

Valentijn Dhaenens / SKaGeN & KVS



UNSSUNG



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PRODUCTION INFO

UNSUNG gives you a portrait of the homo politicus. Not the gauche politician from *Yes, Minister*, the idealised machine from *The West Wing*, the lonely evil genius from *House of Cards* or the has-been from *Revue Ravage*. The emphasis is on the realistic way in which we deal with power in our Western world. The piece also investigates the mostly irrational reasons for this hunger for power.

UNSUNG starts out from the idea that the politician's talent is also ultimately the cause of his downfall. For time and time again, it is his drive that makes him go too far, his strength of character that makes him lose touch with reality, his charisma that fails to achieve its aims, or his suppleness that leads to him being accused of being untrustworthy and fake.

UNSUNG goes back to the seeds of political life: why do leaders have such a powerful desire for power in a democracy, where power is highly relative and where politicians are subject to the demands of voters, the media and interest groups? Why does a politician seek recognition in a job that is known to be the most unpopular ever?

SKaGeN

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BY & WITH VALENTIJN DHAENENS TEXT VINCENT STUER DRAMATURGY KRISTIN ROGGHE SET DESIGN ROEL VAN BERCKELAER COSTUMES HEIDI EHRHART LIGHTING DESIGN MARGARETA ANDERSEN SOUND MAX STUURMAN & STEPHANE PAPADOPOULOS ASSISTANCE DIRECTION & SURTITLING INGE FLORÉ PRODUCTION MANAGER NELE DRUYTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR DONALD BERLANGER SET CONSTRUCTION DANNY VANDEPUT DISTRIBUTION SASKIA LIÉNARD TRANSLATION TREVOR PERRI (EN) & ANNE VANDERSCHUEREN (FR) PRODUCTION KVS & SKAGEN

'What underlies Onbezongen is a powerful script. The actor Valentijn Dhaenens is quite at home in his role, and is a credible slick operator and woolly smooth-talker.'

*De Morgen *****

'Stuer subtly marks the tragedy of his character: it is lonely at the top for everyone's friend.'

*De Standaard *****

'Onbezongen is a play that sows seeds, that makes you think. The sort of play of which there should be more.'

*Het Nieuwsblad *****

'You would blindly make Dhaenens, with charisma engraved into his face, the party's leading candidate.'

It is clever how his character tumbles swiftly from campaign speech to media storm to triumphal procession. A wolf in chameleon's clothing.'

*De Standaard *****

'Onbezongen neither endorses nor negates these not very flattering stereotypes, but offers a nuanced and realistic readjustment of the true DNA of the Homo Politicus.'

*De Morgen *****



VINCENT STUER

Vincent Stuer, born 30 December 1975, is a Belgian writer, speechwriter and political aide. He started his career in 1999 as spokesman to the Flemish liberal-democratic party (VLD) and then became a member of the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel De Gucht's cabinet. Vincent followed De Gucht to the European Commission in 2009, where he worked on development and trade issues before joining President José Manuel Barroso's staff as speechwriter. He currently writes speeches mainly on economic and social affairs. Vincent published his first book *Kleinstaterijl*, on separatism and European integration, in 2015 and is currently finalising a book called *Curb your Idealism* on the European Union as seen by insiders, based on conversations with high-level officials. *Onbezongen/Unsung* is his first play. He lives in Mechelen, Belgium, and is married with four children.

VALENTIJN DHAENENS

After obtaining a Master's Degree in Dramatic Arts at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, Valentijn co-founded the theater company, SKaGeN. From 2006, the company has been rewarded with structural subsidisation from the Flemish / Belgian Government for their work as one of the leading modern theater groups in Belgium and Holland. Outside SKaGeN he has worked extensively as an actor in over 30 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* that is touring extensively to major festivals and venues worldwide. A follow up called *SmallWar* was presented at the Edinburgh Festival 2014 and the Adelaide Festival 2015. It will be touring through 2018. Aside from his theatre work, Valentijn 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 theatre schools. To a broader audience, Valentijn 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 such as the Prix Art et Essai at the Cannes Film Festival 2009.

