



les ballets C de la B

# *nicht schlafen*

les ballets C de la B  
Alain Platel



Pietà (2007), Berlinde De Bruyckere – foto © Mirjam Devriendt

## **World première:**

September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 - Jahrhunderthalle, Ruhrtriennale (DE)

duration: 1h40' (without interval)

les ballets C de la B vzw

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### **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 and dancers. 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'*.

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A group of men gathers around some dead horses to perform a ritual. Summarized in one sentence like this, "nicht schlafen" might retain the semblance of a story. But everything instantly contradicts this notion. The area of the archaic cult is bounded by a giant blanket. And amongst the men there is one woman. Is this the staging of a new Rite of Spring? Will a woman be sacrificed once more to atone for failing masculinity?

The new production of director Alain Platel uses the work of the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler as its starting point, as proposed by Gerard Mortier. It wasn't love at first sight for Platel. Initially, he did feel particularly affinity with the era Mahler expresses in his work: an age of great acceleration and disruption leading up to the First World War. But then, in the nervousness and aggressiveness, passion and yearning for a lost harmony that is expressed by Mahler's music, Platel discovered also a match for the images he's looking for in his work.

The musical direction is in the hands of composer Steven Prengels. In the soundscapes he puts the Mahler in contrast to African polyphonic chants and herds in sounds of cowbells or sleeping animals. In terms of stage-setting, this is the first collaboration between Alain Platel and visual artist Berlinde De Bruyckere. What they have in common: a love for the big themes of suffering and death. Together with a group of nine dancers they started the search for the potential for transformation, with the shaky hope that things will not end in large-scale destruction. That potential, that possibility is what this group of dancers want to look for in every performance, without a safety net. A dance of life and death.

**“Und selbst im Atem des Schlafes drückt sich dieser irrsinnige Wille zum Leben aus.”**

K49814 - <http://atmenohnepause.org>

*And even in the sleep's breath this irrepressible will to live is breaking through.*

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The new production of director Alain Platel uses the work of the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler as its starting point, as proposed by Gerard Mortier. It wasn't love at first sight for Platel, although he eventually became totally captivated by the music. Initially, he did feel a particular affinity with the era Mahler expresses in his work: an age of great acceleration and disruption leading up to the First World War. Together with composer Steven Prengels and musical dramaturgist Jan Vandenhouwe, Platel browsed his oeuvre, at first only picking the slow pieces, before finally changing tacks and opting for the nervous and high-contrast work. The final selection draws upon all of the symphonies, with the exception of the 8th.

Composer Steven Prengels sporadically manipulates Mahler, adding contrast with the polyphonic chants of Boule Mpanya and Russell Tshiebua and herding in sounds of cowbells or sleeping animals - recordings Platel was given by K49814 (code name) who has made a life's work of the registration of sleeping animals (<http://atmenohnepause.org>).

Two songs complement the orchestral work: a text by Nietzsche in "Also sprach Zarathustra": "O Mensch," which Nietzsche himself labelled a dance song. The other song is from a choral work from the 2nd symphony and runs through the performance like a leitmotif: "Hör auf zu beben, Bereite dich zu leben". By way of contrast, a cantata by Bach can be heard briefly: "Den Tod nobody Zwingen kunnt". This sets the scene and the big themes: day and night, life and death, lust and suffering.

Platel shares his love for the big themes of suffering and death with visual artist Berlinde De Bruyckere. Their admiration is mutual and De Bruyckere agreed to design and realize the set for "nicht schlafen". The decor hones in on three dead horses-bodies, piled onto a pedestal, as a silent reminder of something. It's an almost obscene image of contorted, interlocking corpses, stifled in an eternal embrace. The corpses are riddled with holes, like the blanket which surrounds the scene. The blanket harks back to the security of childhood, but the mold and holes tell a different story. What catastrophe, what struggle of attrition has occurred here?

In between the many pictures on the wall of the rehearsal room – images meant to inspire costumes or improvisations – there was a photograph of the Dutch company Schwalbe: a player is lying on the floor, his clothes being ripped off by two other players, each pulling to one side. The fight inspired by the photograph, in all its performative power, constitutes the core content and the central touchstone for director Platel. It is the violence scraping off the thin veneer of civilization that holds together communities. How can we find an equally exciting way out, one that turns this sort of violence away? During a long improvisation at the end, set to music of the 2nd symphony (first part), the performance makes room for a quest for vitality and joie de vivre. The team of dancers with whom Platel tackles this quest consists of a mix of veterans and new arrivals. Among the veterans: Elie Tass (VSPRS, pitié!, Out of Context-for Pina, tauberbach), Ido Batash (C(H)EURS), Romain Guion (C(H)EURS) and Berengère Bodin (C(H)EURS, tauberbach). During the auditions Platel encountered Samir M'Kirech, Dario Rigaglia and David Le Borgne. The two Congolese performers Russell Tshiebua and Boule Mpanya are the same backing vocals whom Platel put into the limelight in "Coup Fatal". Sure, this team is full of contrasts: man/woman; black/white; Jew/Arab; dancer/singer. But Platel hardly plays on these individual differences, instead opting for the collective in this production. What happens with and to the collective eclipses individual differences.



