

En avant, marche!

NTGent/ les ballets C de la B
Frank Van Laecke, Alain Platel, Steven Prengels



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les ballets C de la B vzw

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NTGent

NTGent is Ghent's civic theatre. From its home base – the theatre on Sint-Baafsplein, at the heart of the city, between the cathedral, belfry and town hall – it goes out into the wide world with its ensemble of leading Flemish and Dutch actors. NTGent makes it a point of honour to take theatre to every corner of its own language area, but it is also a welcome guest and an active partner on the international scene, from the Avignon Festival, the RuhrTriennale, the Athens Festival and the Wiener Festwochen to such cities as Sydney, New York, Moscow, Zagreb and Seoul.

NTGent aims to present theatre that is moving, challenging and surprising. On the basis of its conviction that theatre remains unsurpassed as a social space that sets great store by tolerance, as a mental haven where the most diverse world-views can clash peacefully with each other, as an artistic space where openness to new ideas provides the start of a new story, with an eye to today's world and always ready for interaction with other artistic disciplines.

Until July 2015, NTGent's artistic course will be determined by actor and artistic jack-of-all-trades Wim Opbrouck. After this, NTGent will be celebrating the return of its former artistic director Johan Simons, the Dutch director who in 2010 swapped NTGent for the Münchner Kammerspiele. From 2015 to 2017, Simons will be combining this role with that of intendant of the RuhrTriennale. Wim Opbrouck will continue to work as an actor for NTGent, which, incidentally, will be celebrating its 50th birthday as a civic theatre in 2015.

www.ntgent.be

les ballets C de la B

les ballets C de la B (Ghent-Belgium) was founded by Alain Platel in 1984. Since then it has become a company that enjoys great success at home and abroad. Over the years it has developed into an artistic platform for a variety of choreographers. The company still keeps to its principle of enabling artists from various disciplines and backgrounds to take part in this dynamic creative process. As a result of its 'unique mixture of artistic visions', les ballets C de la B is not easy to classify. It is nevertheless possible to discern something like a house style (popular, anarchic, eclectic, committed), and its motto is *'this dance is for the world and the world is for everyone'*.

www.lesballetscdela.be

En avant, marche!

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For *En avant, marche!* the directors Frank Van Laecke and Alain Platel have taken inspiration from the tradition of musical groups which for decades have been part of the social and cultural life. The musical direction is in the hands of Steven Prengels. At every venue, the four actors and seven musicians will be joined by a local brass band or marching band on stage.

A miniature society

Music clubs – brass and other wind bands – have been part of the social and cultural life for decades. In 2012, this inspired the Huis van Alijn museum in Ghent to present a much appreciated exhibition of photos and traditional objects from past and present, under the title *En avant, marche!* In cooperation with Stephan Vanfleteren and other photographers, this also led to a book of photos, containing both new portraits of musicians and majorettes and black & white pictures from the archives.

Now, under the same title – *En avant, marche!* – it is the directors Frank Van Laecke and Alain Platel who, together with the composer Steven Prengels, have taken inspiration from this tradition. This is their first joint production since *Gardenia*, the theatre production that brought them so much success at home and abroad in 2010. For this new production, Van Laecke and Platel approach the world of music clubs as a ‘miniature society’ in its own right: a collective of very different individuals who try to keep to one and the same marching direction. An arrangement that is kept as well as possible, sometimes by trial and error, and as such is a metaphor for our society as a whole.

A broad musical palette

En avant, marche! The title evokes a musical universe of binary time signatures and staccato rhythms, with parades in major and funeral processions in minor. Anyone who recently saw *tauberbach* (directed by Alain Platel, musical director Steven Prengels) will know that Steven Prengels’ palette is broader than that, much broader. A few months before the rehearsals of *En avant, marche!* started, Prengels said: ‘There will probably be a march in the performance, but we especially want a great deal of experimentation: differentiated sounds, soundscapes, layered sound, etc. We want to create a performance in which the action on stage develops as much as possible out of the music. In addition, we do not limit ourselves to the march repertoire. Alain Platel is happy to take inspiration from the well-known classical repertoire, and in this project this is mainly music from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ranging from Ludwig Van Beethoven, Giuseppe Verdi and Gustav Mahler to the Brabançonne. We arrange this music, sometimes for brass and percussion, sometimes just for singers... For the orchestration, apart from drums, I particularly want to use brass instruments: trumpet, horn, bugle, euphonium, tuba. This will lead us away from the triumphal celebratory music with which a wind orchestra is often associated. With instruments like the tuba and horn we can go very deep, very intense, almost like a chorale.’

