

BIG IN BELGIUM CHICAGO

Don't miss two more pioneering works that represent the next wave of boundary-pushing international theater.

2 WEEKS ONLY!
OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 4

ONTROEREND GOED'S

FIGHT NIGHT

FIVE CANDIDATES.
ONE WINNER.
YOU DECIDE.

written by **Alexander Devriendt, Angelo Tijssens,**
and the **Cast** • directed by **Alexander Devriendt**
TICKETS START AT \$38



“★★★★★
**VITAL EXPLORATION OF OUR
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**”
-THE SCOTSMAN



2 WEEKS ONLY!
JANUARY 22-FEBRUARY 3



“★★★★★
**PLAYFUL, PAINFULLY
FUNNY, AND
MOVING**”
-THE GUARDIAN

The Beslan school siege
by Chechen separatists
is brought to life in a
haunting, beautiful piece
of physical theater.

BRONKS'S

US/THEM

written & directed by **Carly Wijs**
TICKETS START AT \$38

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chicago shakespeare theater on navy pier

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Barbara Gaines and Executive Director Criss Henderson, Chicago Shakespeare has redefined what a great American Shakespeare theater can be—a company that defies theatrical category. This Regional Tony Award-winning theater's year-round season features as many as twenty productions and 650 performances—including plays, musicals, world premieres, family programming, and presentations from around the globe. The work is enjoyed by 225,000 audience members annually, with one in four under the age of eighteen. Chicago Shakespeare is the city's leading producer of international work, and touring its own productions across five continents has garnered multiple accolades, including the prestigious Laurence Olivier Award. Emblematic of its role as a global theater, the company spearheaded Shakespeare 400 Chicago, celebrating Shakespeare's legacy in a citywide, yearlong international arts and culture festival, which engaged 1.1 million people. The Theater's nationally acclaimed arts in literacy programs support the work of English and drama teachers, and bring Shakespeare to life on stage for tens of thousands of their students each school year. Over the summer, the company tours a professional production of Shakespeare's work, free for all, to neighborhood parks across the city. In 2017 the Theater unveiled The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare—with its innovative design that has changed the shape of theater architecture. Together with the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater and the Thoma Theater Upstairs, The Yard positions Chicago Shakespeare as the city's most versatile performing arts center.

BARBARA GAINES
Artistic Director
Carl and Marilyn Thoma Endowed Chair

CRISS HENDERSON
Executive Director

ARTISTIC

RICK BOYNTON
Creative Producer

BOB MASON
Artistic Associate/
Casting Director

AISLINN FRANTZ
Associate Producer

DOREEN SAYEGH
Manager of International
and Special Projects

LAURA DURHAM
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EMMALINE KEDDY-HECTOR
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ALEXA BERKOWITZ
Production Office Manager

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Associate Producer

KAITLIN KITZMILLER, AEA
CST *BigMouth* Stage Manager

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MICHAEL JANSSENS
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REBECCA DOROSHUK
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Laundry

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JEFF GLASS
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Assistant Lighting Supervisor