Whereas "tauberbach" (Platel's 2014 creation) outlined the existence of a human lost on the dump of civilization, and his potential for transformation, "nicht schlafen" draws the existence of man as a social animal, the group, the community. And yet, it also expresses the shaky hope that things will not end in large-scale destruction, again. Even though the music of Mahler sketches a fragmented world: just before the outbreak of the First World War when the world actually shattered. From "Coup Fatal" (creation with Congolese musicians from 2014) Platel learnt and remembered the incredible lust for life of people living in intolerable circumstances. That potential, that possibility for transformation, is what this group of dancers want to look for in every performance, without a safety net. A dance of life and death.

Hildegard De Vuyst, dramaturg  
August 2016



(c) Chris Van der Burght

O Mensch! Gib acht!  
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?  
»Ich schlief, ich schlief -,  
Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht: -  
Die Welt ist tief,  
Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.  
Tief ist ihr Weh -,  
Lust - tiefer noch als Herzeleid:  
Weh spricht: Vergeh!  
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit -,  
- will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!«

*O man! Take heed!  
What saith deep midnight's voice indeed?  
"I slept my sleep -,  
From deepest dream I've woke and plead: -  
The world is deep,  
And deeper than the day could read.  
Deep is its woe -  
Joy - deeper still than grief can be:  
Woe saith: Hence! Go!  
But joys all want eternity -  
- want deep profound eternity!"*

Also sprach Zarathustra, Friedrich Nietzsche



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### **Music for a broken world**

**A conversation with Alain Platel and Steven Prengels on Mahler, Pygmy music and Bach**

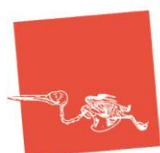
Since the production of *Gardenia*, Alain Platel has been collaborating on a regular basis with Belgian composer Steven Prengels, who is both the creative mind behind the soundscapes for the dance performances by the Ghent choreographer and director, as well as their musical director. For “nicht schlafen” they drew inspiration from the symphonies and songs of Gustav Mahler. The Viennese composer wrote his music in the late 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. It was a time of great uncertainty. New technologies, globalization, terrorism, social tensions and new forms of communication were the talk of the day, both in private conversation and in the media. The world was accelerating and nobody knew what all of this would lead to. Mahler was the son of Jewish parents, born in a Guesthouse and growing up near an army barracks. Child death claimed six of his siblings at a very young age. Folk and dance music, military marches, funeral marches and Jewish music blended together in his musical imagination early on and would remain essential elements of his musical language until his final works. His music is a nervous journey through the colliding soundscapes of his childhood in which celebrations, mourning and drumrolls were all vying for attention at the same time. Gustav Mahler composed fragmented music for a broken world which was on the verge of disappearing.

Steven Prengels: “Like a seismograph, Mahler's music recorded the underground tensions of the years before the First World War. Plenty of parallels can be drawn between our time and Mahler's, which seemingly makes his music resonate with a contemporary sense of life. The book “Der taumelnde Kontinent. Europa 1900-1914”, in which historian Philipp Blom describes the years before the First World War, was one of the sources of inspiration during the creation of “nicht schlafen.”

Alain Platel: “Initially, I resisted the notion of creating a performance around Mahler. Late romantic symphonic music did nothing for me. But when I read Blom's book, I suddenly realized working with Mahler would pose an interesting challenge. These past few days I have been reading things about Donald Trump or Erdogan, the terror of IS, the Brexit and nationalism rearing its head across Europe, which show a frightening number of parallels with the times in which Mahler lived. Many friends and colleagues who attended the rehearsals in our Ghent studio in recent weeks, said the performance reflected a very contemporary sense of confusion, fear, uncertainty and explosive violence, even though, at first sight, they were under the impression of seeing an archaic, primitive tribe on stage.”