Of the performer-musicians Steven Prengels says: ‘Apart from the actors we want an ensemble of seven musicians on stage. The actors will join in too and the musicians will join in the acting. We are also cooperating with the renowned brass band De Leiezonen, which also played in *Aida* at NTGent (directed by Frank Van Laecke). They will record several pieces on tape, which we shall then incorporate into the soundscape. Finally, we will work together with local brass bands and marching bands at the venues where we perform *En avant, marche!* All these components together form the basic material with which we will experiment during rehearsals.’

Steven Prengels knows the world of brass bands through and through. He played in one when he was a child and later conducted it. The title *En avant, marche!* indicates that music is a driving force in the lives of the people on stage. And something they can hold on to. ‘Music as a metaphor for something that transcends the anecdotalism of a brass band. Something much bigger, perhaps society, or life as a whole.’

En avant, marche!

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Frank Van Laecke, Alain Platel, Steven Prengels

A sense of community – this is one of the key concepts that arise when Frank Van Laecke, Steven Prengels and Alain Platel look back at their original fascination with building a production around a brass band. This fascination derives in part from the world as they knew it during their youth and which they found again in the book *En avant, marche!*, which the photographer Stephan Vanfleteren created together with the Huis van Alijn. Those who are familiar with the individual and sometimes varied work of Van Laecke and Platel will know that both these directors are extremely sensitive to both the strength and the fragility of all feelings of collectivity and to the role that music can play. On the basis of this shared sensitivity, it was almost self-evident that they should take the life of a brass band as a starting point. Even more so because the musical director, Steven Prengels, with whom they made the marvellous *Gardenia* in 2010, has a thorough knowledge of this musical world and its repertoire. But the world of the brass band also summons up other associations. Village feuds, affairs, generational conflicts, ambitions and frustrations – stories and anecdotes that could undoubtedly fill an entire theatre season. Van Laecke, Platel and Prengels sought the essence of the story they wanted to tell in this abundance of narrative material.

‘La morte è passata – death has visited’. With this phrase, taken from Luigi Pirandello’s *L’uomo dal fiore in bocca* (The Man with the Flower in his Mouth), the makers apply serious tension to the sense of community that is invariably associated with the life of a brass band. Pirandello’s 1922 play is spoken by a man dying from cancer of the mouth and who, in light of this, pushes away his beloved. A raging monologue by a dying man who seems with every word he utters to want to struggle against the tumour that is eating his mouth away. Van Laecke and Platel introduce Pirandello’s man with the flower in his mouth into *En avant, marche!* as a trombonist who, because of his illness, has to say farewell to his instrument and withdraw to the back of the band armed with two cymbals. A man who is part of a group, but who as a result of his disease is cast into the greatest imaginable solitude: the confrontation with one’s own mortality. There in the back row of the orchestra there is the latent possibility of a new love. But, as in Pirandello’s play, the dying man himself rejects potential lovers. Love is too reminiscent of life. And of everything from which he has to take his leave. So he prefers to cut off all intimate ties and work on a departure that he chooses and orchestrates himself. So, like *Gardenia*, *En avant, marche!* is a story of leave-taking. *Gardenia* is the departure of a group, while *En avant, marche!* is the departure of a member of a group. This appeals to a melancholy fantasy, an ultimate image that is familiar to many: the idea we sometimes dare to have of our own funeral. It is a narcissistic fantasy, with a spotlight on the empty space we leave behind. However narcissistic this image may be, it expresses the desire to be seen and sustained by the community. Or, more precisely, the desire to see our role or function in that community named and honoured. Our place.

It may be that this place is the true stage for this performance. It is where the man meets his successor in the form of an energetic young dancer. As if he were seeing his own youthful self appear. What they share is a love for the sound of a trombone. In this place they make a pact by which the one relinquishes his place and the other takes it over. A unique handover from one generation to the next that seems almost archaic. It is this handover that is so characteristic of the world of brass bands; it makes it seem as if time and mortality have no hold here. It is probably this suggestion of immortality that we find so moving in the compelling sound of a group of brass players. And which leads to their participation in commemorations, ceremonies, funerals, celebrations and inaugurations. To capture it in a single image, imagine a group of brass players at every graveside. As guardians of the wish that nothing should ever be permitted to vanish completely.

