

BIG IN BELGIUM CHICAGO

Following *BigMouth* and *Fight Night*, be sure to join us for *Us/Them*, the final production in the Big in Belgium—Chicago series, representing the next wave of boundary-pushing international theater.

SKAGEN'S BigMOUTH

created & performed by **Valentijn Dhaenens**



ONTROEREND GOED'S

FIGHT NIGHT

written by **Alexander Devriendt, Angelo Tijssens,**
and **the Cast** • directed by **Alexander Devriendt**



2 WEEKS ONLY! JANUARY 22-FEBRUARY 3

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

“**STRIKING**”
—FRINGE MAGAZINE

The Beslan school
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separatists is brought
indelibly to life in an
exquisitely haunting,
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always beautiful, piece
of physical theater.

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US/THEM

written & directed by **Carly Wijs**
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chicago shakespeare on navy pier theater

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.

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chicago shakespeare on navy pier theater

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CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER,
ONTROEREND GOED, THE BORDER PROJECT, THEATRE ROYAL PLYMOUTH,
RICHARD JORDAN PRODUCTIONS AND VOORUIT
present



FROM BELGIUM: ONTROEREND GOED'S

FIGHT NIGHT

written by **ALEXANDER DEVRIENDT,**
ANGELO TIJSENS, & THE CAST
directed by **ALEXANDER DEVRIENDT**



#CHICAGOSHAKES #FIGHTNIGHT

PRODUCTION SUPPORT GIVEN **In Memory of Doris Conant**

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

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Ontroerend Goed’s
FIGHT NIGHT
OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 4, 2018

Director	ALEXANDER DEVRIENDT
Text	ALEXANDER DEVRIENDT, ANGELO TIJSENS, & THE CAST
Cast	CHARLOTTE DE BRUYNE AARON GORDON AURÉLIE LANNOY ANGELO TIJSENS JEROEN VAN DER VEN MAX WIND
Scenic Design	SOPHIE DE SOMERE LILLITH TREMMERY
Lighting Design	LILLITH TREMMERY
Costume Design	SOPHIE DE SOMERE ANGELO TIJSENS
Sound Design	DAVID HEINRICH
Voting System Graphic Design	NICK MATTAN
Compositions	CAMERON GOODALL DAVID HEINRICH
Tour Technical Directors	BABETTE PONCELET IBEN STALPERT
CST Stage Manager	SHANNON GOLDEN*
*denotes member of Actors’ Equity Association.	
Produced by Ontroerend Goed, The Border Project, Theatre Royal Plymouth, Richard Jordan Productions, and Vooruit in association with Big in Belgium	
Big in Belgium—Chicago is curated by Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Richard Jordan Productions, and David Bauwens, and developed with Theatre Royal Plymouth.	
Special thanks to State Theatre Adelaide, NTGent, Angela Schellekens—CCBe, and Unicorn Theatre	
Ontroerend Goed is supported by Flemish Community—Province of East-Flanders— and City of Ghent.	
Run Time: 90 minutes (no intermission)	

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Your vote. So many people fight for it. So many promises are made to obtain it.

And yet it feels so small. Such a tiny contribution. A seemingly insignificant voice muffled by the turmoil of the powers that be. I’ve been all kinds of voters: a frustrated one, one who consciously abstains, one too lazy to go, a fervent one, a social one, a strategical one.

But more and more I became fascinated by the extent to which my choice was manipulated on so many levels, and not just by the politicians themselves or by the media. All sorts of little things in my immediate or faraway surroundings had an impact on my vote.

What it mostly boiled down to is the feeling that made me say: “I trust this person.” A trust that seemed to be of my own making.

I trusted this one person in Belgian politics. He seemed intelligent and somebody who could represent me in the political field. When he appeared on television he said things that made sense. Whether it was in a game show or political talk show, I can’t remember (the distinction has become blurrier day by day). It’s a feeling I share with many Trump supporters today. You trust your own judgment so well that you rarely question what it’s really based upon.

Then while I was in rehearsals for this show, I took a closer look at the views of this Belgian politician and I was amazed how different our views were on so many levels. How the things I cared about were not even mentioned in his political agenda. I still trust the guy. He is a strong politician. He just doesn’t get my vote anymore.

There is this other person whose agenda I share completely. She doesn’t get enough votes to really matter in Belgian politics, but I believe the votes she *does* get keep her going. Because my vote matters to her, and she matters to her party, and the party influences decisions in the country, and the country has a say in the European Union. And maybe the powers beyond are kept in check just a little bit more.