### **Did Mahler's music influence the choreographical and musical form of “nicht schlafen”?**

Platel: “nicht schlafen exhibits the same kind of fractures and contrasts as Mahler's own music; the performance is composed of very diverse ingredients, highly contrasting atmospheres. Mahler was one of the very first composers to ‘sample’ music. In that sense I can see similarities with my own work. In his symphonies and songs, Mahler tied ‘high’ and ‘low’ art together. Different styles and moods collide. Steven and myself view his music as an invitation to keep sampling. For example, I immediately wanted to connect his music to African polyphonic traditions, brought in by the Congolese singers Boule Mpanya and Russell Tshiebua.



Prengels: "Like Mahler's symphonies, 'nicht schlafen' is a very narrative piece, albeit without a clear narrative. You have no clue as to its exact nature, but you do start feeling you achieve an understanding of sorts. During rehearsals, I got the feeling that the performance would function as one big Mahler adagio. My soundscapes do not emerge from a preconceived plan to take Mahler's collage techniques to the limit, but from the creative interaction with Alain and the dancers during rehearsals. I try to organically respond to what everyone comes up with during the improvisations."

**In his early works, Alain often used baroque music: Bach in 'Iets op Bach', 'pitié!' or 'tauberbach' or Monteverdi in 'vsprs'. Mozart, in 'Wolf', seemed the exception to that rule. Mahler's music wasn't exactly in line with expectations. Or was it?**

Platel: "In the past, I always used to argue that the gap between baroque music and my dance language was so wide and the contrast between them so strong, that they actually reinforced each other. The ugliness of this world achieved some sort of beauty through the music. Conversely, Bach or Monteverdi seemed to become even more emotional through their combination with the tormented, abrasive, raw movement language of the dancers. In the C(H)OEURS project, which focused on the choral music of Verdi and Wagner, however, I noticed to my great surprise that, with the music of Wagner's opera Lohengrin, my dance seemed to be coming home. It was as if music and dance were running parallel and supporting each other. With Mahler, something similar happens. The nervousness and aggressiveness, passion and yearning for a lost harmony that is expressed by Mahler's music, is a match for the images I'm looking for in my work. Sometimes, of course, I keep working with contrasts in 'nicht schlafen', like in the famous Adagietto from the Fifth Symphony, which I combine with short nervous dance phrases. During the long first movement of the Second Symphony, however, I ask the dancers to stick to the music as closely as possible with their movements and to seek some sort of fusion between Mahler and their dancing. For me, Mahler's music has to do with total surrender. The dancers need to go all out, follow the music. It is fascinating to see how dancers who stick closely to Mahler's music, especially, seem to be able to better convey a sense of detachment and liberation. The dancers who resist Mahler, appear less free. That is a very paradoxical experience, which seems to have a lot to do with Mahler himself. He was a control freak who filled his scores with over-detailed dynamic and expressive directions for the musicians: "etwas zurückhaltend" "etwas täppisch und sehr derb 'or' nicht schleppen" ... At the same time, his music is extremely compelling. I recognize something of myself in it. Often, my performances are a form of organized chaos, but in everyday life I really like punctuality and order..."

Prengels: "The more I read about Mahler's life, the more parallels I discover with Alain. (Laughs.) They both seem to deliberately seek out suffering in their work, even though they are aware that they will be suffering themselves during the creative process."

Platel: "I do tend to go very deep during rehearsals. But I assure you that I'm far from unhappy."

**At a certain point in 'nicht schlafen' you link Mahler to African music. Why this combination?**

Platel: "Encountering Boule and Russell in the context of the 'Coup Fatal' production, enriched my personal life immensely. They bring to the table a unique way of being and they sing Pygmy music with their very own polyphonic and rhythmic complexity. Even from the outset of the preparations for 'nicht schlafen' I could imagine some sort of counterpoint between this African music and the adagios of Mahler. With this fusion, I intended absolutely no grand political





statement on, for instance, post-imperialism or post-colonialism. 'Just act normal', I often say to myself and the dancers. Is the fact that we have two black dancers a statement? That we have both a Muslim and an Israeli dancer? That one woman dances among all these men? No, absolutely not. Everybody on stage should just be themselves."

Prengels: "Less is more. Which is what often occurs to me while creating the soundscapes. Boule and Russell improvise from Mahler's material and end up with their own African musical language in an organic way. The influence goes both ways: we confront our Western classical music with African culture. At the same time Russell and Boule Mahler learned to sing in German. Initially, they hated Mahler and asked us how we could listen to such sad music for our leisure. Today, they have come to love Mahler."

**Why, in addition to the African music, does this Mahler project yet again incorporate an excerpt from Bach?**

Platel: "Like Hitchcock in his movies, Bach keeps popping up in my productions. It seems like a fetish. Bach reassures me. Yet the presence of Bach in 'nicht schlafen' also rings true from a content perspective. 'Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt' from Bach's Kantate 'Christ lag in Todesbanden' arrives at a turning point in the performance, the moment at which it is shown that death can be ritualized in a new way. For me, the ritualization of death is a main theme of 'nicht schlafen'.