A wish expressed everywhere and at all times. Brass bands and other wind bands are found all over the world. So, wherever the piece was performed abroad, the makers of *En avant, marche!* opted to cooperate with a local brass band. The language of the performance is a mixture, as can often be heard in the rehearsal rooms of ensembles and orchestras. It is impure and

corrupted and, perhaps precisely because of this, boundless (this is a commonplace often applied to music). Its ideal is to be a language shaped and used by everyone.

Koen Haagdorens, april 2015

En avant, marche!

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Frank Van Laecke, Alain Platel, Steven Prengels

directors

Frank Van Laecke and Alain Platel

composition and musical direction

Steven Prengels

created and performed by

Chris Thys, Griet Debacker, Hendrik Lebon, Wim Opbrouck, Gregory Van Seghbroeck (bass), Jan D'Haene (trumpet), Jonas Van Hoeydonck (trumpet), Lies Vandeburie (bugle), Niels Van Heertum (euphonium), Simon Huetting (horn), Witse Lemmens (drums), Steven Prengels (conductor) and a local musical group

dramaturgy

Koen Haagdorens

soundscape executed by

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direction assistant

Steve De Schepper, Katelijne Laevens

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Luc Goedertier

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Marie 'Costume' Lauwers

costumes and set realized by

atelier NTGent

stage manager

Wim Van de Cappelle

production manager

Marieke Cardinaels, Valerie Desmet

tour manager

Steve De Schepper

production

NTGent and les ballets C de la B

in collaboration with

VLAMO

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Schoenfabriek Van Beers



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Frank Van Laecke, Alain Platel, Steven Prengels

directors

Frank Van Laecke

b.1958, Ghent (BE)

Frank Van Laecke has built a rich international career both as a writer and as a director. He received numerous awards both at home and abroad for his work. A writer of TV series for the Flemish public television channel VRT, Van Laecke took his first professional steps as a director in the musical department of the Royal Ballet of Flanders. Since then he has directed plays, operas, musicals and television programmes.

When he directs musicals and large scale theatrical productions, Frank Van Laecke does not shy away from entertainment and knows exactly how to combine comical content and size. This way he achieved resounding successes with musicals such as *Kuifje en de Zonnetempel* (Tintin and the Temple of the Sun – the French-language version being hailed as best performance 2002 by Téléoustique), *Dracula*, *Oliver !*, *Rembrandt – de musical*, *Pirates Pirates !*, *Daens*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Domino*, *Ben X...*

With the greatest of ease, Frank Van Laecke applies himself to work that requires pure aesthetics such as the theatre production he directed about Anton Chechov (*Jouw hand in mijn hand*) in 2006. That same year saw the premiere performance of *Kijk mama, ik dans* (Look mummy, I'm dancing), a monologue directed jointly with Vanessa Van Durme. Later on, the performance toured worldwide. In 2010, Frank Van Laecke worked with Alain Platel for the first time: *Gardenia* (the story of a memorable group of older artists in a transvestite cabaret) was nominated in London for the prestigious Oliver Award 2012. Also in 2012, Frank Van Laecke directed *Aida*, the season opening performance of NTGent and right after that his performance *Masterclass* with Pia Douwes as Maria Callas premiered. This performance was nominated for the prestigious Nederlandse Toneel Publieksprijs (Dutch Audience Drama Award) and was selected for the Theaterfestival.

Frank Van Laecke was also the director of many operas in several countries, such as *Faust* (2009), *Madame Butterfly* (2012) and *La Traviata* (2014) for Opera Zuid in the Netherlands, *La Bohème* (2013) for the Florida Opera Festival and *Peter Grimes* (2013) in Germany.

