

dossier

creation 2021

première: 5 November 2021 - hetpaleis, Antwerp (BE)

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## promise me

Joke Laureyns & Kwint Manshoven

laGeste (kabinet k + les ballets C de la B) & hetpaleis



foto © kvde.be

WRITTEN  
BY  
THE  
BODY

laGeste

photo: *promise me* (2021) © Kurt Van der Elst



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# promise me

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“An antidote for our times”

Charlotte De Somviele in De Standaard

Summer 2020. Joke Laureyns and Kwint Manshoven organize a series of improvisations with the children from *as long as we are playing*. Not so much to refresh the material of the show after the run between March and July had been cancelled, but to meet each other again after months of stagnation, isolation, distance and loss. To be able to perform and play in freedom and proximity. *Still playing, but different*, that's what Joke Laureyns and Kwint Manshoven called this series. The children's experience with a creation process and a first run made the complicity amongst themselves and the familiarity with the physical vocabulary of Joke and Kwint so strong that the power and eagerness of the children splashed off the dance floor.

These intense impro-sessions held the contours of a new creation: *promise me*. A relentlessly physical and fiery show. In a language of dance that develops around notions of swaying, bouncing and tilting. With bodies that search for extremes. A creation in the sign of bravado, guts and surrender.

In times when we want to insure ourselves against everything, this show is a celebration of the untamed, the reckless, the brave.

Joke Laureyns and Kwint Manshoven examine the attitude and the dynamics of 'recklessness'. The urge to discover things, to flirt with danger, to get over cold feet. *promise me* questions our fears and prudence; gauges what we have to lose. However battered we come out of the battle, it's crucial to do something we've never dared before. *promise me* talks about courage, curiosity, impetuosity. To say it with Pippi Longstocking: "I've never done it before, so I think I can do it". *promise me* throws the suffocating bandages in the air in which we wrap ourselves, and even more so our children.

Anger, waywardness and resistance slumber in this work. Like a burst of rage after a long period of powerless passivity. The urge for touch, no matter what the consequences are. A revolt against that what stops you from living. Throwing a stone at death. Giving your demons the finger. *promise me* is about letting go of control and taking risks. About scars and the stories they leave on our skin.

Thomas Devos is in charge of the live music. Thomas has worked with kabinet k before for *raw* (2013) and *horses* (2016). He challenges the dancers to leave their fear behind and throw themselves into the arena. A celebration of the lust for life and defiance of death.

“Young children in your country are being raised so safely that they’re becoming a danger to themselves. Zero risk awareness. Whoever spends their whole childhood on rubber tiles with plastic hammers, turns into a surroundings illiterate. Children without scars. Children without a scratch, even. Children who’ve never seen their own blood, let alone tasted it. Incomprehensible. Dangerous children.  
(...)

Ode to recklessness in times of absolute safety obsession. No, that’s the wrong word, recklessness. What it is then? Drive, glow. Yes, you need to use your body sparingly, but do you also need to use life sparingly?

from: *Ode to my scars, a plea for recklessness* - david van reybrouck in De Correspondent 2015

photo: *promise me* (2021) © Kurt Van der Elst



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## CREDITS

*choreography* Joke Laureyns & Kwint Manshoven

*composition & live music* Thomas Devos

*with* Ido Batash, Ilena Deboeverie, Téa Mahaux, Zélie Mahaux, Kwint Manshoven, Juliette Spildooren en Lili van Den Briel

*stage design* Kwint Manshoven & Dirk De Hooghe

*dramaturgy* Mieke Versyp & Koen Haagdorens

*light design* Dirk De Hooghe

*sound engineering* Karel Marynissen of Pieter Kint

*costumes* Valerie Le Roy

*production management* Marieke Cardinaels

*communication and distribution* Mieke Versyp

*photography* Kurt Van der Elst

*production* laGeste (kabinet k + les ballets C de la B) & hetpaleis

*many thanks to* les ballets C de la B

*with the support of* the Flemish government, the city of Ghent & the Tax Shelter of the Belgian federal government via Casa Kafka



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## PRACTICAL

*promise me* is a dance performance for an adult audience, but in its layering it can also be presented to a family audience (aged 8 and up).

