

Kiss & Cry Collective: Cold Blood

Key information

Running time: 1 hour 20 mins / no interval

Age guidance: 14+ (contains depictions of death)

Post-show talk led by Donald Huttera, Thu 30 Jan

BSL – interpreted performance by Martin Fox-Roberts, Thu 30 Jan

Digital programmes

In an effort to be more sustainable, this digital programme is part of a trial we are conducting to discontinue printed freesheets.

Welcome to the Barbican and this exciting annual staple of our genre-defying theatre and dance programme, the London International Mime Festival. We're thrilled to be working alongside the festival's directors Helen Lannaghan and Joseph Seelig on this 2020 edition at the Barbican. Four extraordinary live performances in the Theatre and The Pit are joined by three American slapstick comedies from the 1910s and 20s in the cinema, with live accompaniment by Guildhall School jazz musicians. The Olivier Award-winning Belgian company Peeping Tom return with the final piece of their family trilogy, *Child (Kind)*, focusing this time on the perspective of young people, and we welcome back Kiss & Cry Collective, also from Belgium, with *Cold Blood*, seven surprising stories performed by dancing hands, filmed live and transposed to a giant screen. From Australia, Fleur Elise Noble returns to the Barbican with *ROOMAN*, presented as a three-dimensional story book about a woman dreaming of escape, and making their Barbican debut with *Chimpanzee*, Nick Lehane and his talented puppeteers tell the heart-breaking tale of our closest relatives abandoned by the human families that once fostered them.

Toni Racklin, Head of Theatre, Barbican

The captivating imaginations of Belgian filmmaker Jaco Van Dormael and choreographer/dancer Michele Anne de Mey produce theatre whose beauty and originality is in a class of its own. Intricate hand choreography, tiny props and live cinema, Fred and Ginger dance and floating figures in outer space – *Cold Blood* is a kaleidoscope of unexpected images, and much more.

Cold Blood is the second Kiss & Cry Collective production presented by LIMF in partnership with the Barbican in recent years, and the last of five exceptional shows and films that make up our 2020 jointly hosted season. We hope you have been transported by them all.

Helen Lannaghan and Joseph Seelig

Directors, London International Mime Festival

barbican

Performers & Creative team

Created and directed by **Michele Anne de Mey**, **Jaco Van Dormael** and the Kiss & Cry Collective Text

Thomas Gunzig

Creative team **Grégory Grosjean**, **Thomas Gunzig**, **Julien Lambert**, **Sylvie Olivé**, **Nicolas Olivier**,
and with the participation of **Thomas Beni**, **Gladys Brookfield Hampson**, **Boris Cekevda**, **Gabriella Iacono**, **Aurélié Leporcq**, **Bruno Olivier**, **Stefano Serra** **Michele Anne de Mey**, **Jaco Van Dormael**, **Thomas Gunzig**

Cinematography **Jaco Van Dormael**, **Julien Lambert**

Choreography **Michele Anne de Mey**, **Grégory Grosjean**

Dancers **Manuela Rastaldi**, **Grégory Grosjean**, **Gabriella Iacono**

Image **Julien Lambert** with **Aurélié Leporcq**

Set design **Sylvie Olivé** with **François Roux**, **Juliette Fassin**, **Théodore Brisset**, **Brigitte Baudet**, **Daniella Zorrozuca**

Set construction **Jean-François Pierlot (Feu, Métal)**, **Walter Gonzales (Triline)**

Lighting designer **Nicolas Olivier** with **Bruno Olivier**

Sound designer **Boris Cekevda**

Cold Blood (London)

Performers **Manuela Rastaldi**, **Denis Robert**, **Nora Alberdi**, **Ivan Fox**, **Stefano Serra**, **Jaco Van Dormael/Harry Cleven**

Image **Juliette Van Dormael**, **Aurélié Leporcq**

Light **Yann Hoogstoel**

Sound **Boris Cekevda**

Photography **Julien Lambert**

Technical director **Thomas Dobruszkès**

Voiceover **Toby Regbo**

Text translator **Gladys Brookfield Hampson**

Producer **Hélène Dubois**

Presented by the Barbican in association with London International Mime Festival

Executive producer **L'Astragales asbl (Belgium)**

Associate producer **Mars Mons Arts de la Scène**, **Théâtre de Namur (Belgium)**

Co-producers **Charleroi Danse**; **la Fondation Mons 2015**; **KVS (Belgium)**; **Les Théâtres de la Ville (Luxemburg)**; **le Printemps des Comédiens**; **Théâtre des Célestins (France)**; **Torino Danza (Italy)**; **Canadian Stage (Canada)**; and **Théâtre de Carouage (Switzerland)**

With support from **Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, service de la Danse**

Creators' note

A plane journey, a forest in the fog, seven unexpected deaths...