Interview: Jan Vandenhouwe, musical dramaturg  
August 2016



(c) Chris Van der Burght

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Alain Platel

## **Direction**

Alain Platel

## **Composition and musical direction**

Steven Prengels

## **Creation and performance**

Bérengère Bodin, Boule Mpanya, Dario Rigaglia, David Le Borgne, Elie Tass, Ido Batash, Romain Guion, Russell Tshiehua, Samir M'Kirech

## **Dramaturgy**

Hildegard De Vuyst

## **Musical dramaturgy**

Jan Vandenhouwe

## **Artistic assistance**

Quan Bui Ngoc

## **Set design**

Berlinde De Bruyckere

## **Light design**

Carlo Bourguignon

## **Sound design**

Bartold Uyttersprot

## **Costume design**

Dorine Demuyne

## **Stage manager**

Wim Van de Cappelle

## **Photography**

Chris Van der Burght

## **Production manager**

Valerie Desmet

## **Tour manager**

Steve De Schepper

## **Production**

les ballets C de la B

### **Coproduction**

Ruhrtriennale, La Bâtie-Festival de Genève, TorinoDanza, la Biennale de Lyon, L'Opéra de Lille, Kampnagel Hamburg, MC93 - Maison de la Culture de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Holland Festival, Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, NTGent

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Frans Brood Productions

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<sup>1</sup> Symphony n° 3 in D minor IV, Gustav Mahler: “O Mensch! Gib acht!” – Dagmar Pecková (mezzo-soprano), Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, conducted by Kent Nagano. cd: 2000

Teldec Classics International GmbH

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1. “Hör auf zu beben”  
Gustav Mahler (Arr. Steven Prengels)
2. “Pastorale”  
Based on Mahler, *Symphony N°1, Part 1* (recomposed by Steven Prengels)
3. “Adagietto”  
Gustav Mahler, *Symphony N°5, Part 3*
4. “O Mensch”  
Gustav Mahler, *Symphony N°3, Part 4*
5. “Breathing - Mahler”
  - Mahler, *Symphony N°9, Part 4* (extract)
  - Soundscape by Steven Prengels, based on recordings of breathing animals by K49814
6. “Den Tod”
  - Based on Mahler, *Symphony N°2, Part 1*
  - “*Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt*”, J.S. Bach (Arr. Steven Prengels)
7. “Scherzo”  
Based on Mahler, *Symphony N°7, Part 3* (recomposed by Steven Prengels)
8. “Ambula Makasa”  
By Boule Mpanya, Russell Tshiebua and the cast
9. “Bells”  
Based on Mahler, *Symphony N°6, Part 1* and J. Strauss, *Kaiser-Waltz*
10. “Pygmee Song”  
By Boule Mpanya, Russell Tshiebua and the cast
11. “The Fourth”
  - Gustav Mahler, *Symphony N°4, Part 3* (extract)
  - *Hör auf zu beben* (Mahler, Steven Prengels)
  - *Bulelela*, by Boule Mpanya and Russel Tshiebua
12. “Breathing - Counterpoint”
  - Soundscape by Steven Prengels, based on recordings of breathing animals by K49814
13. “The Second”
  - Gustav Mahler, *Symphony N°2, Part 1*



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### 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 Ruhrtriennale. The choir project for the opening of the new KVS marked the start of close collaboration with the composer Fabrizio Cassol. *vsprv* (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.

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, the Nieuw Ensemble Amsterdam and the Symphony Orchestra of Flanders. In 2012 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)OEURS (les ballets C de la B/Teatro Real, 2012), in which Steven Prengels created additional music and soundscapes to the work of Wagner and Verdi, *tauberbach* (les ballets C de la B/Münchner Kammerspiele, 2012) and *En avant, marche!*, which he created together with Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke (les ballets C de la B/NTGent, 2015). For *Accatone*, the season opener of the Ruhr Triennale 2015, he composed the soundscape, commissioned by director Johan Simons.

