Rijeka, 7 February 2020

**PRESS RELEASE**

## 

## NEEDCOMPANY FESTIVAL TO KICK OFF ON 29 FEBRUARY AS PART OF THE RIJEKA 2020 ECOC PROGRAMME

**The Belgian art group Needcompany, one of the most important representatives of contemporary European theatre, will give as part of the Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture programme three performances from 29 February to 6 March and open an exhibition representing the richness and diversity of their art work – one performance being primarily musical, the second dramatic, and the third a dance performance.**

Needcompanyis an international, multilingual and multidisciplinary art group established in Brussels in 1986 by **Jan Lauwers** (BE) and **Grace Ellen Barkey** (ID/BE) and was joined by **Maarten Seghers** (NE) as artistic director in 2001. Their body of work spans various artistic fields, including theatre, dance, performance art, visual arts, literature and more. They have performed at some of the world’s most eminent festivals, museums and theatres. They have received numerous awards, including Jan Lauwers receiving the Golden Lion for lifetime achievement at the 2014 Venice Biennale.

In Rijeka they will present audiences with the exhibition *18 Videos*, the *Concert by a Band Facing the Wrong Way,* and the performances *All the Good* and *Forever*.

**Festival Programme:**

### CONCERT BY A BAND FACING THE WRONG WAY – Maarten Seghers & Needcompany

**29 February 2020 – Croatian House of Culture, Rijeka, 9:00 pm**

### EXHIBITION: 18 VIDEOS – Lemm&Barkey / Needcompany

**29 February - 6 March 2020 – Rijeka Ivex Building – DeltaLab001**

### ALL THE GOOD – Jan Lauwers & Needcompany (BE)

**3 and 4 March 2020 CNT Ivan pl. Zajc, Rijeka, at 7:30 pm**

### FOREVER – Grace Ellen Barkey & Needcompany

**6 March 2020 CNT Ivan pl. Zajc, Rijeka, at 7:30 pm**

### CONCERT BY A BAND FACING THE WRONG WAY – Maarten Seghers & Needcompany

*Concert by a Band Facing the Wrong Way* is a performance about effort, or as its creators describe it, “about how much effort it takes”.

*Concert by a Band Facing the Wrong Way* is a portrait of a group of Western artists running endlessly onward. It is unclear whether they are fleeing from all the misery in the world or racing towards it. The performance is a pressure cooker bursting with boundless effort, which leads to an exuberant optimism that has lost all sense of direction.

The Band Facing the Wrong Way consists of **Maarten Seghers** and **Rombout Willems** as guitarists and singers and **Nicolas Field** on drums.

### EXHIBITION: 18 VIDEOS – Lemm&Barkey / Needcompany

The exhibition featuring seven video installations brings together **Needcompany**’s body of work and serves at the same time as a common thread for the performances and accompanying events that make up the programme of Rijeka’s Needcompany Festival*.*

**Grace Ellen Barkey** is one of the co-founders of the Needcompanyart group, and her field of activity blurs the boundaries between theatre, dance, performance art and visual arts. **Lot Lemm** has been a member of the Needcompanygroup since 1993 and works as an artist, set designer and costume designer. This artistic duo is known as **Lemm&Barkey.**

Crafts – porcelain making, knitting and crochet – play an important role in their artistic work. The materials that pass through Lemm & Barkey’s hands are handled in an almost ruthlessly hysterical manner and turned into something monumental. The story that began with the materials has burst at the seams and formed something bigger. Porcelain objects become parts of the body and even a link between the bodies. What could be more meaningless than a handmade teapot that you can’t drink tea from? A porcelain bra is unbearably rigid. And is the teddy bear part of child’s play or is it a transgressive dream? If they knew the answers, they wouldn’t create these items.

### ALL THE GOOD – Jan Lauwers & Needcompany (BE)

The play *All the Good* was created in a collaboration, co-production and co-presentation of: Needcompany and the following partners: Rijeka 2020, the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc Rijeka, Ruhrtriennale – Kultur Ruhr GmbH (DE), the ReimsScènesd’Europe Festival (FR), Concertgebouw (Bruges, BE), La Colline Paris (FR), Zürcher Theater Spektakel (Zürich, CH), Teatro Central de Sevilla (ES), Kaaitheater Brussel (BE), Toneelhuis Antwerpen (NL), the Malta Festival Poznań (PL), Niedersächsische Staatstheater Hannover GmbH (DE) and NTGent (BE).

*All the Good* is a story of loss and hope. A love story at a time in which Europe is sacrificing its values and a large group of people are succumbing to hatred and a lack of understanding. This story of a family of artists with their everyday cares and the omnipresence of death, which mercilessly imposes itself on them, both in the seclusion of their home and in the outside world.

**Jan Lauwers** is the author of the play, set designer and director, and **Maarten Seghers** wrote the music.

The story begins in 2014, when Jan Lauwers meets the Israeli elite soldier and war veteran **Elik Niv** who, following a serious accident and a long rehabilitation process, has become a professional dancer. During their long discussions about Niv’s military missions and his development as a dancer in the safely subsidised world of the live art in Germany, bombs explode at the Zaventem airport and Maalbeek metro station.

*All the Good* is a story with a double autobiographical background: On the one hand, there is Elik’s life and on the other, the life of Jan Lauwers and **Grace Ellen Barkey** with their children in the infamous Brussels district of Maelbeek.

*All the Good* also tells the story of a young girl, Romy, who is convinced that the world is good. During a trip through China, she meets the soldier Elik while she is vomiting in an alleyway after drinking snake’s blood. This meeting changes her life.

### FOREVER – Grace Ellen Barkey & Needcompany

When the composer Gustav Mahler was diagnosed with a fatal heart disease, he wrote to a friend: “I have lost everything I have gained in terms of who I thought I was, and I have to learn my first steps again like a new-born.”

It was in this mood that Mahler wrote *Das Lied von der Erde/The Song of the Earth,* whose last song, the touching *Der Abschied/The Farewell,* was to become one of his most personal works. Man’s struggle with his mortality is in contrast with nature, which is eternal and constantly renewing itself.

In the song *Forever*, **Grace Ellen Barkey** raises the same questions as Mahler.

The song is performed in an intimate setting as a recollection by the artist **Maarten Seghers**, backed up by dancers and installation art. The score of Mahler’s *Farewell* is visible in the choreography of *Forever*.

***Festival organisers: Needcompany in collaboration with the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc Rijeka and Rijeka 2020***

Photos relating to the performances can be downloaded from <https://app.box.com/s/5qgule5n5llzhtle5qroy8du9qxqn394>

Thank you in advance for publishing the release. With kind regards,

**Rijeka 2020**

Media Relations – Edi Jurković

[edi.jurkovic@rijeka2020.eu](mailto:edi.jurkovic@rijeka2020.eu), Cell phone: 099 220 5612