2014 was a year of extremes with the intimate *Pauline en Panlette* (for Judas Producties) and '14-'18 a great musical performance about friendship and love in the First World War. As he did before in other productions, Frank Van Laecke wrote the '14-'18 script together with Allard Blom and worked on the music together with composer Dirk Brossé. In the season 2014-2015, projects follow at full speed: *Kadanza* (Ketnet-studio 100), *Aspe*, *Moord in het Theater* (Uitgezonderd Theater), *En avant, marche!* (in collaboration with Alain Platel and Steven Prengels), *De Sokkensonate* (Cour&Jardin), *Carmen* (summer opera Alden Biesen), *Marathon* (NTGent) and *Sacco & Vanzetti* (Festivaria).

www.frankvanlaecke.be

Alain Platel

b. 1956, Ghent (BE)

Alain Platel is trained as a remedial educationalist, and is an autodidact director. In 1984 he set up a small group with a number of friends and relatives to work collectively. *Emma* (1988) signalled his concentration on directing. He was responsible for *Bonjour Madame* (1993), *La Tristezza Complice* (1995) and *Iets op Bach* (1998), with which les ballets C de la B (as the group was now called) rocketed to the international top. In the meantime his collaboration with Arne Sierens had a similar effect on the Ghent youth theatre company Victoria, with the three plays *Moeder en Kind* (1995), *Bernadetje* (1996) and *Allemaal Indiaan* (1999).

After *Allemaal Indiaan* he announced that he was stopping making productions. But shortly afterwards Gerard Mortier persuaded him to do *Wolf* (2003) based on Mozart for the Ruhrtrienale. The choir project for the opening of the new KVS marked the start of close collaboration

with the composer Fabrizio Cassol. *vsprs* (2006) proved to be a turning point in his career. So far his work had been exuberant in both the diversity of performers and the themes, but now it became more profound and intense and revealed a world of passion and desire. And violence, as in *Nine Finger* (2007) with Benjamin Verdonck and Fumiyo Ikeda.

After the baroque *pitié!* (2008), *Out Of Context – for Pina* (January 2010) is an almost ascetic reflection of the movement repertoire of spasms and tics. Platel consistently continues to search this language of movement for incarnations of feelings that are too vast. The yearning for something transcending the individual is becoming more and more palpable.

In collaboration with director Frank Van Laecke, he created *Gardenia* (June 2010), a production in which the closing of a transvestite cabaret affords us a glimpse into the private lives of a memorable group of old artists. In 2015 Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke renew their collaboration, this time joined by composer Steven Prengels, for *En avant, Marche !* a performance about a society inspired by the tradition of fanfare orchestras and brass bands.

C(H)ŒURS (2012), so far Platel's biggest project, is created on demand of opera director Gerard Mortier. He got to work with the famous choral scenes from Verdi's operas, later on he added pieces of music from Richard Wagner's works. In *C(H)ŒURS* he examines –together with his dancers and the Teatro Real choir – how 'dangerously beautiful' a group can be. The political connotation in performances such as *tauberbach* (2014) and *Coup Fatal* (in collaboration with Fabrizio Cassol 2014) lies in the joie de vivre and energy that is displayed on stage to show how people sometimes live or even survive in undignified circumstances (a landfill in *tauberbach* and the real living conditions of the musicians from Congo in *Coup Fatal*). "Lust for life" as a way of rebellion.

But let it be clear, Platel is not just into large scale projects nowadays. In the recent past, he worked on small projects such as *Nachtschade* (for Victoria in 2006) and coaching work for amongst others Pieter and Jakob Ampe and their production *Jake & Pete's big reconciliation attempt for the disputes from the past* (in 2011). Two projects which have had a significant influence on his way of perceiving theatre.

He also almost surreptitiously entered the arena of the dance film together with the British director Sophie Fiennes (*Because I Sing* in 2001, *Ramallah!Ramallah!Ramallah!* in 2005 and *VSPRS Show and Tell* in 2007) and solo with *de balletten en ci en là* (2006), an impressive view of what goes on in a twenty-year-old dance company, taking us all the way to Vietnam and Burkina Faso, but also and mainly being an ode to his home town Ghent.

composition and musical direction

Steven Prengels

b. 1978, Zele (BE)

In 2009, Steven Prengels graduated as a Master in Composition at the Conservatory of Amsterdam in the class of Wim Hendrickx, with whom he already had obtained a master's degree in composition at the Conservatory of Antwerp in 2007. His work covers a wide range of artistic fields including music for large orchestra, theatre, dance, short film and visual arts. His work has been executed by the Chamber Orchestra of Belgium, Brussels Philharmonic, deFilharmonie, SPECTRA and the Nieuw Ensemble Amsterdam. In 2012, he wrote *Sisyphé* for mezzo, baritone and orchestra, commissioned by the Symphony Orchestra of Flanders, based on the writing of Albert Camus. Shortly after that he wrote *Wagner in Bayreuth*, commissioned by the Oxalys Ensemble and created by the bass-baritone Dietrich Henschel and the Oxalys Ensemble.