Bérengère Bodin  
b. 1980, Fontenay-le-Comte (FR)

From my small native town in the west of France, near the ocean, I stated with conviction as a child, accompanied by adult laughter: 'I'm going to live with the Indians!' At the age of 15, my encounter with dance has fulfilled this deep dream, this new language has expressed my love of words, and has claimed the search for freedom amongst packs brought together by this same unquenchable thirst for new truths. After my training at CNDC (national centre for contemporary dance) in Angers, these are the encounters which have guided my path in the hope that it is miscellaneous. From the dances of Raimund Hogue, Joelle Bouvier, Carolyn Carlson, and the KKI, from the theatre of Isabella Soupard, to the contemporary music with Vocaalab, from the completion of animation feature films and the comedy world of Robyn Orlin, from collaboration with the video with Kurt d'Haeseleer or the cinema with Géraldine Doignon, it was with *Primero* by Lisi Estaras that led to the discovery of Ghent. Ghent has opened up some incredible and precious encounters such as that with Cacao Bleu, Kabinet K, l'Ommm, and, of course, one of the most remarkable with Alain Platel!

Boule Mpanya  
b. 1987, Kinshasa (COD)

Boule Mpanya grew up in Kinshasa. His father loved to play music at home and at parties, where Boule accompanied him as a dancer. He gave Boule every encouragement to develop his artistic talent. Boule joined a church choir as a singer. Then, together with his elder brother and some friends, he set up a group which combined pop music and hip hop. His singing talent also led to other horizons and discoveries, from a singer in a gospel choir or member of an alternative music group to collaboration with the music group Washiba. Shortly afterwards, he met Paul Kerstens, co-ordinator of the Africa operation in Congo from the Royal Flemish Playhouse in Brussels (KVS), who suggested to him that he should devote his knowledge to the *Coup Fatal* project with Fabrizio Cassol and Alain Platel. For more than two years, he did a world tour with *Coup Fatal*, which included over a hundred performances. Boule Mpanya has worked together with scores of artists in his native land, mainly Christians, but also with international musicians such as Rokia Traoré, Marie Daulne, Fabrizio Cassol, and

Fredy Massamba. Of all the styles of music which he listens to and likes, his favourite is salsa. Apart from his musical activities, Boule Mpanya has also developed an acting career, including a role in a Congolese TV series. At the same time, he has done a course in interior architecture at the Academy of Fine Art in Kinshasa.

#### Dario Rigaglia

b. 1995, Catania (IT)

Dario Rigaglia studied dance in Giarre (Sicily, Italy). This formation included different dance styles as classical ballet, modern dance, contemporary dance, Latin dance, hip hop. After he completed his high school studies, Dario decided to do further dance studies and moved to Rome to the DAF (Dance Arts Faculty), followed by a traineeship at the Agorà coaching Project in Reggio Emilia. Dario danced in several projects, including the Kitonb Project, the Vibrazioni Dance Company and the corps de ballets for some operas.

#### David Le Borgne

b. 1996 (FR)

After doing a lot of fencing, he started hip-hop dancing at the age of 12. One year later, he started classical dancing with the idea of joining his twin brother at the dance school of the opera. This didn't materialise, but the disappointment was to take him from Conservatoire d'Angers to the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris (CRR) and then to the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris (CNSMDP), always on a classical course. At the higher academy, certain encounters led him to start contact dancing on a regular basis. He subsequently passed a course in contemporary dance at the academy at the age of 17. He was to follow this path for two and a half years, whilst at the same time starting to create individual pieces (two pieces) and in a group (two pieces), some of which would go on tour in France and in Tahiti during his study vacations (Tribish tour, Cie Stimulus).

At the age of 19, he started to work with his friend and colleague Alice Boivin, who created a solo named *Hans* for him, a solo which would soon be presented in Belgium and France, but developed in the form of a duo. This pair go by the name of *L'Explorium*. In the same year he joined les ballets C de la B for *nicht schlafen* (Alain Platel).

At the same time, David has learnt to write poetry and does rap on a daily basis.

#### Elie Tass

b. 1981, Ghent (BE)

In his youth, Elie Tass engaged in different sports, ranging from soccer to martial arts to power training. Dancing came into play only later on, gradually, starting with ballet, and later breakdance. However, this was never with the idea or goal to choose performing as a profession. Later on, after 2 years of physical education at the University of Ghent, he started out on a 3-year dance training at the HID (Higher Institute for Dance) in Lier, Belgium. In addition to a series of creations with Thierry Smits and Marc Bogaerts and some small work of his own, he participated in *Tannhäuser* (an opera by Richard Wagner) for Troubleyn/Jan Fabre while he was still at school. In 2006 he started working with les ballets C de la B/Alain Platel for the creation of *vsprs*. That meeting was continued for the next years, with mainly three creations, *pitié!*, *Out of context* - for Pina and *tauberbach*.

In 2011 Ross McCormack - they met at les ballets C de la B during *vsprs* - invited Elie to Australia to join him to work on a short co-creation for Queensland-based contemporary dance company Dancenorth. As part of a double bill they made *[SIC]*.

