

# KAAI THEATER

## BURNING ICE #6

David Weber-Krebs & Maximilian Haas  
**Balthazar (1. Stories)**

**28 & 29/03/2013 – 19 :00 – RITS- De Bottelarij**  
Theatre | 60 min.

**EXTRA:** On **28/03** you can combine the performance with *Animal Dances* by Martin Nachbar at the Kaaistudio's. That evening there is also a post-performance talk with David Weber Krebs, Martin Nachbar and Jeroen Peeters, in the Kaaistudio's.

On **29/3** you can combine the performance with the book presentation of *Entropic Empire, On the City of Man in the Age of Disaster* by Lieven De Cauter and Rudi Laeremans, in De Bottelarij.

## CREDITS

### direction

David Weber-Krebs

### dramaturgy & theory

Maximilian Haas

### performance

Julie Delrue

Greet Jacobs

Linda Lugtenborg

Evelien Van de Maele

Annemieke Ros

Sid Van Oerle

### the text is based on the donkeys' biographies

#### written by

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### documentation

Ines Lechleitner

### techniek

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Elmar Neudam (RITS)

### costume coordination

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### donkey tutors

Foti Vlachos

Karine Van Beneden

### donkey taxi

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### research

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Kaaithheater

RITS

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### in cooperation with

Ferme du Parc Maximilien asbl

### thanks to

Cin Windey

Jean-Baptiste van Zeebroeck

Frits Maris

**EN** - In *Balthazar* (1. *STORIES*) a donkey is at the 'centre of the action'. He is not reduced to the role of a piece of living scenery, but is given the leading part.

*Balthazar* (1. *STORIES*) confronts the spectator with his narcissistic desire to identify with the animal, fully knowing that this projection – which is fundamental to conventional theatre – is inadequate for this situation. Looking at the animal, the spectator is tempted to assign a psychological significance to his behavior and an artistic or an anti-artistic purpose; he may assume that the donkey is complying with the performance, that the beast is understanding and approving of it, that he is participating in the piece and developing it further using artistic means. Inevitably we follow this reading of the animal, while being fully aware of its absurdity. Neither theatre nor film can communicate an animal's thoughts – or, arguably, their sentiments. In fact, the same applies to humans, but there are conventions and techniques in the media that allow us to forget that. On stage, however, we can bring to the fore *anthropomorphization* and other projections that the spectator applies to the animal, and reveal the limits of such identifications and projections.

The *Balthazar* project is inspired by Robert Bresson's film *Au hasard Balthazar* (1966), which tells the eventful life story of a donkey. The performance repeats on stage the artistic approach to the animal applied by Bresson on film: a donkey is transferred into an alien artistic context designed for representing humankind – and this impacts both on the animal and the context in which it is placed. The piece shifts back and forth from performance to theatre – where we define performance as a live and active intercommunication between performer and audience (and among performers) that has an open outcome, and theatre as a specific representation of an absent meaning.

David Weber-Krebs is a theatre director, a film- and video-maker, and a performer. Maximilian Haas is a writer and dramaturg.

## **The BALTHAZAR project**

*BALTHAZAR (1. Stories)* is the first result of a long-term artistic research project by David Weber-Krebs (director) and Maximilian Haas (dramaturgy/theory) that explores our cultural relationship with animals using the means of theater. The project consists of a series of three performance productions and a book. Referring to the traditional division of the performing arts between theatre, dance, and opera, each performance concentrates on a specific theatrical means: narration, choreography, and sound. And each of them has a different conceptual focus derived from the works of the three philosophers that shaped the contemporary reflection on the animal most prominently: Gilles Deleuze, Donna Haraway and Jacques Derrida. Visual artist Ines Lechleitner keeps records on the different project phases and creates an artist's book that brings together the experiences and outcomes of those artistic experiments with the philosophical ideas. The performances are developed in cooperation with theatre/dance schools and presented in theatre festivals.

a.

*BALTHAZAR (1. Stories)*, Kaaitheater Brussels, March 2013

Stories try to grasp the animal and assign a stable meaning to him. But the animal undercuts constantly this attempt to define him and pulls the narrator and the narration into a process of becoming-animal. Together with students of the drama program Rits (Brussels) we explore the narrative definition of animals on a theatre stage. Different stories are confronted with their living object, the donkey Balthazar, who might embody or belie them.

b.

*BALTHAZAR (2. a Choreography)*, Kampnagel Hamburg, June 2013

We live with animals and we work with them. And since we lack a common language it is up to the bodies to negotiate the shared world. And: What we are, is just what we have become while working with them. With students of the Inter-University Centre for Dance Berlin (HZT) and Performance Studies Hamburg we explore the conditions of living and working together with animals in choreographic practices. The dance performance will be presented during the Live Art Festival (Kampnagel, 5th–15th of June).

c.

*BALTHAZAR (3. Voices)*, Amsterdam, 2014

Animals don't have a language comparable to ours, but they have voices. They produce sounds that we interpret as indicators of joy, rage, pain or tranquillity. How can we frame those expressions in order to perceive them as voices, both in the musical and in the political sense of the word? And, taking those questions seriously: Can we still keep up with the straight borderline between humans and animals? With students of the programs Mime and SNDO at the Theaterschool Amsterdam we focus on the musicality of the donkey. The sound-performance will be presented in an Amsterdam festival in 2014.

Kaaitheater is supported by



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