JOAN E. CLAUSSEN
Lighting Crew Head

MARTHA TEMPLETON
Lighting Technician

SOUND

PALMER JANKENS
Sound Supervisor

JOSEPH DISBROW
Sound Crew Head

LINDSAY PUTNAM
Sound and Lighting Technician

RALPH LOZA
Sound Technician

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Wig and Make-up Supervisor

MIGUEL ARMSTRONG
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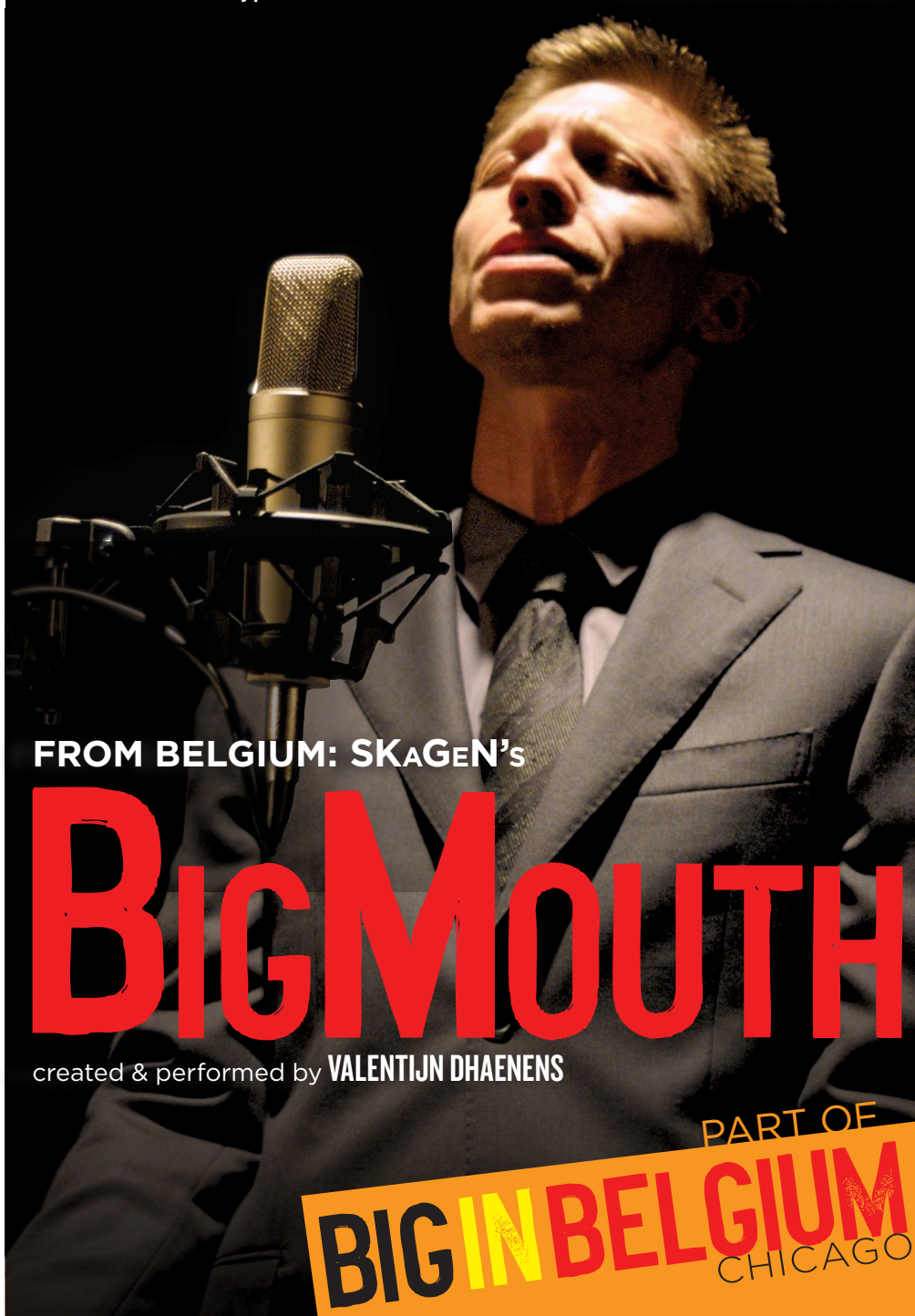
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Managing Director for
Development and External Affairs



FROM BELGIUM: SKAGEN'S

BIGMOUTH

created & performed by **VALENTIJN DHAENENS**

PART OF
BIG IN BELGIUM
CHICAGO

LEAD PRODUCTION SPONSOR **In Memory of Doris Conant**

Annual support perennially provided by **The Davee Foundation WorldStage Fund**



Lead individual support provided by Raymond and Judy McCaskey, Burton X. and Sheli Z. Rosenberg, Timothy R. Schwertfeger and Gail Waller, Carl and Marilyn Thoma, and Donna Van Ekeren Foundation.

SKaGeN’S

BigMouth

SEPTEMBER 12-22, 2018

Creator & Performer	VALENTIJN DHAENENS
Costume Designer	BARBARA DE LAERE
Sound & Lighting Designer	JEROEN WUYTS
Company Manager	SASKIA LIÉNARD
CST Stage Manager	KAITLIN KITZMILLER*

*denotes member of Actors’ Equity Association.

