Chers amis,

Over the last decade, the Avignon Festival under your very radical and inspiring leadership has grown enormously in prestige and has meant a lot to a great many, or... Flemish artists (one can’t ignore the fact). For ten years you have battled against a wave of mediocrity that has washed over Europe under the regimes of many of those in power. What is more, you have never fallen into the trap, as so many other curators have, of putting the political message before the intrinsic quality of the work of art. That is a considerable achievement at a time when certainty and clarity are high on the list of desirables. While remaining free of any sort of populism or poisonous nationalism, you have always aimed for a good balance between artists from France and from the rest of the world. It is to your credit that great risks are now taken in the official festival, with the support of a highly committed audience. And in the arts world and the living arts in particular it is all a matter of taking risks. Without such risks theatre is doomed to sink into oblivion. A work of art that has revealed its secrets is no longer a work of art, but a form of entertainment. Of course there is nothing wrong with entertainment, nor with political content, but when the means becomes the end and the content is confused with the form, art is too helpless to defend itself. It is in this that both artists and curators bear a serious responsibility.

Unfortunately for some, welcomed by others, you now have to throw in the towel. Politics has decided. It is definitely a couple of years too early. You will not be able to reap the benefits of la FabricA, the new workspace for which you and your loyal team have struggled day and night, so as to be able to open it this summer. The instructions are to hand over the keys and leave. That must hurt. But the world is big and needs people like you to create new and positive conflict zones together. Because that is precisely what you have made of this tremendous festival: a positive conflict zone with a highly-respected audience and artists who can never lose because they have no desire to win.

All the members of Needcompany wish you an extremely interesting future.

All the best,

Jan
MUSH-ROOM
Grace Ellen Barkey

Visual concept: Lemm&Barkey
Created with/formed by: Sung-Im Her, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gab, Maarten Seghers, Julien Faure, Mohamed Toukabri, Catherine Travelletti

Production: Needcompany / Co-production: PACT Zollverein (Essen) and Internationales Figurentheater Festival (Erlangen)

25, 26 June 2013
Malta Festival, Poznan
+48 61 64 65 243

30 June 2013
ImPulsTanz, Vienna
+43 1 722 54 00 111

14-22 June 2013
Holland Festival (Amsterdam)
Production: Needcompany / Co-production: MaisonDahlBonnema, Needcompany

17-21 September 2013
Holland Festival, Amsterdam
Production: Needcompany

The Impossible
Jan Lauwers

14-22 June 2013
ImPulsTanz, Vienna
+43 1 722 54 00 111

10, 11 September 2013
La Bilbaïne, Geneva
+41 22 738 19 19

THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AT NEEDCOMPANY

With MUSH-ROOM, her latest creation, Grace Ellen Barkey has intoxicated audiences in Essen, Brussels, Stockhle, Erlangen, Amsterdam and Leuven. The Swedish site kulturnyggen.com describes this production as ‘vivacious and enchanting’. The Flemish newspaper De Morgen wrote: ‘In MUSH-ROOM, Grace Ellen Barkey expands the borders of her own stage madness. (...) It’s enough for the group of performers to have unlimited, uncompro- mising dedication to make the wildest imag- inings become reality. (...) Suddenly everything is possible. You hallucinate without eating: a single mushroom, Cornelia del funghi, that’s what it is.’ We shall be spreading much of this summer on tour... MUSH-ROOM has programmed ANOGH-ROOM, but has also opted to take MaisonDahlBonnema’s Analysis – the Whole Song. At the Malta Festival in Poznan, ANOGH-ROOM will be on alongside Jan Lauwers’ Marketplace 76. The latter production has been on in Frankfurt, Vienna and Antwerp over the last few months. It has been selected for a great many festivals, and above all we are very proud to have been invited to the Avignon Festival for the fifth time. We shall be performing Marketplace 76 in the magical Château des Carmes for two weeks. The play-script is being published by Actes Sud. This dark story of village life can also be seen at the Holland festival, the Venice Biennale and La Biéle (Geneva). I WANT (NO) REALITY. Ana Brzezin’ska’s documentary on Needcompany, will also be on in Poznan and Avignon. Recently, it has been broadcast on the Polish TV channel TVP.

We are launching into the summer festival season with the performance The House of Our Fathers at the Kunst-Festspiele in Hanover. The special guest in this museum installation is the artist Dirk Braeckman. He will take part in three 4- to 6-hour marathons together with members of Needcompany. The biggest difference between theatre work and visual work is the use of the observer’s time. In theatre, the creator determines the time an image is given the time to penetrate into the observer’s memory. On this subject, Jan Lauw- ers says: ‘King Lear is an image that looks back at the audience, arrogant, provocative and in deathly silence. King Lear does not give any answers. It allows understanding and suffering without commentary.’ Jan Lauwers has been invited to show his work in the ‘Côté Cour’ exhibition in the exceptional setting of the Saline Royale (Royal Saltworks) at Arc-et-Senans. ‘Côté Cour’ assembles work from contemporary artists, visual artists, video artists and theatre-makers. It is intended to focus attention on the presence and movements of the body in space. The architecture is the space in which the body takes the stage. Jan Lauwers will be showing his short films C-Song and Raverve. And finally, we are off to China! Isabella’s room will be performed in three cities and will then go on to Taipei. You can read more about this adventure in September. Needcompany wishes you a super summer.

THE HOUSE OF OUR FATHERS – PERFORMANCES
Jan Lauwers
Performers: Grace Ellen Barkey, Anneke Bonnema, Hans Peter Dahl, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gab, Romy Louise Lauwers, Emmanuel Schwartz, Maarten Seghers, Catherine Travelletti, Jan Lauwers, Elke Janssens
Production: Needcompany / Co-production: PACT Zollverein (Essen) and Internationales Figurentheater Festival (Erlangen)

20 July 2013
ImPulsTanz, Vienna
+43 1 722 54 00 111

ANALYSIS – THE WHOLE SONG
MaisonDahlBonnema
With: Hans Peter Dahl and Anna Sophia Bonnema
Production: MaisonDahlBonnema, Needcompany / Co-production: PACT Zollverein (Essen) and Internationales Figurentheater Festival (Erlangen)

5 August 2013
Festival d’Avignon
+33 4 90 14 14 14

THE HOUSE OF OUR FATHERS – INSTALLATION
Jan Lauwers
Performers: Grace Ellen Barkey, Anneke Bonnema, Dirk Braeckman, Hans Peter Dahl, Julien Faure, Yumiko Funaya, Benoît Gab, Elke Janssens, Jan Lauwers, Romy Louise Lauwers, Maarten Seghers, Mohamed Toukabri, Catherine Travelletti, Inge Van Brystegem
Production: Needcompany

14, 15, 16 June 2013
Kunst-Festspiele, Oranienbaum
Hannover
+49 511 168 499 94

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