



4 : 3

a stageplay by

TIBALDUS EN ANDERE HOEREN
THEATER STAP

About 4:3

THE TWO COMPANIES

Tibaldus en andere hoeren (Tibaldus and other whores) was founded in 2009. Timeau De Keyser, Hans Mortelmans and Simon De Winne, who met each other at School of Arts in Ghent, Drama Department, form the artistic core of the collective. Tibaldus makes theatre together with friends. People who they think are fascinating and important as artist, characters and human beings. The collective tries to create a moment of pause in the hearts and minds of its audience, challenging the passive gaze and sharing experiences of shock and wonder. Tibaldus' theatre is slow, sculptural and physical, in the hope of not only being a telling voice, but also a listening ear. Looking for a space where one can listen, watch and experience, the collective prefers austerity to abundance and necessity to effect. Compressing an ever so complex reality into a number of highly personal, yet very identifiable symbols (e.g. the horse), Tibaldus tries to write and imagine its own small myths and tragedies.

The basis of *Theater Stap* is a concept of equality, which maintains that mentally disabled people with acting talent must be allowed to develop it completely. From this viewpoint the acting company is not only the party to be nursed but they also have a lot to offer as cultural producers. Theater Stap produces performances in the regular theatrical circuit. The choice to strive for a diversified output makes the contribution of guest directors an absolute requirement. Partly as a result of this, Theater Stap has developed into a theatre working place where disabled actors and able-bodied artists meet. They strive to realise productions in which an authentic approach predominates with passion and professionalism. Productions that also want to complement the lively discussions that keep the theatre moving.

The repertoire of Theater Stap is thereby diverse. In addition of existing stories and plays, theatre Stap also uses collage productions through an associative approach to a theme. These themes are not typical to the specific living environment of mentally disabled people, but matches beautifully, as we see through the working process. And even more, we think they can enrich this kind of working.

After twenty years touring and about twenty-five productions, Theater Stap is just at the beginning of its quest.

WHY WE WANT TO COLLABORATE WITH THE ACTORS OF THEATER STAP

I hate actors. They never act like people. They just think they do. Some of the good ones do, in a very slight way, but not in a way that's fun to watch. And if an actor's really good, you can always tell he knows he's good, and that spoils it.

— Catcher in the rye, by J.D. Sallinger

Tibaldus en andere hoeren's way of being on a stage

By using the form of slow and ritual theatre, we want to create a space where the spectator can watch and listen without a multiplicity of unnecessary impressions.

We are constantly in search of how to be on a stage. A way of *being on stage* that doesn't feel too implausible. In fact we don't like *the acting part* of being on a stage, *pretending* something or someone. So we try to create a situation where the focus is on the action, rather than on the psychology of the actor, or of a character. And when we follow the trail of actions, as precisely as possible, we think we can end up in a concentration / situation where the whole performance comes *alive*. Because it is the action that is the starting point of the actor, and through the action he and the performance itself, find a certain emotional quality (this quality isn't unambiguous, not a specific emotion. It's a kind of turmoil).

The actors of Theater Stap

When we watch the actors of Theater Stap on a scene, we're astonished. Because they can do what we already try to do for several years. Their way of playing is very related to the work we try to create. When the actors of Theater Stap are on stage, they do it *without something in their hands, without something in their pockets*, as we say it in Belgium. They don't use any tricks. It's fascinating to see they've not incorporated some of theatre's rules. Rules we, Tibaldus en andere hoeren, try to deconstruct and build up ourselves. But the actors of Theater Stap do it better. Not incorporating these conventions is very interesting for us to see, because in a way, it gives a theatre freer than that of standard performers. In that way they fit precisely in what we search in theatre, in our esthetics. And they help us to open new possibilities, new powers, of which we didn't even know they existed.

THE PERFORMANCE 4:3

In december we have our première in Turnhout, with the play called 4:3. This is a play with 11 people on stage: Two actors from Tibaldus en andere hoeren, and nine players from theater Stap.

The starting point of our working process was the idea of showing a scene full of Gods, because we liked the idea to show the players of Theater Stap as Gods.

Today they say God is dead. On the other hand we live more than ever with a multiplicity of Gods in our society. A lot of people are living close to their own Gods, and we're confronted with them every day, in our daily life, or on television.

In this production we don't want to show the Gods we see nowadays in all the media and in our streets: Gods of guilt, of anger, and intolerance.

Instead we play the Gods of farts, sputter, hope and orthopedic shoes.

Their stories are inconsequent and eclectic. The way they are doesn't fit in a strong pattern, they are wild and anarchic. And showing these kind of Gods played by the players of Stap, is the big main theme of the play.

Because we find it a very comforting thought, thinking of these Gods. We show heaven. We show people who need Gods and Devils, people who create gods to comfort themselves. Because they are in doubt, scared, and they find support in the melodies, stories and rituals.

In 4 : 3 Gods tell their stories and truths. They present their rituals and dances. They sing their songs.

When we ask the players of Theater Stap to play gods, they start talking. Deadly honest and effective. About Turnhout, their hometown, about the company of their brother, or about the Flemish fund. So they become gods with a brother working in a wood company, gods who talks at dinner about the Belgian problems, a bilingual country. And we don't know these Gods yet, don't know about a God living in Turnhout. Exciting!

These strange and anachronicle spectacles ensure that the Gods suddenly become human beings, become human-gods. Who don't remain suspended in a classical anecdote, in clichés. Because of their astonishing way of experiencing these clichés, gibbering, in a semi concentration, laughing because of someone letting a fart.

This is the reason we want to show 4 : 3 and its players to the world, because of the comforting feeling it creates. The pleasure of them being on that stage is endless, warm, and moving. Their uniqueness is full of promise for theatre and dance, just as their humanity should be for society in general.



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fragments of 4:3 on vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/61174285>

Images