*première* 5 November 2021 - hetpaleis, Antwerp

*duration* 60 min without a break

*no language*

*available* until the end of September '23 (not in school examination periods)

*technical conditions* scène dimensions 11 x 11 metres (ideally) - technical rider on request.

playlist / downloadable photos / trailer / programme

<https://www.lageste.be/en/touring/promise-me>

biography / interview wit Joke Laureyns

<https://www.lageste.be/en/creations/promise-me>

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## IN THE PRESS

*'promise me* tears conventions to shreds, individuals to pieces, taboos into strips and neat dance steps into fragments. They dare. This performance drops splintered beauty at your feet and moves you by placing an uninhibited little girl next to a strongman and by transforming girls with blonde angel hair into fierce revolutionaries. This is a wow-turn in the oeuvre of kabinet k and a message to the dance world: to take children seriously as fully-fledged performers who are capable of much more than performing in creations about 'their world'. Kabinet k uses the young soul to make a strong statement, together with and equal to older souls: cherish together the fearlessness in the pursuit of happiness.'

*Focus Knack - Els Van Steenberghe* \*\*\*\*

*'Promise me* is not only an ode to our inner rebel in a fearful society that swears by control and security. It is also about stubbornly standing up for something. Pushing your boundaries. Going against the flow. And trusting that if you almost hit a wall with your eyes closed, there will always be someone to protect you. It makes *promise me* a beautiful antidote for these times.'

*De Standaard - Charlotte De Somviele* \*\*\*

photo: *promise me* (2021) © Kurt Van der Elst



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## PRODUCTION

### laGeste (kabinet k + les ballets C de la B)

laGeste came into being in 2022, from a fusion of kabinet k and les ballets C de la B. The two Ghent dance companies had a long history of collaboration and a great artistic affinity in the search for visceral storytelling. They decided to join forces and continue their work under the new name laGeste: a home both for the intergenerational practice that Joke laureyns and Kwint Manshoven developed at kabinet k, and for the legacy of choreographer Alain Platel, who was the pivot of les ballets C de la B for more than thirty-five years.

laGeste, written by the body. Each project is “un monde des possibles” populated with a diversity of bodies. Bodies carry a history. They can be weighed down by it, scarred by it, permeated by it to every pore. But a body is not a prison, a scar not a condemnation. The body also holds the promise of transformation. Bodily practices emerge from that deep connection between place and time, between individual and community. We prefer movement, produced by that connection, to words, but without excluding language.

The body is a battlefield on which the great social battles are fought. Cisgenders versus fluids, the enterprising versus the unproductive, the excellent versus the limited, the identitarians versus those who think they can become anything and anyone, the privileged versus the decolonised, the old scarred by historical traumas versus the young threatened by ecological disasters, the haves versus the have-nots.

This polarisation has increased enormously in the last five years, and intensified in times of pandemics and other crises. With our work, we hope to create temporary spaces where we can bridge the gap between people again.

We are building an inclusive narrative, not on the margins, but right at the heart of what we do. We aim for diversity and mixability at all levels. We would like to see more reality in the represented bodies and at the same time fight for the possibility of transformation, play and poetry, of singing our way out of the boxes we keep each other in.

[www.lageste.be](http://www.lageste.be)

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### hetpaleis

hetpaleis is a performing arts house for young audiences. It encourages children in their experience of art: as spectators, as interlocutors, as participants, as young artists.

hetpaleis is an urban theatre. It addresses a broad urban audience, embraces diversity in all its qualities and focuses on community building.

hetpaleis produces high-quality work for the large auditorium. It programmes different art disciplines and supports a variety of artists in their development.

hetpaleis links a locally anchored operation to a national and international reach.

hetpaleis is a mirror for a world that is changing radically, a home for the adults of tomorrow.

[www.hetpaleis.be](http://www.hetpaleis.be)

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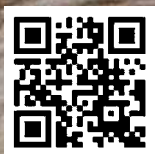
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