Cold Blood takes a poetic yet pragmatic look at death and its often arbitrary nature. With a certain lightness, life celebrates its final moments of happiness and memories file past, at times languid, at others more vibrant. Each vignette features a different passing, some mundane and some downright bizarre but all equally final. Existence stands still for a dance. When death arrives it is absurd, often trivial and sometimes comical.

We challenged ourselves to make a feature-length film on a kitchen table with a cast of dancing hands. But unlike a regular film the script was written at the end, once we had experimented with improvisation and suggestions from all members of the group. When the script was in place, we pulled together all the visuals. Yes it is cinema but it is also much more. There is dance, but also more than dance. It is like a pop-up film in which the camera films things which are too small to be seen by the naked eye and the eye sees what the camera does not capture. It's a show which appeals to all five senses. When people take their last breath they expect to see their lives flash before them but this is not what happens. There is only one final image which takes them by surprise... the softness of skin on an afternoon which smells of vanilla, the noise of the sheep you are shearing, the smell of freshly cut grass at the height of summer... when the end comes we do not know it is the end.

Michele Anne de Mey and Jaco Van Dormael

Biographies

Michele Anne de Mey is a Belgian dancer and choreographer. She attended Mudra, the Brussels-based school founded by Maurice Béjart, from 1976 to 1979. She choreographed her first show, *Passé Simple*, in 1981. Giving Belgian dance a new direction, she followed this up with the duets *Ballatum* (1984) and *Face a Face* (1986). In 1983 she had become one of the four founding members of Rosas dance company, for which she worked for six years devising and staging several works for Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, including *Fase* (1982), *Rosas danst Rosas* (1983), *Elena's Aria* (1984) and *Ottone, Ottone* (1988). Although always focusing on the connection between dance and music, her choreography has a strong dramatic content, placing the dancer in a specific and innovative relationship between stage and audience. In 1990 she set up her own company, *Astragale*, producing some thirty shows that have enjoyed international success. In 2005 she became joint director of *Charleroi-Danse* at the Centre Chorégraphique de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles.

In 2011, together with director/filmmaker Jaco Van Dormael and a group of colleagues, she co-devised *Kiss & Cry* at the Festival VIA, bringing together film, dance, text and theatre. This show became a worldwide success and has twice featured at the Barbican as part of London International Mime Festival. With the same team she co-created *Cold Blood* at Le Manège de Mons, or the context of Mons – European City of Culture 2015. She subsequently stepped down from her post as director of *Charleroi Danse* and restarted her own company. Its first production, *Amor*, was a solo for Michele Anne in which she conveyed her own, intimate, near-death experiences.

Jaco Van Dormael is a Belgian director, writer and filmmaker, perhaps best known for the movies *Toto the Hero* (1991), *Le Huitième Jour* (1996), *Mr. Nobody* (2009) and *The Brand New Testament* (2015). At birth, he had nearly been strangled by his umbilical cord and received an insufficient supply of oxygen. It was feared that he might end up mentally impaired and this trauma may partly account for the recurring themes in his films which often explore the worlds of people with mental and physical disabilities. He studied film at INSAS in Brussels and later at the Louis Lumière College in Paris. In 1995, he took part in the *Lumière et Compagnie* project, an anthology of very short films (on average 50-60 seconds) contributed by international directors in which each used the original Auguste and Louis Lumière's motion picture camera to film their short movie. In 1998 he was a jury member at the 51st Cannes Film Festival, and in the same year participated in the *Spotlights on a Massacre* project – 10 Films Against 100 Million Antipersonnel Land Mines, a collection of short films that served as an anti-land mine campaign.

Van Dormael's feature debut *Toto The Hero* about a man who believes his life was stolen from him when he was switched at birth, won *Caméra d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival and numerous other awards as well as a BAFTA nomination. *Le Huitième Jour* won Best Actor Award at Cannes for Pascal Duquenne and Daniel Auteuil jointly. All his films contain surreal elements and make prominent use of nostalgic, popular music standards. Typically, they end with a death, portrayed not as a tragedy, but as a happy 'moving on'. Jaco Van Dormael and Michele Anne de Mey are husband and wife.

London International Mime Festival

London International Mime Festival (LIMF) promotes contemporary visual theatre. Its productions have been nominated for and won Olivier Awards and in 2017 the festival was honoured with the Empty Space – Peter Brook Special Achievement Award for its work over four decades. Founded in 1977, LIMF is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

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