A chain of influence that can alter the world. Eight years under Romney would have been a different world; a Canada led by Trudeau resonates even in our country; a referendum in Britain has altered the course of history.

I remember when we performed *Fight Night* in London, there was this 80-year-old man who started shouting to younger people who were giving up their device, who were giving up their vote. “Don’t do it. People have fought for this!” he shouted.

I’m probably going to be like him.

photo by Sarah Echaut

PROFILES

ALEXANDER DEVRIENDT (Director/Text) is artistic director and a founder of Ontroerend Goed. Mr. Devriendt’s past work includes the creation of Ontroerend Goed’s theater trilogy: *The Smile Off Your Face*, *Internal*, and *A Game of You*; the direction of the three celebrated teenage plays: *Once and for All We’re Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen*, *Teenage Riot & All That Is Wrong*, and *A History of Everything*, co-produced with Sydney Theatre Company and with its American premiere at Chicago Shakespeare in 2012. His most recent works include: *Sirens*, a performance about feminism; *Are we not drawn onward to new erA*, a palindrome show; and *World Without Us*, the final part of the Fast Forward Trilogy. Mr. Devriendt’s plays have won several awards around the world, and are performed across Europe, Australia, North America, the Middle East, Russia, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

ANGELO TIJSENS (Text/Cast/Costume Design) studied theater at the Antwerp Conservatorium. Having engaged with a few shows as a director, actor, and writer, after a couple of years started working for Ontroerend Goed as an understudy, and soon joined the company and started touring all over the world. His work with Ontroerend Goed includes: *A Game of You*, *Internal*, *Audience*, *A History of Everything*, and *Fight Night*, as well as the English and French versions of *Are we not drawn onward to new erA*, £¥€\$, and *OMG* with co-performer Charlotte De Bruyne. He has acted in several films and television series, and written three short films. Recently Mr. Tijssens wrote his first feature film, *GIRL*, with director Lukas Dhont and choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, a film that won multiple awards at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival, including the Camera d’Or, the Fipresci Award, and the Queer Palm, it is also the Belgian submission for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 2019 Academy Awards.

CHARLOTTE DE BRUYNE (Cast) started acting in 2002 at the Ghent-based youth theater KOPERGIETRY, where she met Alexander Devriendt and his company, Ontroerend Goed. Ms. De Bruyne was involved with their performance about teenagers, *Once and for All We’re Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen* and then joined the cast of several other Ontroerend Goed shows, including: *A Game of You*, *A History of Everything*, *Fight Night*, *Sirens*, and *Are we not drawn onward to new erA*. In 2008 Ms. De Bruyne studied acting at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, KASK. In 2012 she played her first movie role in *Little Black Spiders*. Other film and TV work includes *Flying Home*, *Vriendinnen*, *Achter De Wolken*, and *Don’t Shoot*.

AARON GORDON (Cast) is an actor and writer. Mr. Gordon previously worked with Ontroerend Goed on the *Fight Night* world tour. He trained with the National Youth Theatre Rep Company in 2013. He has several credits in film, television, and theater, and co-runs a theater company called Itch + Scratch. Mr. Gordon appeared in the Ontroerend Goed production of £¥€\$, and is working on a number of projects, including a one-man show about mental illness.

AURÉLIE LANNOY (Cast) trained in theater at the Kleine Academie in Brussels with movement and creation as a pedagogical basis. In the years following, Ms. Lannoy also received training at the Susan Batson Studio in New York. After completing drama school, Ms. Lannoy joined Ontroerend Goed and collaborates regularly as an actress, creator, and performer, allowing her to perform internationally. She has received awards on several occasions, and has performed at the Adelaide Festival and Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Alongside her work with Ontroerend Goed, Ms. Lannoy researches the possibilities and the limits of a deep and authentic relationship between actors and their audiences.