In the world of theatre and dance, he often works as a musical director and composer. Highlights are *Gardenia* (2010 - by Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke) of which he created the musical concept. Other projects with Alain Platel followed : *C(H)ŒURS* (2012), the large scale production by les ballets C de la B and Teatro Real Madrid, with big choir, orchestra and ten dancers, in which Steven Prengels created additional music and soundscapes to the work of Wagner and Verdi. In 2012, there was *tauberbach* that premiered in the Münchner Kammerspiele. In 2015, he works again with directors Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke on *En avant, marche !*, co-produced by les ballets C de la B and NTGent and he also works with director Johan Simons and conductor Philippe Herreweghe on *Accatone*, the season opener of the Ruhr Triennale 2015.

created and performed by

Chris Thys

b. 1954, Zonhoven (BE)

Chris Thys studied speech and drama at the Conservatory of Ghent and was trained in method acting in Italy, Spain and the United States. Shortly after her studies she started working at the Theater Arena in Ghent (1975-1978) and transferred to NTG in Ghent (1978-1994) and KVS in Brussels (1994-2005). Since 2011, after a short period as a freelancer she was once again part of the NTGent actors ensemble.

In her remarkable drama career she played in dozens of various productions. A glance in her career: *Woyzeck*, *the Rocky Horror Show*, *Toch zonde dat het een hoer is*, *Oom Wanja*, *de Reisgids*, *Station Service*, *Jozef in Egypte*, *Peter Pan*, *Mario ga eens opendoen*, *Kwartet*, *Requiem voor een spion*, *Oedipus*, *Misanthroop*, *Othello*, *Tartuffe*, *MacBeth*, *Andromache*, *Emilia Galotti*, *Peter Handke en de wolf*, *De Damen*, *De Rafaëls*, *Het leven en de werken van Leopold II...* For the Zeeland Nazomerfestival she performed in *Phaedra*, *Zittend meisje* and *Misanthroop* and she directed *Kwartet* and *Beeldbeschrijving*. She is also known for her performances in Flemish television programmes such as *Stille Waters*, *Witse*, *Flikken*, *Thuis*, *Goesting...*

She also played cousin Hilda in *Een bruid in de morgen*, a piece by Hugo Claus. Furthermore, in the season of 2011-2012 Chris played in *Ginds, tussen de netels* and in *Tartuffe*. In 2013-2014 she acted in *De ideale man* (Jelinek/Oscar Wilde) and in a French-Flemish production *Romeo & Juliette* by Théâtre de la Place (Liège). In the season of 2014-2015 she is performing in *Elektra* and in *En avant, marche!*. Chris Thys enjoys working as a director for amateur theatre companies and used to teach drama.

Griet Debacker

b. 1964, Roeselare (BE)

After obtaining a degree in speech therapy (1985) and a First Prize in Drama (1989) at the Ghent Conservatory, Griet worked as a freelance actress with numerous Belgian and Dutch theatre companies. She played in a number of sitcoms for the Belgian public television broadcasting company VRT and made several guest appearances in Flemish fiction series. In 2005 she founded the Swan Lake company together with Vanessa Van Durme and produced *Kijk mama, ik dans* (*Look mummy, I'm dancing*) under the direction of Frank Van Laecke. Since then, she coached Vanessa during the world tour of this production. Their second production, *Femme Blanche*, saw its première performance in November 2009. It was directed by Jan Steen, followed in 2013 by their creation *Avant que j'oublie*, a co-production with Comédie de Valence. In 2010, Griet De Backer played in *Gardenia* (Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke), a performance that toured the world for two years.

Hendrik Lebon

b. 1980, Ghent (BE)

As a young man, Hendrik Lebon acted and danced in productions of Theater Neon, Speeltheater/Kopergietery and the Royal Ballet of Flanders, among others. In 2005 he graduated in modern dance performance from the Fontys Dance Academy in Tilburg and won the Jacques De Leeuw Top Young Talent prize. He then worked for various companies both at home and abroad while also developing his own work. He acted and sang roles for theatre, musicals, television, opera and circus.

He danced in *Gardenia* (Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke, 2010) and in *Chalk about*, a performance by the dance company Curious Seed in Edinburgh directed by Christine Devaney. In Kopergietery in Ghent he worked in collaboration with Eva Bal on a new production with children and youngsters.