Elie Tass started to work with Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui in 2012 and collaborated with him on *Puz/ zle*.

In 2013 he and Alain Platel work on the graduating performance of drama students at KASK in Ghent and temporarily plays Nicolas Vladyslav's part in *Dans*, a les ballets C de la B and het Kip

co-production. The same year, he works, together with a few fellow-dancers, on a three week brain and body storm in a studio in Seoul. The result is a showing called *n(own)on* (working title), that is performed in the LG Arts Centre.

For and together with dancer Nicola Leahey, he creates a short solo *SHINE (VS SHEILA)* commissioned by laundry festival Paris. At the New Zealand School of Dance in Wellington, he makes *IVORY*, as part of the senior year graduation project.

### Ido Batash

b. 1984 (IL)

Ido Batash is dancer and independent choreographer, based in Israel. He graduated at the Ostrovski High School dance department, directed by Haim Hon, and was a student at Leah Manor dance school in Herzalya (Israel).

From 2002 Ido danced and performed with several companies, including the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, NDD-Galili Dance, the Inbal Pinto & Avshalom Pollak Dance Company, les ballets C de la B (in *C(H)OEURS*, Alain Platel, 2012) and he participated in projects of the choreographers Idan Cohen, Talia Back and Roy Assaf.

From 2009 Ido has created several works as an independent choreographer, which toured in Europe, Japan and Israel. In 2014, a collaboration with Anna Reti for *Ego Trip*, was nominated for the best work of the year by Rudolf Laban Institute. At the same year, he received the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for his work *BodyMagic*, as a part of the Choreography Competition of Machol Shalem. Since 2012, he is a resident choreographer at Random Collision, a collective company based in Groningen (The Netherlands).

Along his personal artistic activities, Ido initiates independent projects in collaboration with other choreographers, artists and scientists from different disciplines, and he is teaching contemporary dance classes and workshops based on his working method.

### Romain Guion

b. 1979 (FR)

Romain is a dancer, performance maker, choreographic assistant, teacher, festival organiser and dog lover. He trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse in Paris and worked in various dance companies such as Charleroi-Danses (BE), National Dance Company Wales (GB), Dance Theatre of Ireland (IE), John Scott's Irish Modern Dance Theatre (IE), Gelabert-Azzopardi Compañía de Danza (ES), Eun Me Ahn Dance Company (KR), PVC-Stadttheater Freiburg (DE), Staatstheater Mainz (DE) before joining les ballets C de la B in 2011 for the creation of *C(H)OEURS*. In 2013-2014 and alongside his performing career, Romain assisted Alain Platel on *Coup Fatal* and collaborated with Koen Augustijnen on *Sehnsucht, limited edition*, a production for the Oldenburgische Staatstheater. In 2014-2015, Romain assisted Koen Augustijnen for the second time creating *Dancing Bach* for the Konzert Theater Bern. In his own professional pursuit Romain is currently curious about working with bodies unaffected by dance training. Recently he started collaborating with theatre director Juliette Navis (Collectif la vie brève) on *Tout ce qui reste (titre provisoire)* encouraging actors to delve deeply into their physicality.

Since 2000 Romain is choreographing as well as transmitting his knowledge of contemporary dance teaching classes and workshops all around the world. Eager to support emerging choreographers and foster creation, Romain has been a dedicated member of the board of directors and curator of the Berlin based short format dance festival LUCKY TRIMMER since 2010.



### Russell Tshiebua

b. 1993 (COD)

At the age of precisely 20, TK Russell has made an impact in the music world of Kinshasa. Author, performer, singer, and show man, Russell makes music which is very much his and his alone. A gifted composer, he started to write and compose music for himself and for others as early as the age of nine. And so, with original music, served by a powerful voice and stage presence, Russell dreams of letting his voice be heard and sharing his musical universe with the entire planet.

After working and collaborating with several national and international artists who have helped him to develop, such as Lokwa Kanza, Jean Goubald, Tshala Muana, Papa Wemba, Salif Keita, Rokia Traoré, Fabrizio Cassol, Fredy Massamba, the group Puggy, les Washiba, and such like, he started to put on his own concerts, which people will discover thanks to the group SADI at the time of the acoustic evenings at the Halle de la Gombe in Kinshasa.

This young artist has become a messenger of hope for his generation. Demanding and industrious, he searches constantly for new tones and doesn't have to worry about copying anyone. His roots are a distinctive feature and his open and creative spirit which feeds on rock, funk, techno, pop, RNB, and flamenco is a strength.