JEROEN VAN DER VEN (Cast) studied philosophy at the University of Antwerp and graduated in 2009 as an actor at RITCS in Brussels. In 2008 Mr. Van Der Ven won the young theater prize at Theater Aan Zee with his solo piece *Leuchter*. Collaborating with fellow student and theater director Thomas Bellinck, he made *Fobbit*, theater company Steigeisen’s first play. With this company he also made *Billy, Sally, Jerry and the .38 gun*, *Lethal Inc.* (selected for the TheaterFestival 2011), *De Onkreukelbare*, and *Memento Park*. Mr. Van Der Ven has worked as a freelance actor with various theater companies, including Olympique Dramatique, KVS, Kris Verdonck, De Roovers, Het Paleis, and Hof van Eede. In 2015 he replaced an actor in Ontroerend Goed’s *A History of Everything* and has since worked with them on *Loopstation* and now *Fight Night*. Mr. Van Der Ven played small roles in different television series and feature films, and in 2017 played the lead role in the comedy series *Generatie B* (selected for Fantastic Fest Austin 2017). He also played one of the main characters in the second season of the political thriller series *Salamander*. Since 2016 Mr. Van Der Ven has been involved in the research of theater director and artist Thomas Bellinck’s *Simple as ABC*. He performed in the documentary musical *Simple as ABC #2: Keep Calm & Validate*, and will participate in the making of *Simple as ABC #3: The Wild Hunt*.

MAX WIND (Cast) graduated from the theatre academy in Maastricht in 2017. He previously collaborated with Ontroerend Goed on *A History of Everything*, *Fight Night*, *Loopstation*, and £¥€\$. Mr. Wind has worked as a director for the Jonge Harten festival in Groningen and has presented his work at Theater Aan Zee. He tries to constrain his work in a theoretical frame, and his work is primarily text-based.

BABETTE PONCELET (Tour Technical Director) is the current technical director of Ontroerend Goed. Ms. Poncelet has been with the company since her first show, *OMG*, in 2014. Having a technical background from her studies as a theater technician at RICTS Schools of Arts in Brussels, Ms. Poncelet has a specific eye for lighting and sound design. Her lighting design credits for Ontroerend Goed include *Are we not drawn onward to new erA*, *World Without Us*, and £¥€\$. She has also worked for Miet Warlop as a lighting designer, sculpture assistant, and technician.

IBEN STALPAERT (Tour Technical Director) was born and raised in Bruges, Belgium. He went to art school RITCS in Brussels to study lighting and sound, and after finishing college started working as a freelance lighting and sound technician for a number of Belgian theater companies, including hetKIP, Ontroerend Goed, Le Mouton Noire, Antigone, De Werf, and Campo. He also plays the drums and is in a band called Ventilateur, which mixes rock, jazz, with a hint of blues.

SHANNON GOLDEN (CST Stage Manager) CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: Shakespeare in the Parks production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. CHICAGO: *Frederick* (Chicago Children’s Theatre); *Plantation!*, *Hard Times*, *Moby Dick*, *Thaddeus and Slocuum: A Vaudeville Adventure* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *The King of the Yees*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Carlyle*, *Soups Stews and Casseroles: 1976*, *Feathers and Teeth* (Goodman Theatre); *The Mutilated*, *Simpatico* (A Red Orchid Theatre); *This Wonderful Life* (American Blues Theater); *Betrayal* (Raven Theatre). REGIONAL: Peninsula Players Theatre. EDUCATION: BS in stage management, Ball State University.

ONTROEREND GOED produces self-devised work grounded in the here and now, inviting their audiences to participate as well as observe. They first emerged in the international scene in 2007 with *The Smile Off Your Face*, a one-on-one show in which the audience is tied to a wheelchair and then blindfolded. Their hit show, *Once and for All We’re Gonna Tell You Who We Are So Shut Up and Listen*, was an uncompromising celebration of raw teenage energy on stage. With every new piece of work, Ontroerend Goed provides an intense experience constructed in reality; life goes on during the performance. The company has won numerous awards across Europe, including STUK-prijs (2003), Edinburgh Fringe Firsts (2007, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2016, 2017), Herald Angel (2008, 2009), Total Theatre Award (2007, 2008, 2012), Three Weeks Editors Award (2007), and Stage Award for Best Ensemble (2014). Ontroerend Goed performs in Dutch, English, and French, and has toured in New York, Sydney, Hong Kong, Toronto, and London with critical acclaim. Their work is currently being presented in countries around the world; they perform their own work and have successful local productions in Istanbul, Moscow, and Vancouver. Ontroerend Goed consists of artists Alexander Devriendt, David Bauwens, Joeri Smet, Wim Smet, Charlotte De Bruyne, Karen Van Ginderachter, Karolien De Bleser, Babette Poncelet, Aurélie Lannoy, and Angelo Tijssens. They are currently associated artists in residence at Vooruit Arts Centre in their hometown Ghent, Belgium. In 2015 Oberon Books published *All Works and No Plays*, in which Ontroerend Goed explores different forms to convey a theatrical experience on paper. Each performance has its own way of approaching the audience so that each text has its own way of addressing the reader. The book is not designed to be read cover to cover as a documentation of past performances, but rather for people to use as a tool. A tool to play, adapt, oppose, relive, challenge, and inspire. It contains nine blueprints of shows by Ontroerend Goed, including: *The Smile off Your Face*; *Internal*; *A Game of You*; *Once and for All...*; *Teenage Riot*; *All That Is Wrong*; *Audience*; *A History of Everything*, and *Fight Night*.

