

BRUSSELS, MAY 2012

Hello,

I am often asked why I chose to work as a resident director at the Burgtheater in Vienna. Tricky. I'll try to answer:

1. It has something to do with my urge always to look for something new. I am not interested in the familiar. Theatre that is clear, lucid and familiar is not my thing. I want to create problems, not solve them. So why the great Burgtheater, the most conventional place imaginable? Because the new means nothing without what has gone before. Because everything has already been said, but we must not repudiate the history of what has been said. It is in this contradiction that the new is to be found. And the Burgtheater stands for history. A phenomenal history.

2. The Burgtheater also stands for 'style-lessness'. Each director is responsible for leading the actors he works with to new problems. Thomas Vinterberg, known to you all as the maker of the film masterpiece *Festen*, made his first theatre piece here and

directs in a way that is almost the exact opposite of my approach.

The intendant, Matthias Hartmann, a very generous and astute man, recently said to me that for the actors, making a classical comedy is actually the same as the daily classical training for the dancers who work for someone like Forsythe. A question of maintaining and polishing one's skills.

I am working on Camus' *Caligula* with a group of exceptional actors. Their skills are extraordinary. My task is to give this craftsmanship a kick and to question it. To examine its history and then make an attempt to give this 'new thing' a chance. And this is possible in the Burgtheater.

3. It is a merciless system. Any production that is not a sell-out in its first season is unrelentingly removed from the bill. I experienced this personally with my first production for the Burgtheater: *The art of entertainment*. It

was dropped after its first season and with sales of only 70% after the first 20 performances. I do not agree with this, because new things are slow and need time to be recognised. But it is also exciting to enter into a struggle with the lie of history.

4. And of course there is also the 'respect' for theatre that makes Vienna unique.

(I can't stop myself making a few comparisons: the federal state of Vienna (1.7 million inhabitants) receives about 65 million euro in subsidies for spoken theatre. The federal state of Flanders (6.3 million inhabitants) receives about 27 million. So each individual in Vienna is offered about 10 times more culture than in Flanders. Yet the Flemish pay more taxes than the Viennese. No further comment.)

5. And vanity. I have to admit that when I walk beneath Klimt's painted ceilings on my way to 'work', I do not feel any false modesty...

6. So why don't I leave Flanders? Because of the incredible 'freedom' offered by the total lack of history in our theatre. No one can prise me out of Brussels because it's a 'dangerous' city full of problems. Needcompany is unique and is respected all over the world and was born in this dark city. There is no better place to ask new questions. And there is no better place than Vienna to give a value to these questions.

All the best,  
JL

PS: One comment, after all: in Flanders, artists and arts organisations have been able to read the recommendations given to the Minister of Culture, which indicate who, according to the advisory committee, should be allowed to work in the 'cultural sector' and who should preferably be forbidden from practising the profession. In these documents it is assumed, shamelessly, that there should be less money for the arts in general, and thus also for the expensive (?) performing arts sector.

It should be realised that all those extremely impassioned and committed people who have put their lives on hold in favour of art and culture (not only artists but also people like Jan Hoet and Gerard Mortier), people who have put Flanders on the international map, are actually being asked just to go away. And the reason is not that those on the far right call us subsidy junkies, but that for decades no party has had any real interest in culture in general and art in particular. To many people subsidies in Flanders look like becoming fuck-off bonuses.

I propose that all the recommendations currently in the minister's hands should be reviewed and the basic principle adopted that subsidies for culture can and should be increased, just as in Poland, for example. The Dutch model should be cast aside. You will see that the economy of the heart will be better for it, for all citizens, even those who always announce winter too early.

## AGENDA

### MARKETPLACE 76

Jan Lauwers

With: Grace Ellen Barkey, Anneke Bonnema, Hans Petter Dahl, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gob, Sung-Im Her, Romy Louise Lauwers, Maarten Seghers, Emmanuel Schwartz, Catherine Travelletti, Jan Lauwers, Elke Janssens

Production: Needcompany | Coproduction: Ruhrtriennale, Burgtheater (Vienna) and Holland Festival (Amsterdam)

7, 8, 13, 14, 15 September 2012

Jahrhunderthalle, Ruhrtriennale, Bochum  
+49 700 20 02 34 56

### NEEDLAPB 19

Jan Lauwers

With: Grace Ellen Barkey, Anneke Bonnema, Hans Petter Dahl, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gob, Sung-Im Her, Romy Louise Lauwers, Maarten Seghers, Emmanuel Schwartz, Catherine Travelletti, Jan Lauwers, Elke Janssens

Production: Needcompany

23 June 2012

Kaaitheater, Brussels  
+32 2 201 59 59

### CALIGULA

Jan Lauwers

With: Anneke Bonnema, Hans Petter Dahl, Nicolas Field, Maria Happel, André Meyer, Cornelius Obonya, Falk Rockstroh, Herman Scheidleder

Production: Burgtheater (Vienna) | In association with Needcompany

17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24 May 2012  
11, 12 June 2012

Kasino (Burgtheater), Vienna  
+43 51 444 4145

### THE ART OF ENTERTAINMENT

NEEDCOMPANY PERFORMS THE DEATH OF DIRK ROOFTHOFT

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)

23, 24, 25 May 2012

deSingel, Antwerp  
+32 3 248 28 28

### 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, PACT Zollverein (Essen) | With the collaboration of deSingel (Antwerp), La Rose des Vents (Villeneuve d'Ascq), Kaaitheater (Brussels)

27, 28 May 2012

SIBFest 2012, Radu Stanca National Theater of Sibiu / Sibiu International Festival Theater

+40 269 21 00 92

### 25 MOVES

With: Grace Ellen Barkey, Misha Downey, Julien Faure, Nicolas Field, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gob, Sung-Im Her, Maarten Seghers, Elke Janssens, Jan Lauwers, Joeri Cnapelinckx, *et al.*

Production: Needcompany / Vrijsstaat O.

