canvas**, which includes work by Jan Lauwers. Time Canvas examines the social significance of music, its rela-

tionship with other art forms and the interaction with the audience.

November starts with **The House of Our Fathers** at Museum M in Leuven. Jan Lauwers' installation, with its seven-hour performances, which was shown earlier this year at the 16th International Schillertage in Mannheim, can be seen in Leuven on four successive days.

Alex Rigola, curator of the Workshop of Dramatic Arts at the Venice Biennale's 41st International Theatre Festival, selected a group of prominent theatre-makers who are internationally regarded as leaders in their field, and invited them to take part in a master-class project with a concluding performance

called **The Seven Sins**. Jan Lauwers is one of them, along with Thomas Ostermeier, Romeo Castellucci, Rodrigo Garcia, Ricarco Bartis, Calixto Bieito and Jan Fabre.

In addition, Rigola also presents one production by each of the directors involved, one that is representative of their poetic idiom. Needcompany will be performing **Isabella's Room** at the Teatro alle Tese. In December it will also be on in Blois.

The Deer House is also continuing to tour and will be on at the Divadelna Nitra international theatre festival in September.

Goldfish Game, the full-length film Jan Lauwers and Needcompany made in 2002, is programmed at the KASK cinema (formerly the Film Plateau) in mid-December. Dramaturgist Erwin Jans will give an introductory talk.