



Astragales

Kiss & Cry

2025.10.18 Sat. 14:30

2025.10.19 Sun. 14:30

Weiwuying Playhouse

Duration is 80 minutes without intermission.



National Kaohsiung
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEI WUYING

衛武營 國家藝術文化中心
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

Program Introduction

An original production by Belgium's contemporary dance company Astragales, *Kiss & Cry* is a brilliant story told by choreographer Michèle Anne DE MEY and filmmaker Jaco VAN DORMAEL. This intimate tale of a woman's five love stories unfolds through the masterful use of object arrangements, cinematic transitions, and stagecraft. The music features a medley of opera, an American ballad, and vintage Shanghai melodies, while the scenes shift between evocative settings like trains, beaches, stations, a ballroom, and a double bed. Sometimes playful, sometimes melancholic, the finger dances reflect the emotional arcs of each love story, allowing the audience to intuitively grasp the plot development despite the absence of dialogues or facial expressions. *Kiss & Cry* seamlessly blends the immediacy of theater with the magical allure of cinematic techniques.

About the Creative Team



Choreography & NanoDances | Michèle Anne DE MEY

Belgian choreographer Michèle Anne DE MEY (Brussels, 1959) attended Mudra, the Brussels-based school founded by Maurice BÉJART from 1976 to 1979. She choreographed her first show, *Passé Simple*, in 1981, giving contemporary dance a new direction she subsequently followed with the two-handers *Ballatum* (1984) and *Face à Face* (1986).

In 1983, she became one of the four founding members of the Rosas Company. She spent six years working on devising and staging several works by Anne Teresa DE KEERSMAEKER, including *Fase* (1982), *Rosas danst Rosas* (1983), *Elena's Aria* (1984), and *Ottone, Ottone* (1988). Although Michèle Anne DE MEY focuses on the connection between dance and music, the choreography of her productions always has a strong drama content and places the dancer in a specific and innovative relationship between stage and audience.

In 1990, while staging *Sinfonia Eroica*, she set up her own company, Astragale. There followed thirty or so productions that enjoyed international success. Among them were *Châteaux en Espagne* (1991), *Pulcinella* (1994), *Love Sonnets* (1994), *Cahier* (1995), *Katamenia* (1997), *Utopie* (2001), *Raining Dogs* (2002) and *12 Easy Waltzes* (2004). Michèle Anne DE MEY has also done important teaching work (in Amsterdam, at INSAS in Brussels, at CNDC in Angers and at the École en Couleurs, also in Brussels).

Her work as a choreographer has led to several films being made, including *Love Sonnets* and *21 Études à Danser* by Thierry DE MEY, and *Face à Face* by Eric PAUWELS. Devising her choreography from powerful music by reputable composers, she has also worked with Robert WYATT and Jonathan HARVEY. For many years now, she has been forging close work partnerships with other artists, like visual artist and scenographer Simon SIEGMANN, Transquinguennal group member Stéphane OLIVIER and Grégory GROSJEAN with whom she staged the two-hander *12 Easy Waltzes*. In 2006, she revived *Sinfonia Eroica*, one of her landmark shows from the 1990s, a successful, irreverent and cheerful spectacle to the soundtrack of BEETHOVEN's *Eroica* Symphony. This production has been staged more than a hundred times all over the world since then. In 2007, she staged *P.L.U.G.*, which deals with the mechanics of mating and, in 2009, the one-person show *Koma* at the Made in Korea Festival started by BOZAR. This one-person show is one of a series of four, with the other three being by Sidi Larbi CHERKAoui, Arco RENZ and Thomas HAUERT. In 2009, she also devised *Neige*, using BEETHOVEN's Symphony No. 7, an atmospheric sequel to *Sinfonia Eroica*. On the occasion of the VIA 2011 Festival, she staged the première of *Kiss & Cry*, alongside Jaco VAN DORMAEL and in a team with Grégory GROSJEAN, Thomas GUNZIG, Julien LAMBERT, Nicolas OLIVIER, and Sylvie OLIVÉ. In May 2012, she presented *Lamento*, a one-person show devised for and performed by dancer Gabriella IACONO, inspired by MONTEVERDI's *Lamento d'Arianna*.

Kiss & Cry was a great success, playing 300 performances in 9 different languages in twenty or so countries, and was seen by over 180,000 audience members. After this, Michèle Anne DE MEY and her team of talented designers devised *Cold Blood* within the context of Mons as European Capital of Culture in 2015, and this show has enjoyed the same worldwide success as *Kiss & Cry*.

Subsequently, Michèle Anne DE MEY stepped down as director of Charleroi Danses and restarted her company, Astragales. In October 2016, at the Théâtre National, she devised *Amor*, a poetical, powerful show in which, alone on the stage, Michèle Anne conveyed her own, intimate near-death experiences.

In 2019, at Opéra Royal de Wallonie-Liège, she choreographed ballet extracts for a new version of VERDI's *Aida*, directed by Stefano MAZZONIS DI PRALAFERA. She was assisted by Fatou TRAORÉ and worked with dancers and circus performers.