Wim Opbrouck

b. 1969, Bavikhove (BE)

Wim Opbrouck studied at Studio Herman Teirlinck. At the beginning of his career he was a member of the Blauwe Maandagcompagnie. In 1997, he was the talk of the town in the marathon performance *Ten Oorlog* by Tom Lanoye. After the merge between Blauwe Maandag Compagnie and KNS Antwerp, he became an actor at Toneelhuis and performed some significant roles in *Aars!* by Peter Verhelst, *De Leenane Trilogie*, *L. King of Pain*, *Mood on the Go* by Jeroen Olyslaegers and *Macbeth*.

The general public mainly knows Wim Opbrouck from his performances in television programmes such as *De Bende van Wim*, *Windkracht 10*, *Het Eiland*, *In de gloria*, *Heterdaad*, *Matroesjka's* and *De Ronde*. He appeared in many movies such as *Manneken Pis*, *Walballa*, *Ad Fundum*, *Meisje*, *Iedereen beroemd*, *Man zket vrouw* and *Het varken van Madonna*. Besides acting, he also sings and plays the accordion and keyboards in his own band 'De Dolfijntjes' and writes music, which he did for the play *Vergeten Straat*.

In 2005 he joined the NTGent theatre company. During his first season with NTGent, Wim performed in several productions such as *Ik wil dat jij een beer wordt*, *Het leven een droom*, *Merlijn*, *Ik val... Val in mijn armen*, *Instinct*, *Kasimir en Karoline*, *La Grande Bouffe*, *Kinderen van de Zon*, *Aida**, *Clauskamp #2* and *Nero*.

For his performance of Beck in *De asielzoeker* he was nominated as Best Male Lead Actor for the prestigious Louis d'Or award in 2006. In 2012 he was nominated again for the same prize, this time for his role as Orgon in *Tartuffe*.

In September 2010, Opbrouck became the new artistic director of NTGent in succession to Johan Simons. Wim Opbrouck baptized NTGent as 'a house of players'. A place where fun, imagination, craftsmanship and open-mindedness towards other arts are paramount. During the season 2011-2012, Wim played in *Tartuffe*, *Messen in Hennen* and *Hans & Grietje*, a musical spectacle conducted by the Swiss tenor Christoph Homberger. In 2012-2013 he performed in the musical production *Candide* (inspired by Voltaire) and *in ROOD* by John Logan; where he played the role of the famous painter Mark Rothko. This production is still on the repertory of NTGent.

Furthermore, he got the title role as doctor Boesman in the TV-series *In Flanders Fields* in 2014. In March 2014 he performed in *Parsifal*, which is the closing piece of a theatre trilogy on optimism. It is a performance with Christoph Homberger, music director, Peter Verhelst, text and direction, and Wim as co-director and lead actor. In 2014-2015 Wim Opbrouck sings and acts in his own protest song program *We Shall Overcome*, and in the coproduction between NTGent and les ballets C de la B, *En avant, marche!*

Gregory Van Seghbroeck (bastuba)

b. 1982, Dendermonde (BE)

Gregory grew up in a world that turned around a fanfare orchestra, the same fanfare orchestra that was once conducted by his great grandfather. A musical family so to speak. At this moment he is finishing his studies at the School of Arts in Ghent. He is studying jazz euphonium with Marc Godfroid, Bart Maris, Carlo Nardoza, Bart Defoort and Pierre Vayana.

Not only does he play the euphonium, which is quite an usual instrument, he also plays several other brass instruments in various kinds of groups and in very different styles. This way he plays the sousaphone with Fatback Brassband (hiphop brass), Zinger (spacepop), Ambrassband (gipsy), Hot Diggity Dogs (New Orleans funk), the trombone with Sic Bo (rocksteady ska), the euphonium with Lady O'Leary (jazz) and de Pandoering (balkan, klezmer) and the baritone with Brassband Zele (classical). Apart from all that, he is often asked as a substitute which gave him the opportunity to play with Flat Earth Society, de KleptomatICS and Va Fan Fahre.

He worked with the musical theatre company Walburgis and in NTGent, he was one of the musicians in the performance *Elektra*.