Produced by SKaGeN and Richard Jordan Productions with Theatre Royal Plymouth and Big in Belgium, in association with De Tijd and STUK.

Big in Belgium—Chicago is curated by Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Richard Jordan Productions, and David Bauwens, and developed with Theatre Royal Plymouth.

Run Time: 85 minutes (no intermission)

A NOTE FROM VALENTIJN DHAENENS



“Over the course of a year I promised myself to read at least one speech a day. Doing so, I read more than a thousand speeches that year. I tried not to force speeches to relate to one another but simply put them on stacks, hoping that one day they would start communicating with each other. For instance, there were five months between the reading of Goebbel’s ‘Totaler Krieg’ speech and the moment I ran into the Patton speech. I learned that that they were given at about the same time, saying exactly the same thing to exactly the same kind of people in a very different manner. Those speeches were begging to be interweaved with one another and become a massive go-to-war-appeal.

One of the key moments in the development of the show came when I had just memorized the funeral oration of Pericles (around 400BC) and at night watched the television news and saw French President Sarkozy (who had just lost ten soldiers in Afghanistan) repeating about the same words. A few months later I added King Boudewijn’s abduction speech right after Pericles. The last one talking to the parents of literally thousands killed, lying there at his feet. The first one refusing to sign an abortion law, fighting for an even unborn single life.

I knew I wanted the songs between the speeches to be produced only by my live voice to add to the idea what human vocal chords are capable of doing. I looked for songs that added up to the speech they accompanied in a historical way, to mark the period, sometimes in an ironical way, sometimes even in an emotional way. When I turned my attention away from the speeches I worked on finding the perfect harmonies that I would be able to put live, in a loop, to support the songs.”

PROFILES

VALENTIJN DHAENENS (*Creator & Performer*) After obtaining a master’s degree in dramatic arts at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, Mr. Dhaenens co-founded the theater company SKaGeN. Since 2006 the company has been rewarded with structural subsidization from the Flemish / Belgian Government for its work as one of the leading modern theater groups in Belgium and Holland. Outside SKaGeN, he has worked extensively as an actor in over thirty productions for Belgium’s major companies, such as NTGent, Kaaitheater Brussels, and Ontroerend Goed. His international breakthrough came with his own written and directed solo-show *BigMouth*, which is currently touring extensively to major festivals and venues worldwide. His follow-up work, *SmallWaR*, has enjoyed similar international success and continues to tour the world; the production will receive its North American premiere at The Cultch in Vancouver in November 2018. In addition to his theater work, Mr. Dhaenens is a sought-after narrator for documentaries such as *The Boy Is Gone* by Christophe Bohn. Occasionally he is a guest lecturer at Belgian and Dutch theater schools. To a broader audience, Mr. Dhaenens is best known for his acting in several TV shows and films, most notably for his lead role in *De helaasheid der dingen* / *The Misfortunates* by Felix Van Groeningen, which won numerous prizes worldwide, including the Prix Art et Essai at the Cannes Film Festival 2009. Most recently, Mr. Dhaenens’s latest solo-show, *Unsung*, won the coveted Scotsman Fringe First Award at this year’s Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

JEROEN WUYTS (*Sound & Lighting Designer*) started work as an all-round technician in Kunstencentrum Vooruit, Ghent, before moving on to lighting design for En-Knap dance company and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui’s *Foi*. He combined his technical skills and lighting design for *Isabella’s Room* (Needcompany), and toured with *Once* (Rosas). Mr. Wuyts began working with SKaGeN when he did the company’s lighting designs and touring performances, including *BigMouth* and *SmallWar*. He has worked with Mr. Dhaenens since 2001.

SASKIA LIÉNARD (*Company Manager*) has an MA in communication sciences and cultural management (KULeuven University) and an MA in cultural sciences (KUBrussel University). Ms. Liénard has managed actors, writers, and musicians on an independent basis since 1998. She is the agent of writers Tom Lanoye and Ramsey Nasr, actors Jan Bijvoet, Tom Dewispelaere, Sachli Gholamalizad, Koen De Sutter, Sofie Decleir, Els Dottermans, Frank Focketyn, and Anne-Laure Vandeputte, and musicians Guy Van Nueten and The Valerie Solanas. After assuming the role of managing director of theater company SKaGeN from 2012 to 2016, she became head of the international department of Rural Flemish Theatre Brussels. She produced several productions for different theater companies (Theater Zuidpool, Eisbär, David Bovée, Liesa Van der Aa) that have traveled in Europe and overseas.