Directed and Written by | Jaco VAN DORMAEL

Jaco VAN DORMAEL was born on 9 February 1957 in Ixelles, Belgium and spent part of his childhood in Germany. After studying film at Louis-Lumière in Paris and INSAS in Brussels, he became a children's theatre director and clown. He has written and directed several fictional short films and documentaries—*Maedeli-la-brèche* (1980), *Stade* (1981), *L'imitateur* (1982), *Sortie de secours* (1983), *È pericoloso sporgersi* (1984) and *De Boot* (1985)—before going on to write and direct three feature length films: *Toto the Hero* (1991) with Michel BOUQUET which won a Caméra d'Or award at the Cannes Film Festival, *The Eighth Day* with Pascal DUQUENNE and Daniel AUTEUIL (1996) which won the best actor prize (ex æquo) at Cannes, and *Mr. Nobody* (2009) with Jared LETO, Sarah POLLEY, Diane KRUGER and Lin Dan PHAM which won a prize at the Venice Film Festival and three prizes at the Magrittes awards ceremony (Best Film, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay), as well as the Audience Prize at the European Film Awards.

Jaco VAN DORMAEL has also directed for theatre, including *Est-ce qu'on ne pourrait pas s'aimer un peu?* with Eric DE STAERKE. In 2012, he directed his first opera, *Stradella* by César FRANCK, to mark the reopening of Opéra Royal de Wallonie-Liège. In the dreamy atmosphere of his productions, Jaco VAN DORMAEL explores the power of the imagination and the contribution of childhood. In less than thirty years, he has developed a poetic and ambitious world of his own with non-linear narrative forms. He lives with the choreographer Michèle Anne DE MEY and has two daughters, Alice and Juliette. His brother Pierre VAN DORMAEL (1952-2008) was a composer and jazz guitarist.

Text | Thomas GUNZIG

Thomas GUNZIG was born in Brussels in 1970 and graduated with a degree in Political Science (International Relations). He embarked on his writing career with a collection of short stories entitled *Situation instable penchant vers le mois d'août* which won the City of Brussels student writer's prize in 1994. This was the first of many publications and literary awards. His writing has since diversified, from short stories to a novel (*Mort d'un parfait bilingue*, Rossel Prize 2001) and from radio fiction to a book for young people (*Nom de code: Superpouvoir*, 2005), by way of musical theatre (*Belle à mourir*, staged at Le Public in 1999). He also worked with Jaco VAN DORMAEL, Harry CLEVENS and COMÈS on a film adaptation of the comic strip *Silence* in 2006. His works have been adapted for the stage in France and Belgium. In 2008, he trod the boards himself for the first time in his own play *Les Origines de la vie*, which he directed with Isabelle WERY. His *Spiderman* has also been adapted for the screen by Christophe PERIÉ in a Jan KOUNEN production. His books have been translated into several languages, including German, Russian, Italian and Czech. There is also an educational dimension to Thomas GUNZIG's work as he regularly runs writing workshops and gives lectures in Belgium and abroad. He also gives classes on literature at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels (La Cambre) and on storytelling at the Institut Supérieur Saint-Luc in Brussels.

Music List

G. F. HANDEL: “Lascia ch’io pianga” from Opera *Rinaldo*

A. VIVALDI: “Gelido in ogni vena” from Opera *Farnace*

Arvo PÄRT: *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten*

Arvo PÄRT: *Fratres* for Eight Cellos

Gottfried Michael KOENIG: *Funktion Grau*

John CAGE: *A Room*

Carlos PAREDES: *Canção*

“No More Words” sung by Anna CALVI

P. I. TCHAIKOVSKY: *Valse Sentimentale*

“Les feuilles mortes” sung by Yves MONTAND

György LIGETI: *Lux Aeterna* for 16 Voices

“Nothing Compares 2 You” sung by Jimmy SCOTT

“Waiting for the Lover” sung by WU Ying-yin

Henryk GÓRECKI: I. Adagio-Molto Andante-Cantabile, from String Quartet No. 3 “...songs are sung”

Creative and Production Team

Original Idea | Michèle Anne DE MEY & Jaco VAN DORMAEL

In Collective Creation with | Michèle Anne DE MEY, Grégory GROSJEAN,
Thomas GUNZIG, Julien LAMBERT, Sylvie OLIVÉ,
Nicolas OLIVIER, Jaco VAN DORMAEL

Choreography & NanoDances | Michèle Anne DE MEY & Gregory GROSJEAN

Directed and Written by | Jaco VAN DORMAEL

Revival Director | Harry CLEVEN

Text | Thomas GUNZIG

Lighting Design | Nicolas OLIVIER

Set Design | Sylvie OLIVÉ

Sound Design | Dominique WARNIER & Boris CEKEVDA

Performers | Michèle Anne DE MEY, Charlotte PAUWELS, Denis ROBERT, together with
Julien LAMBERT, Harry CLEVEN, Aurélie LEPORCQ, Ivan FOX,
Ondine DELAUNOIS

Cameraman | Julien LAMBERT

Camera Assistant | Aurélie LEPORCQ

Lighting Operator | Yann HOOGSTOEL

Assistant Lighting Operator | Gaspard PAUWELS

Sound Engineer | Boris CEKEVDA

Technical Director | Benjamin DANDOY

Production / Administration | Gladys BROOKFIELD-HAMPSON

Narrator | MO Tzu-yi (Mandarin)

Sound Engineer for Mandarin Narration | KAO Chin-lun, Hzalyzer Sound. Ltd.