Alongside his individual work, Russell also participates in joint projects such as *Sadi-Echos* (a project to raise awareness concerning conservation of the natural biodiversity of the Congo basin, which is maintained by the WWF) as artistic director, composer, and interpreter of the songs on this album; he has also taken part in the creation of the tour for the show *Coup Fatal* created by Alain Platel, including a world tour which has been in progress for two years as a singer, dancer, and percussionist. His passion for music knows no bounds because it is for him a way of life.

### Samir M'Kirech

b. 1985 (FR)

I began dancing by practicing 12 years of football, followed by 2 years of breakdancing, while I was studying and getting my baccalaureate in literature and drama. During my drama studies, I saw *La Grande Fugue* choreographed by Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker and I decided to start dancing. I was 19 years old.

I started my academic training at the Conservatoire National de Région de Rouen and continued my education at the Martha Graham Dance School, directed by Marni Thomas and then Virginie Mécène, and performed for 3 years with the Martha Graham 2.

I refined my training at the Ballet Junior de Genève, under artistic directors Sean Wood and Patrice Delay, where I performed pieces by Alexander Ekman, Thierry Malandain, Patrick Delacroix, Ken Ossola, Guilherme Botelho amongst others.

I pursued my career in London in 2011 with DV8 Physical Theatre (artistic director Lloyd Newson) on the production *Can We Talk About This*, with which I toured internationally.

In the next years, I collaborated with several directors: with Franck Chartier (Peeping Tom Collective), for the opera *Mârouf, savetier du Caire* in Paris; with Blanca Li, still in Paris, for the creation *Robot*, which toured internationally. Also, I had the pleasure to dance for some projects directed by Emilie Capel and Yaman Okur.

In 2016, I entered at les ballets C de la B and I am super happy to be part of *nicht schlafen* (Alain Platel).

### Hildegard De Vuyst

b. 1963, Aalst (BE)

*Update: dossier tauberbach 17.01.2014*

"Late '94, I made my first tentative steps as a dramaturge, working for Het muziek Lod. When Lod started a coproduction in '95 with les ballets C de la B for *La Tristezza Complice*, this was to

launch a longstanding collaboration with director Alain Platel. I'm very proud of *Iets op Bach*, *Wolf* and *vsprs, pitié!* and *Out of Context – for Pina*. As a freelancer, I also worked with different choreographers from the same stable: Koen Augustijnen (*To crush time*) and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (*Rien de rien*). In the interim, I taught workshops (dance dramaturgy) in Amsterdam, Lublin and Aarhus; I taught at the Rits, the Brussels-based college for actors and directors; I set up a publication on the arts centres in Flanders (*Alles is rustig*) together with the Flemish Theatre Institute; I walked out on the X-group at P.A.R.T.S., etcetera...

Starting in 2001, life took on a fresh turn: the Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg (KVS for short) in Brussels came under new management and I started work there as a dramaturge. The challenge to turn this dormant repertory theatre into a lively place that would attract the whole city was considerable. The efforts we brought to bear were enormous and the satisfaction was duly proportionate. In 2006, the new infrastructure that was rebuilt from scratch was ready for operation and inaugurated by the choir project in collaboration with Alain Platel and Fabrizio Cassol. This enables us to make an even bigger imprint on the heart of the city. Still, however far-reaching my commitments to the KVS may be, when Platel calls, I come.

It is also Alain Platel's fault that I went to Palestine for the very first time in 2004. It has led to PASS (Performing Arts Summer School) a long term project that I coordinate with young Palestinian performers in collaboration with KVS, les ballets C de la B and the A.M. Qattan Foundation in Ramallah. The absolute highlight of this adventure is *Badke*, a production with ten Palestinian dancers, that will perform in Palestine in spring 2014.

Since September 2016 I joint the team of les ballets C de la B.”

#### Jan Vandenhouwe

b. 1979, Zottegem (BE)

After studying musical science at the catholic university of Leuven and at the technical university of Berlin, Jan Vandenhouwe starts working for the newspaper De Standaard as a music and opera critic. From 2005 till 2008, he works with Gerard Mortier at the Opéra de Paris as a musical dramaturge. He is also responsible for the artistic program of l'Amphithéâtre Bastille. He programs a series of recitals with piano player Pierre-Laurent Aimard at the Opéra Garnier. From 2009 till 2011, he is musical programmer at Concertgebouw Brugge. Nowadays he is a freelance musical dramaturge working for Teatro real (Madrid), Ensemble InterContemporain (Paris) and Klara Festival (Brussels), among others. He works with directors such as Krzysztof Warlikowski (*Parsifal*), Alain Platel (*C(H)ŒURS/Madrid*), Ivo Van Hove (*Macbeth/Lyon* and *Brokeback Mountain/Madrid*) and Johan Simons (*Parsifal* and *Boris Godunov/Madrid*). At this moment he is dramaturg at the Ruhrtriennale 2015-2017, under artistic direction by Johan Simons.