KAITLIN KITZMILLER (*CST Stage Manager*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare in the Parks production of *Romeo and Juliet*. **REGIONAL:** Peninsula Players Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Resident Ensemble Players, Lake Dillon Theatre Company. **EDUCATION:** BFA in technical theatre, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

SKAGEN is an Antwerp-based theater company that has been producing highly successful plays in Belgium and the Netherlands since 2000 both in the art circuit and public-oriented festival circuit, including Summer in Antwerp and Theatre on the Market. Its success derives from its combination of high artistic standards and accessibility. SKaGeN has built a tradition of adapting great novels, films, and documentaries for theater. The company was formed by members of a class graduating from the renowned Antwerp Conservatory, headed by a lion of Flemish theater, Dora van der Groen, and the internationally acclaimed theater and opera director, Ivo Van Hove. The group has developed into one of the leading theater companies of its generation. SKaGeN’s company is comprised of Valentijn Dhaenens, Korneel Hamers, Mathijs Scheepers, and Clara van den Broek.

BIG IN BELGIUM, now in its sixth year, provides a platform for some of the most significant theater companies from the Flemish part of Belgium. Each of the shows was successful on the European mainland before being chosen for its British premiere at the Edinburgh Fringe, where many have received multiple awards. A number of these productions have subsequently toured internationally. Big in Belgium was also created with the vision of being able to play as a season of Flemish works in other cities around the world. In April 2018 Big in Belgium presented its first of these seasons in Vancouver, and is now curating a five-month program of works with Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Curated by David Bauwens, Executive Produced by Richard Jordan Productions, and developed with Theatre Royal Plymouth, Big in Belgium presents productions that are breaking new ground in English-speaking territories, aiming to create a greater visibility for Flemish theater on the international scene.

RICHARD JORDAN PRODUCTIONS is an Olivier and Tony Award-winning production company under the leadership of British producer, Richard Jordan. Based in London, the company was founded in 1998 and enjoys associations with many of the world’s leading theaters and arts organizations. It has produced over 230 productions, including eighty world premieres, and ninety-one US, UK, and Australian premieres by new and established writers, artists, and companies, including SKaGeN, whose work he co-produces worldwide. His past productions have won a number of major awards including: a Laurence Olivier Award; sixteen Scotsman Fringe Firsts; ten Total Theatre Awards; two Herald Angel Awards; an Emmy Award; an Off-West End Award; a US Black Alliance Award; two Jeff Awards; an Obie Award; three Helen Hayes Awards; John Gardner Award for Best New American Play; a Tony Award (along with eleven other Tony nominations); and Drama Desk, Drama League, New York Critics, Broadway.com, and Outer Critic Circle Best New Play Awards. In 2013 he became the first British producer to have won every notable Broadway and off-Broadway Best New Play Award. Described by *The Stage* newspaper “as one of the UK’s most prolific theatre producers” and named seven times in their annual list of the top 100 UK theater professionals, he was the first recipient of the TIF/Society of London Theatre Producers Award.

In 2012 Curator David Bauwens and Executive Producer Richard Jordan produced the first Big in Belgium season at the Edinburgh Fringe. Over the past six years, they have gone on together to establish it as a major international season of contemporary works, with many of the productions subsequently touring the world in co-production with Richard Jordan Productions and Big in Belgium.

Mr. Jordan enjoys a close relationship with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, with which he has produced: *Itsoseng; en route; A History of Everything; Roadkill; Dickens’ Women; Cadre; Since I Suppose; David Carl’s Celebrity One-Man Hamlet; undreamed shores*; the London and New York premieres, Chicago season, and world tours of The Q Brothers’ *Funk It Up About Nothin’* and *Othello: The Remix*; the Chicago world premiere and revivals of *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*; and the upcoming *Fight Night, Acéléré*, and *Us/Them*. For more information, please email: info@richardjordanproductions.com.