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.

THEATRE ROYAL PLYMOUTH is the largest and best-attended regional producing theater in the UK and the leading promoter of theater in the South West. Theatre Royal Plymouth produces and presents a broad range of theater, including classic and contemporary drama, musicals, opera, ballet, and dance in its three distinct performance spaces—The Lyric, The Drum, and The Lab. Theatre Royal Plymouth specializes in the production of new plays and has built a national reputation for the quality and innovation of its program. Recent Theatre Royal Plymouth productions include: *Monster Raving Loony* by James Graham; *The Man with the Hammer* by Phil Porter; *The Whipping Man* by Matthew Lopez; *After Electra* by April de Angelis; *Grand Guignol*; *Horse Piss for Blood* by Carl Grose; *Merit* by Alexandra Wood; *Another Place* by DC Moore; *Chekhov*

in Hell by Dan Rebellato; *The Astronaut’s Chair* by Rona Munro; *Solid Air* by Doug Lucie; and *MAD MAN* by Chris Goode. The Theatre Royal Plymouth also collaborates with some of the best artists and theater makers in the UK and internationally. It regularly co-produces with: Ontroerend Goed; Richard Jordan Productions; Vooruit (*World Without Us*, *Are we not drawn onward to new erA*, *Sirens*, *Fight Night*, *Audience*, *All That Is Wrong*, *Under the Influence*, *Teenage Riot*); Paines Plough (*The Angry Brigade* by James Graham, *Love Love Love* by Mike Bartlett); Frantic Assembly (*Othello*, *The Believers* by Bryony Lavery, *Lovesong* by Abi Morgan); Told by an Idiot (*My Perfect Mind*, *And the Horse You Rode In On*); and Graeae (*The Solid Life of Sugar Water*).

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. His company has produced over 230 productions, including seventy world premieres and ninety-one US, UK, and Australian premieres by new and established writers, artists, and companies, including Ontroerend Goed, whose work he co-produces worldwide. Richard Jordan Productions past productions have won a number of major awards including: the Laurence Olivier Award; sixteen *Scotsman* Fringe Firsts; seven Total Theatre Awards; two Herald Angel Awards; two Jeff Awards; the Emmy Award; the Off-West End Award; the U.S. Black Alliance Award; the John Gassner Award; the Obie Award; three Helen Hayes Awards; the Tony Award (and eleven other Tony nominations); Drama Desk, Drama League, New York Critics, Broadway.com, and Outer Critic Circle Best New Play Awards. In 2013 Mr. Jordan 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. Mr. Jordan enjoys a close relationship with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, with which he has produced: *Itosens*; *enroute*; *A History of Everything*; *Roadkill*; *Dickens’ Women*; *BigMouth*; *Cadre*; *Since I Suppose*; Circolumbia — *Acélééré*; *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 *Us/Them*. For more information, please email: info@richardjordanproductions.com.

VOORUIT is a vibrant arts center based in Ghent, Belgium with 350,000 visitors annually. Since 1982 it has developed cultural events focusing specifically on performing arts, music, books, city, and transition. With its broad range of activities, from stage shows, performances, and concerts, to book presentations, debates, and parties, Vooruit is a significant meeting place for a very diverse public. Vooruit is located in an impressive 100-year-old monument that houses four stages, four studios, and a large café with a connecting terrace and bicycle parking lot. Vooruit is a central platform in a dense network of artists and organizations from a variety of sectors, inspired by a turbulent world and an always evolving arts field. With a contemporary vision for the future, Vooruit strengthens the cross-pollination between the arts and the local and global communities. Vooruit serves as a welcoming meeting place and as a lab for development, production, presentation, participation, and reflection. It continues to build on a past of innovation and social engagement. Since January 2017, Vooruit has collaborated with five long-term podium residents: Ontroerend Goed, Sachli Gholamalizad, Miet Warlop, Nadia Beugré, Alexander Vantournhout. It presents around fifty performing arts productions every season.