#### Quan Bui Ngoc

b. 1976, Hanoi (VN)

Quan Bui Ngoc starts his dance training as a child at the National School of Vietnam, joining until 1996 the Ballet of the Hanoi Opera. In 1997 Bernadette Tripier invites him to France at Istres dance school. He met Alain Platel in 2002 to start working with him for *Wolf*. He continued this collaboration with *vsprs* (2006), *pitié!* (2008), *Out of Context-for Pina* (2010), *C(H)ŒURS* (2012). He collaborated with Lisi Estaras as a dancer in *Bolero* (2009) and as a co-director in *I know a place* (2009). He created *Jump or fall* (2009) with Juliana Neves and Samuel Lefevre. In 2011 he joined the Australian Dance Theatre for the tour of *Be Your Self*. Recently he created with Daniel Hellmann K. and *Untold* with 3art3 from Zürich. Also he created pieces with specific dancers, he choreographed a memorial piece with 200 children for the city of Ieper, he created a show *Parallell Lines* with prisoners in Bruges and he created the performance *The Roof* for the Ho Chi Minh Opera in Vietnam. Quan regularly gives workshops in different countries and works as a coach for other dancers and companies.



### Berlinde De Bruyckere

b. 1964, Ghent (BE)

Berlinde De Bruyckere lives and works in Ghent. In February 2010, she received the Flemish Culture Prize 2009 for Visual Arts. De Bruyckere's sculptures, installations and drawings set out to embody the world's great stories. The forms and materials she uses are consistently selected for their metaphorical power. For several years now, she has been constructing a highly personal vocabulary, in which a refined vision of the melancholy relationship with the world and the things in it had gradually risen to the surface. Berlinde De Bruyckere represented Belgium at 2013 Venice Biennale with the work "Kreupelhout-Cripplewood" in cooperation with the Nobel Prize winner J.M.Coetzee.

### Carlo Bourguignon

b. 1962, Tienen (BE)

Carlo Bourguignon worked at the Kaaithheater 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*, *En avant, marche !* (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*, *Monkey Mind* (Lisi Estaras), *La Esclava* (Lisi Estaras/Ayelen Parolin), *Asobi* (Kaori Ito) and *Untold* (3art3 Company).

### 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 *Ashes* (Koen Augustijnen), *primero-erscht*, *Monkey Mind*, (Lisi Estaras), *La Esclava* (Lisi Estaras/Ayelen Parolin), *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), *En avant, marche!* (Alain Platel, Frank Van Laecke).

### Dorine Demuynck

b. 1968 Torhout (BE)

Dorine Demuynck studied painting at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent and has been making light and fabric sculptures, installations and performances since 1992. She also works as a freelance props manager, and as a costume and set designer she has been involved in several short films and has collaborated with a number of theatre companies: 4 Hoog, Bart Vanneste's comedy theatre *Tai'm outh* and Wim Willaert's *De grote Boodschap*; she designed costumes and accessories for Kommil Foo's performances *Lof der waanzin*, *Spaak*, *Het Bestand*, *Duizend man sterk en Schoft*.

She worked as the costume assistant for *Je suis sang* by Jan Fabre and was the costume designer for creations by Hans Van den Broeck (*Lac des singes*, *Almost Dark* and *En servicio*) and by Patrick Corillon (*De Blinden*).

Dorine Demuynck worked as a costume designer for les ballets C de la B: in *Patchagonia*, *Bolero*, *primero-erscht*, *Dans Dans* and *La Esclava* (Lisi Estaras) and *Out of Context-for Pina*, *C(H)ŒURS* and *Coup Fatal* (Alain Platel). In collaboration with het KIP, she was the dresser for *Ladycock*. Also for some productions of Compagnie Cecilia she designed the costumes: *The broken circle breakdown*

and *Giovanni* (Johan Heldenbergh), *Ensor* (Arne Sierens), as well as for Circus Ronaldo in *Fidelis Fortibus*.

In addition she is style advisor for several singers and musicians and she took part in various events and exhibitions. In 1999, her installation *Geofferd aan de straatstenen* won the public award at the Art salon of Ghent.



(c) Chris Van der Burght

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### Important remark

To avoid misunderstandings, we are asking not to publish the contents of this file, without consulting Nele Dhaese at les ballets C de la B.

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Thank you for your cooperation