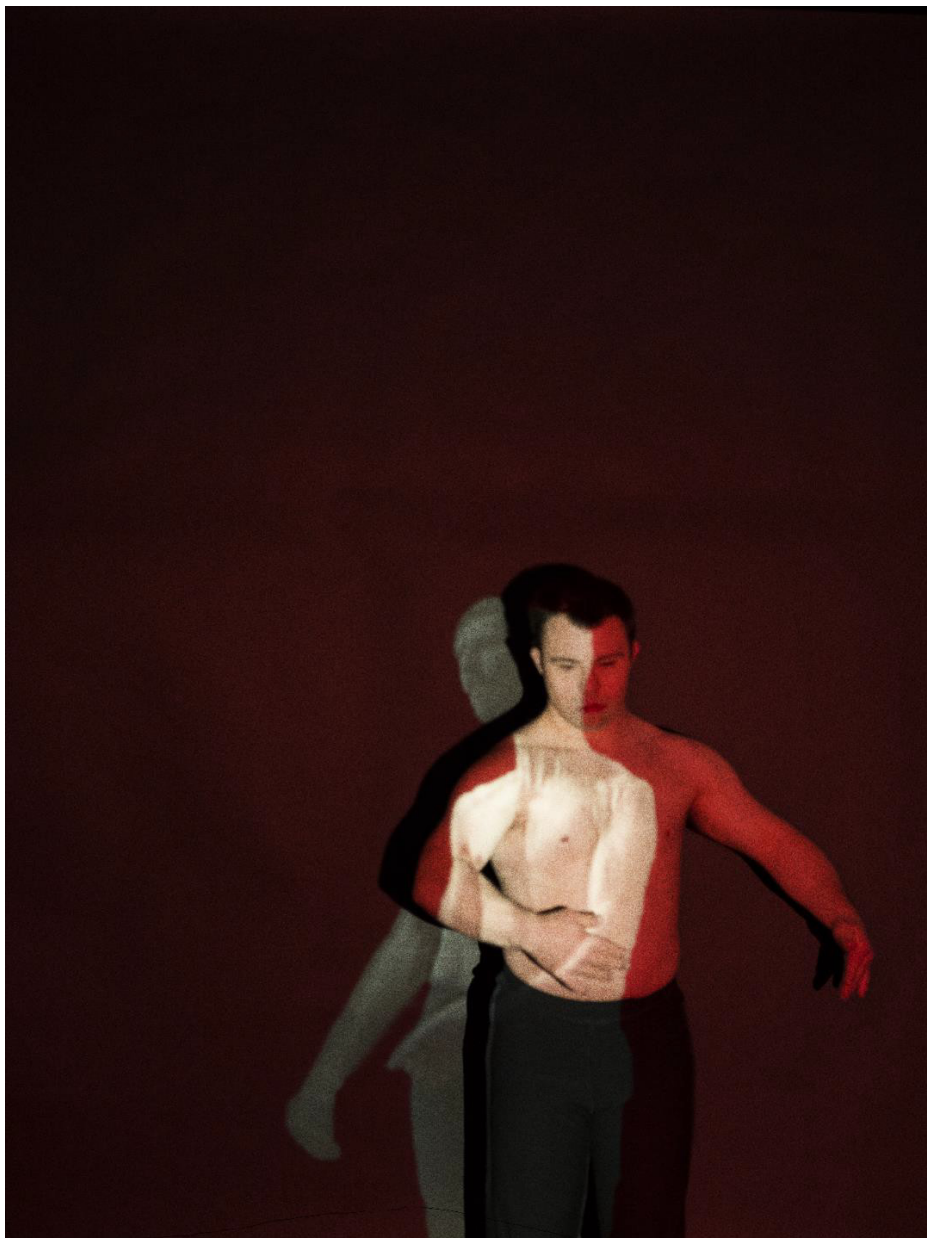


The Goldberg Variations

Platform-K/Michiel Vandeveldde/Philippe Thuriot

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In short

In 'The Goldberg Variations' dancers Oskar Stalpaert (Platform-K), Michiel Vandeveldel and Audrey Merilus use compositions by Bach and choreography by Paxton to reflect on the relation between dance and democracy. How can dance reveal the state of democracy today? The Goldberg Variations are played live on the accordion by Philippe Thuriot.

In detail

'The Goldberg Variations' not only refers to the music of Bach (which is played live on accordion), but also refers to the famous solo of Steve Paxton in the 80ties. In his new choreography Vandeveldel traces the development of dance in relation to the development of democracy. The notion of democracy was important in the 70ties and 80ties for breaking the codes of dance and allowing everyday movement to enter the dancing. Yet, where are we 40 years later? What is the state of dance? What is the state of democracy?

The music is performed on the accordion by Philippe Thuriot, who, in 2015, transposed Bach's music to the accordion. Thuriot himself is the result of an exciting cross-pollination of classical music, jazz and his parents' bar.

The polyphony of the numerous variations in Bach's 'Goldberg Variations' is also reflected in the various layers of this dance performance. A reflection on the condition of dance today, on the state of democracy, and on the various shapes and forms of physicality.

