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**PRESS RELEASE**

**"FOREVER" CLOSES THE NEEDCOMPANY FESTIVAL IN RIJEKA**

On Friday, March 6th, at the **Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka** the performance of **"Forever"** **by** **the Needcompany group marked the closing of the Needcompany Festival in Rijeka**, held from 29 February to 6 March as part of the **programmatic direction Age of Power, Rijeka 2020 – European Capital of Culture.**

**The author and choreographer of the play,** performed by members of the unique Belgian art group Needcompany, is **Grace Ellen Barkey** who, together with her partner Jan Lauwers, founded the Needcompany in 1986.

**Barkey found inspiration for the play in the music of Gustav Mahler**, his symphony **Das Lied von der Erde** (Song of the Earth), more specifically the last movement of the symphony **Der Abschied** (Farewell), which is **one of his most personal works**, one that reflects his state of mind.

When Mahler was diagnosed with severe 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 newborn." Man’s struggle with his mortality is in contrast with nature which is eternal and constantly renewing itself. **Just like Mahler faced the issue of mortality in his music, Barkey deals with it in her play,** deriving the idea from the notion that nobody can sustain constant praise of life. Death, or rather, the finiteness of human life, also deserves a song or dance. The song in the play, as well as the orchestration, was performed in an intimate setting as a recollection by the actor **Maarten Seghers** who plays the dark role of a desperate unaccompanied singer, which evokes sorrow of Mahler's lone wanderer. A large musical ensemble has left him on his own and now, naked, he sings parts of the Farewell song that sounds quite abstract without the instrumental accompaniment.

**The play "Forever" is a fragile performance full of hope**. The farewell becomes something elusive, something that breaks apart, displaying parts of beauty and strength.

**After the performance, members of the Needcompany group also participated in the Q&A with the audience** and commented the impressions of the play. The Q&A was moderated by **Vedrana Klepica**, Croatian playwright, dramaturge and theatre director.

During a week-long Needcompany Festival in Rijeka, the audience had the opportunity to see the play “Concert by a Band Facing the Wrong Way” and two performances of the play “All That Is Good”, which was co-produced by Rijeka 2020, Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc, the Needcompany Group and their partners.

An exhibition "18 videos" by the Lemm & Barkey art duo was set up at the DeltaLab premises, and for a better understanding of Needcompany's artistic work, an introductory talk was held at the very beginning of the festival, which prepared the audience for the artistic expression of the Belgian art group.

Thanks in advance for the publication.

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