Jan D'Haene (trumpet)

b. 1985, Gent (BE)

As a child, I constantly heard music in my head. At twelve I felt the need to share what I heard with other people, so I started to take trumpet classes, three years of which with Rudy Ruenes. When my brother Wim decides not to live any longer in 2004, music becomes my escape, my passion. I hide behind the piano for hours and hours, eyes closed, letting my heart speak. It is

my way of expressing how I feel.

I have spent these last years on a true musical quest. I wanted to move people, make them think. And it worked. Many musical styles have crossed my path on the way: bigband or gispsyjazz, funk or New Orleans. At all times, I just wanted to tell my story. A story about life and saying goodbye but above all a story about the celebration of life!

Jonas Van Hoeydonck (trumpet)

b. 1981, Schoten (BE)

Jonas' musical career started at the age of 8 in the music academy of Wuustwezel where he started to study the organ and then percussion. It was only at the age of 18 that he fell in love with the trumpet. In 2004, he decided to turn his hobby into a career and that is why he took up studying again at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp. In 2010 he graduated there under Alain De Rudder and Steven Verhaert and obtained a master's degree in performing arts and as performing musician trumpet player.

Lies Vandeburie (bugle)

b. 1992, Kortrijk (BE)

As a child, I was me and myself. No fetters. I drew villages full of tadpole men and I wanted to become a clown and travel with the circus. Then I wanted to study music and theatre but I could not decide which. So I discovered Kleinkunst (cabaret) in Antwerp. It is an education that dared me to go on a quest for myself, my fantasies and to find back this feeling of freedom that I had in my childhood. And now, two steps away from graduation, I surrender to the beauty and imagination of the stage. It is the purest and scariest thing to do...

Niels Van Heertum (euphonium)

b. 1990, Turnhout (BE)

Niels started to play the euphonium when he was 8. After having been active in the jazz circuit for a few years, he started studying at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels. He studied there under John Ruocco, Stephane Galland, Jeroen van Herzeele and Kris Defoort among others. He also followed masterclasses and private lessons by Chris Speed, Ellery Eskeli and Samuel Blaser.

Six years ago, Niels and some musical friends founded the band Ifa y Xango. Ifa y Xango won the prestigious Gent Jazz Contest in 2011 and played the year after at the Gent Jazz Festival. In 2012 the band released its first album called *Abraham*. *Abraham* was very well received and chosen best debut album of the year by New York City Jazz Magazine.

Niels worked with bands such as Mount Meru, MikMaak, Jens Maurits Orchestra and the international version of the Brazilian live band DJ Tudo e sua gente de todo lugar. He also worked with people such as Steve Swell, Marc Ducret, Joachim Badenhorst, Eric Thielemans, Jef Neve, Teun Verbruggen, Riccardo Luppi, Lynn Cassiers, Marek Patman and Manolo Cabras.

Simon Hueting (horn)

b. 1985, Zottegem (BE)

Simon made his first musical steps within the Fanfare St-Cecilia in Geraardsbergen. After he had studied philosophy, he decided to take classes with Rik Vercruysse at the Conservatory in Ghent where he is in the final year now. Last year he also took up studying at the Conservatory of Lugano in Switzerland.

Simon plays with the Frascati Symphonic Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra La Chapelle Sauvage and the horn ensemble Lakebrass in Germany.

Witse Lemmens (drums)

b. 1994, Lier (BE)

As a child, Witse really became fascinated with theatre and music. Extreme pieces or more moderate ones, he was stuck with them. At the music academy he studied percussion and singing. He also discovered he had a passion for acting. While he was still studying he was

already successful in classics such as *Lord of Flies* by William Golding, in contemporary theatre such as *Atalanta* by Peer Wittenbols and lighter comedy such as *De Jossen* by Tom Lanoy. In 2013 he earned the greatest distinction for his moving interpretation of the monologue *Titus* by Jan Sobrie. Witse is still active in several amateur theatre companies in which he plays and assists others as a make-up and hair dressing artist.

Being born in a musical family, Witse started from an early age as a percussionist in the Koninklijke Fanfare Sint Jansvrienden in Wiekevorst.

dramaturgy

Koen Haagdorens

Koen Haagdorens is a dramaturge in NTGent. Before that, he worked for la Monnaie and freelance on projects for deSingel, Transparant, het Toneelhuis, detheatremake, Wunderbaum and others.