Biographies

Choreography

Michiel Vandeveldel is responsible for the choreography. And, for the first time in a number of years, he himself will also be on stage as a dancer. 'The Goldberg Variations' relates to Vandeveldel's previous work, in particular 'Ends of Worlds' and 'Neuer Neuer Neuer Tanz'. Both these choreographies take dance history as their initial starting point but become two very different kinds of performances. 'Ends of Worlds' is a journey through various modern and contemporary dance forms from the 20th century (from Isadora Duncan, Kurt Jooss, Anne Hailprin, Steve Paxton and Trisha Brown to the influence of digital technology on choreography today). In 'Neuer Neuer Neuer Tanz' the same dance material is the starting point, but it is mutated into a new 'dance of the future'. For 'The Goldberg Variations' Vandeveldel wants, in particular, to dwell on that crucial moment in the seventies, the development of (contact) improvisation dance, of which Steve Paxton became somewhat of the pioneer. In addition, as one of the layers in the performance, he investigates how the democratisation of dance in the seventies is doing today. Vandeveldel's thesis is that we have experienced a new wave of total professionalisation in the last ten years and now there's a need for disruption, not by demolishing certain forms but by bringing various bodies together.

Dance

Dancers performing 'The Goldberg Variations' are Oskar Stalpaert, Michiel Vandeveldel and Audrey Merilus.

Oskar Stalpaert has been a dancer with Platform-K for two years. Oskar became world famous in Flanders for a brief period in 2018. A short film of him dancing in the square in front of Ghent station went viral online. Oskar works as an actor with various companies.

Platform-K is a dance company in Ghent that guarantees artistic, unyielding and ground-breaking productions. Platform-K connects people with a disability with regular artists for the creation of inclusive dance performances. At the same time the organisation focuses on the development of professional dancers with a disability, by providing contemporary dance training and residencies. In doing so they explore how dancers with a disability can have a fundamental influence on the world of contemporary dance. A quest for an artistic way of overturning prejudices, demolishing boxes and, where possible, removing the barriers between “I and the other”.

Michiel Vandevelde studied dance at P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels. The Goldberg Variations brings Michiel back to the stage after two years of choreographing. He could previously be seen at the renowned Theaterfestival 2019.

Audrey Merilus (F) studied at the National Conservatory for Music and Dance in Lyon (CNSMDL). She then trained at P.A.R.T.S, where, among other things, she worked with Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker on the creation of *Somnia*. Since 2018 she has been part of the Centre Choréographique National d'Orleans.

Music

'The Goldberg Variations', a composition by J.S. Bach, is played by **Philippe Thuriot**, who transposed the music to the accordion.

Philippe's career as an accordionist cannot be summed up in one sentence and his music style cannot be classified under one genre. Philippe Thuriot is the result of a cross-pollination of diverse musical influences. His initial aspiration was classical music, in which he trained at Copenhagen conservatory. This led to a number of much lauded solo records (Warner Classics): Goldberg (2012) and Ravel-Couperin (2018).

From a very young age, Philippe came into contact with light-hearted music in his parents' bar. This inspired him later on when improvising in jazz, in 'Three men in a boat' (his own trio) and with classical compositions such as those by Bach.

He is no stranger to dance stages either, thanks to his collaboration with Alain Platel and Les Ballets C de la B. (*La tristeza complice* in 1996 and *Pitié* in 2008).

Dramaturgy

Kristof van Baarle is a freelance dramaturg and works as a researcher at Antwerp University. Vandevelde and van Baarle have previously worked together for 'Human Landscapes – Book I and II', 'Neuer Neuer Neuer Tanz' and 'Paradise Now (1968-2018)'. Van Baarle will nurture the process from close by, both with direct feedback and by proposing texts and images that contribute to the process.

Costume design

Tutia Schaad is a Swiss-Vietnamese fashion and costume designer, head of faculty at Macromedia University in Berlin and professor for fashion design at "Atelier Chardon Savard" in Berlin. During her studies, Tutia Schaad gained work experiences in Paris at the design studios of Givenchy Haute-

Couture and Prêt-à-Porter with Ricardo Tisci.

She co-founded the fashion label Perret Schaad with Johanna Perret in 2009.

Since 2018, Tutia Schaad, in addition to her academic work, founded her own design studio and designs costumes for various theatre and dance productions

Production

Inge Lattré (Platform-K) acts as the bridge between dancer Oskar Stalpaert and the rest of the artistic team. She is closely involved in the rehearsals and acts as the interpreter for the jargon of the creation process. The abstract language spoken during the creation process is not always easy to understand for dancers with a disability. The relationship of trust between Inge Lattré and Oskar Stalpaert is indispensable in order to push Oskar and to give him the confidence to grow. She watches over Oskar's limitations and consults those close to him if problems arise. Oskar sometimes needs help organising his thoughts. Good contact between Inge Lattré and those close to him means problems can be solved quickly and focus can remain on the artistic process. Inge Lattré also supports the artistic team, sharing her experiences and tips and tricks with the team in order to ensure the process runs as smoothly as possible.

Credits

Production: Platform-K

Co-production: Vooruit and Kaap

Choreography: Michiel Vandeveldel

Dance: Oskar Stalpaert, Michiel Vandeveldel and Audrey Merilus/Amanda Barrio Charmelo

Music: Philippe Thuriot/Vincent Van Amsterdam

Dramaturgy: Kristof van Baarle

Scenography: Michiel Vandeveldel, with the support of Tom Callemin

Light design advice: Tom Bruwier

Costume design: Tutia Schaad

Assistant Costume design: Camil Krings

Technical support: Maxim van Meerhaeghe and Maarten Snoeck.

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