1 July 2012

Oostend beach  
www.dansand.be

### 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

Production: Needcompany | Coproduction: le 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 welt in basel theaterfestival. In collaboration with Kaaitheater (Brussels)

17-21, 24-28, 31 July 2012

1-4 August 2012

Festival Paris quartier d'été, Théâtre Le Monfort, Paris  
+33 1 56 08 33 88

### SUPERBODIES TRIENNIAL

3<sup>rd</sup> Triennial of Art, Fashion & Design in Hasselt

With work by Lemm&Barkey

From 3 February to 27 May 2012

Modemuseum Hasselt  
+32 11 23 96 21

### 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 / de Filmfabriek | With support from Fonds Film in Vlaanderen, Canvas, Canal+ and Bruges 2002

28 May 2012

SIBFest 2012, Radu Stanca National Theater of Sibiu / Sibiu International Festival Theater

+40 269 21 00 92

### I WANT (NO) REALITY

A film by Ana Brzezińska

Production: Yeti Films  
Coproduction: Needcompany

18 May 2012

PLANETE+ DOC FILM FESTIVAL, Warsaw, Poland  
www.planetedocff.pl

## THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AT NEEDCOMPANY

In early September, Jan Lauwers' latest creation premiered during the **Ruhrtriennale**. On 23 June Needcompany will be presenting **Needlapb 19**, which focuses mainly on **Marketplace 76**. **Needlapb** is a space for open thinking with unlimited freedom. A unique opportunity to take a look at the working process. The script of **Marketplace 76** was first fired at an audience during **Needlapb 18**. The people in the Akademietheater in Vienna didn't know what hit them and when it was over they gave it a standing ovation of many minutes. But even this applause was surpassed by the award of the Gold Medal for Services to the Republic of Austria to Jan Lauwers by the Minister of Culture, Claudia Schmied. A festive evening to which we shall be adding a sequel in the Kaaitheater.

**Marketplace 76** tells the story of villagers startled by an explosion in which 24 people die, 7 of them children. The tragedy of the children weighs heavily on the villagers left behind. There is too much sorrow in the air. Until one day a lifeboat falls from the sky...

But before that, we are looking forward to the world premiere of **Caligula** in May, directed by Jan Lauwers on commission to the Burgtheater. The people he is working on it with include the star actor Cornelius Obonya, who plays Caligula, and also Hans Petter Dahl and Anneke Bonnema from the Needcompany ensemble, as well as the composer Nicolas Field, who was previously involved in projects by OHNO COOPERATION.

*"What's the point of the power before me, so dumbfounding, if I can't change situations, if I can't see to it that the sun sets in the East, that there is less suffering and that people no longer die?"*

— Caligula in Albert Camus' play 'Caligula'

After the first performances of **Caligula**, Needcompany will be going to Antwerp, where it will with great pleasure be performing **The art of entertainment** at deSingel. Anyone who has not yet been able to see this play in Belgium, with Dirk Roofthoof and Viviane De Muynck in the leading parts, will have the opportunity on three nights at deSingel.

The recent series of performances of **The art of entertainment** in Espoon were certainly received enthusiastically by both the public and the press:

*"There lies a poetic beauty behind every word and movement."* — Turun Sanomat 13.4.2012

Viviane De Muynck recently gave six weeks of workshops at the **Höhschule der Künste** in Bern and did a Shakespeare adaptation with a group of students there.

**SIBFEST**, a festival in Sibiu, is giving Needcompany an important position. The programme includes two performances of **The Deer House**, and also a screening of Jan Lauwers' 2002 full-length film **Goldfish Game**. The prestigious Humanitas publishing company is launching the Romanian edition of **Isabella's room** at the festival. For the occasion a group of Romanian actors will give a reading of the play.

Visual work by **Lemm&Barkey** can be seen at the **SuperBodies Triennial** until 27 May. For this show they made 18 video pieces entitled **Ontology of a series of images**, in which images are constructed and deconstructed almost in passing. Human figures become forms, matter becomes part of a body, and hesitation becomes eroticism.

The film-maker **Ana Brzezińska** has been following Needcompany on tour since 2009 and has made a personal portrait of the company and the necessity of creating art. Her documentary **I Want (NO) Reality** premieres at the PLANETE+ DOC FILM FESTIVAL (Warsaw) in May.

We are rounding off the season dancing, with **25 Moves** in Ostend. For **Dansand!**, the ensemble will be presenting a one-off night of dance and music that refers to work from the last 25 years.

**25 Moves** is living proof that everything can take on a different meaning at any time. No reconstruction, no nostalgia, but a work that constantly seeks out new problems. In this case the soundtrack of the performances will be a rock concert, the dance will be undermined by sand and in the meantime the visual image will drown in the sea. All under the guidance of **Grace Ellen Barkey** and **Maarten Seghers**.

And to close, the **Festival Paris quartier d'été** and **Théâtre Le Monfort** have invited us to give 15 performances of **Isabella's room** in Paris this summer.