SKaGEN

SKaGeN is a theatre company that has been producing highly successful plays in Flanders and the Netherlands since 2000, both on the *art circuit* and the more public-oriented *festival circuit* (e.g. Summer in Antwerp, Theatre on the Market). This success derives from its combination of high artistic standards and accessibility. SKaGeN was formed by members of a class that graduated from the renowned Antwerp Conservatory, headed by a lion of Flemish theatre, Dora van der Groen, and the internationally acclaimed theatre and opera director Ivo Van Hove. The group has developed into one of the leading theatre companies of its generation. SKaGeN has built a tradition to adapt great novels for theatre. SKaGeN's versions of *La Peste* by Albert Camus, *Voyage au bout de la nuit* by L.F. Céline and *Berlin Alexanderplatz* by A. Döblin are successful examples of this. SKaGeN is Valentijn Dhaenens, Korneel Hamers, Mathijs Scheepers and Clara van den Broeck.

KVS

The unique position in the capital of Flanders, Belgium and Europe is the alpha and omega of KVS' operations. KVS aims to reinterpret the repertoire in relation to the city that is more than ever the whole world. As such, KVS embraces Brussels and her plurality and intends to amplify its artistic voice in the arts field. KVS has an open ensemble of theatre-makers, performers, directors, choreographers and authors. At KVS, they develop both their own personal work as well as shared projects, plus cross-pollination over periods of years. KVS intends to be a place of mental and physical encounter, an urban artery running from tradition to the future. On the basis of an inclusive view of what art is capable of, KVS aims to be an intercultural, inter-generational and open-gender city theatre that resonates far beyond Brussels.



Press on earlier productions

BIGMOUTH

'Unnerving, technically risky and thought-provoking ... I would hate to have missed it.'

The Times

'Enthralling roller-coaster through history and its (in)humanity by one-man powerhouse Valentijn Dhaenens.'

*List ******

'Brilliant ... a fascinating experience.'

*The Guardian ******

'An electrifying and transcendent piece of art.'

*Exeunt Magazine ******

'his linguistic flexibility, musicality, charisma and fierce blonde head all add to the excitement and menace'

Time Out New York

'there might be more to Belgium than beer, waffles and Flemish separatists.'

Village Voice

*'be prepared to learn' ...
'Dhaenens is an incredibly engaging and versatile artist' ...
'his powerhouse voice and charisma''*

Letters From the Mezzanine

SMALLWAR

*"The show finds an effective way to make trauma tangible.
It is hard to ignore – and even harder to watch'*

The Telegraph

'Dhaenens' own production for his SkaGen company and Theatre Royal Plymouth is a hauntingly intense 80 minutes, which explores both the poetic fascination with war as well as its casualties. When one of the soldiers, all played by Dhaenens, with the Nurse the only flesh and blood portrayal on show, zips himself up into a body-bag as willing collateral damage, the image is a quiet but devastating symbol of the horrors of the Somme, Gaza and every battlefield in between.'

*Herald of Scotland ******

"Dhaenens is an exceptional performer. The stillness and presence he is capable of is riveting. Like the orators of the past, when he speaks, you listen. SmallWaR is quiet, sinister and almost entirely intoned, as if he were delivering a sermon. Without becoming ghoulish a tone is struck which is eerily hollow. As if we are present in the void that war creates inside the soldiers, victims and witnesses of hell. 120 million people have died at war since 1914 and like the commemorative services that took place on the anniversary of its outbreak this week, there is no message, only that we remember. SmallWaR is an intense, sophisticated piece of work, the subtleties of which would benefit exponentially from re-visiting, re-watching, re-listening.

*Exeunt Magazine ******

'SmallWar: evocative monologue / hauntingly beautiful performance'

InDaily

'Disturbing, ghostly piece'

TheatreCat

EXTRACTS FROM UNSUNG

Did you see the poll, the one we did?

That one was good.

*Yeah, good indeed,
that's the only thing you remembered!*

It was good.

62% thought my proposal
concerning pensions to be visionary!

And my approach for immigration:
revolutionary!