At NTGent he worked as a dramaturge and/or editor on productions such as *Platform*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Merlin oder das Wüste land* and *Vergeeten Straat* (all of them directed by Johan Simons), *Aida** (Homberger/Van Laeke), *Tartuffe* (Dimitër Gotscheff), *Hans en Grietje* (Servé Hermans), *Tartuffe – all you can live* (Hermans/Platform K), *Clauskamp 4: Thyestes* (Wunderbaum), *Candide* (Michel Schröder), ... At the Opéra National de Paris he did the dramaturgy of *Verdi's Simone Boccanegra* (directed by Johan Simons).

In 2010 he collaborated on the successful opening production *Aida** under Wim Opbrouck and in 2011 he did the dramaturgy of a special NTGent adaptation of the opera *Hans en Grietje*. In 2012-2013, Koen was the dramaturge of the musical performance *Candide* and of *Platonov* (directed by Luk Perceval). In the season 2014-2015, he worked on the songs program *We shall overcome* by Wim Opbrouck and on a special project on the occasion of 50 years NTGent: *Vergeeten Straat*.

light design

Carlo Bourguignon

b. 1962, Tienen (BE)

Carlo Bourguignon worked at the Kaaitheater for five years before he went on to join KVS for a seven-year term, working as an assistant to the director, as a stage manager and as a production assistant. At P.A.R.T.S. he was giving technical support to the student's projects. In 2000, he joined les ballets C de la B, where he created the light design for *Wolf, vsprs, pitié !*, *Out of Context – for Pina*, *C(H)ŒURS*, *tauberbach*, *Coup Fatal* (Alain Platel), *Tempus Fugit* (Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui), *Just another landscape for some jukebox money, bâche*, *IMPORT EXPORT* (Koen Augustijnen), the project *1,2,3 / Propositions*, *Patchagonia* (Lisi Estaras), *Asobi* (Kaori Ito) and *Untold* (3art3 Company).

sound design

Bartold Uyttersprot

b. 1976, Brussels (BE)

He studied oboe, contrabass and piano in art high schools in Louvain and Brussels. After that he followed audio engineering at the SAE Institute in Amsterdam. Since 2008, he has been working for les ballets C de la B and engineered the sound of *Asbes* (Koen Augustijnen), *primero* (Lisi Estaras), *Pénombre* (Rosalba Torres Guerrero/ Lucas Racasse), *Gardenia* (Alain Platel/Frank Van Laecke), *Out of Context – for Pina*, *C(H)ŒURS* (Alain Platel), *Asobi* (Kaori Ito), *tauberbach* (Alain Platel).

set design

Luc Goedertier

b. 1957, Gent (BE)

Luc works for NTGent since 1981. He is the head of the scenographic department of the house. As a stage designer he was part of dozens of productions by NTGent such as *Het leven een droom*, *Oresteia* and *La Grande Bouffe*. His designs for *Instinct*, and the puppets and stage setting of *Vergeeten Straat* are among the highlights of his career.

In 2013 he creates a giant puppet for PARSIFAL, a musical theatre performance.

costume design

Marie 'Costume' Lauwers

b. 1945, Beerse (BE)

After her studies in Dutch, History and stage direction, Marie began her career as a dresser for Yan Tax who, with his degree in costume design from the academy of Sint-Joost, had just begun working in the film world. Later she became his assistant. Later again Marie began working as an independent costume designer, but she continued to assist Yan on major productions, for example with *Daens* in 2008.

As an independent designer Marie has done many stage productions, films and single plays. For example, she has worked with directors such as Eric Barbier, Adrian Brine, Vincent Rouffaer, Marion Handwerker, Berend Boudewijn, Jules Rooyards, Franco Dragone, Ruut Weissman, Christiaan Nortier, Edward Albee, Peter Oosthoek, Paul Verhoeven and others.

She is also the regular designer for Sanne Wallis de Vries who, with her headstrong and provocative shows, has earned a unique place in Dutch Cabaret.

Marie designed the costumes for the last dance film directed by Willem van de Sande Backhuysen for the Scapino Ballet, headed by Ed Wubbe.

Already in 2012, Marie worked together with Frank Van Laecke and Alain Platel for *Gardenia*.

En avant, marche!

NTGent/les ballets C de la B

Frank Van Laecke, Steven Prengels, Alain Platel

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Important remark

In order to avoid possible misunderstanding, we are asking you not to publish the contents of this file without consultation with Nele Dhaese (communication) at les ballets C de la B.

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Thank you for your cooperation.