*It was good indeed,
that's not my point.*

*But there was doubt in it,
exactly about you as a person,
the person behind the politician.*

*What motivates you,
that's what they have a hard time with.*

*They agree with you, but...
you show too little of yourself.*

The real person, they don't know.

The real person?
I don't have time for that.

*No, seriously,
you don't have to take it personally,
you don't always have to be so sensitive,*

it's about what people see.

The individual you, that's the narrative now.

*You amongst the people,
that is what it should be about.
A bit ... being normal.*

On the same level as the everyday person.

And can we not lower the stage? No?

*Let there be no doubt about it:
my first and only idea is to get higher up.*

*For that I will sacrifice everything,
with the exception of, I hope, honesty.*

*But I am even ready to throw love under the
droning train
of my ambition... If it is necessary...*

And all that going on about focus groups.
They call 15 people and we change our whole approach.

Now we are on some kind of middle road
and nobody is happy about it.

In the middle of the road
you get run over by traffic from both sides, you know.

Thatcher said that.

I need an opponent, something I can be against.

The rest will follow then.

Just cut into it
until I alone am standing

We're not making it because we
are smarter or more beautiful than the rest.

The difference is in our focus.
To put all your power on one thing.

*Does your wife nevertheless want you
to continue in politics?*

- Yes, actually she does, yes.

She very much wants her normal life back
Also for our children of course.

If the voter forgives me
she might perhaps also be able to forgive me.

Press on.

People vote much more for an attitude, temperament
than for a program.

UNSUNG

Technical Data Sheet

General

TITLE ONBEZONGEN
PRODUCTION KVS & SKAGEN
DURATION PERFORMANCE '75
PERSONS ON STAGE 1 ACTEUR
NO INTERMISSION
DOORS OPEN / LATECOMERS
IN CONSULTATION WITH STAGE MANAGER

Catering

Please provide meals for:

Set-up day/First performance day:

- Lunch: 3 persons
- Diner (6 pm): 4 persons

Other performance days:

- Dinner (6 pm): 4 persons

Dressing Rooms

Please provide 1 dressing room with shower (hot and cold water)

Team KVS

1 ACTOR
1 LIGHT TECHNICIAN
1 SOUND / VIDEO TECHNICIAN
1 STAGE MANAGER

CONTACT

STAGE MANAGER: NELE DRUYTS

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Transport - Parking

The décor is transported in a Mercedes Sprinter XL Mega Van without tail lift.

Please provide parking space for this van and one passenger car.

UNSUNG

Production Data Sheet

Performance Area

Min. dimensions of the stage:

- Width: 16 meter
- Depth: 14 meter
- Ideal height: 7,5 meter
- Minimum height: 6 meter

If possible, please provide a central front extension to the stage of 2m x 3m (in case of an elevated stage).

In auditoriums with a flat floor and a depth of at least 14m, we suggest creating this space by placing 3 rows of chairs in front of the bleachers, leaving the middle section open.

In both cases, this has consequences in terms of ticket sales.

We perform with an open back wall (without black curtain), so the back wall must be clean and free of unnecessary materials. To the sides, black curtains are used.

Direction + Intercom

Please provide the following places for direction:

- Lighting in the auditorium
- sound in the auditorium
- costume changes preferably on stage, stage left or right

Please provide intercom:

- For light direction
- For costume changes direction

Sound

The receiving theater provides:

- An FOH suitable for the room
- A cluster that can be controlled separately
- 2 microphone stands for the antennas of the transmitters
- A table on stage for the transmitters.
- A multi between stage and direction with at least 5 channels

Lighting

The KVS brings:

- Lighting control console
- 3 fluorescent luminaires
- Dimmer pack for fluorescent luminaires
- Cables
- Ladder trusses + steel cables to make a batten for the fluorescent luminaires
- 5 Striplights
- Adaptors from CEE to shuko if necessary

The receiving theater provides:

- Min. 48 dimmer circles
- Lighting equipment and color filters as indicated on the layout
- The necessary floor stands

Please provide dimmable light in the auditorium, controllable from the direction area via DMX (the auditorium light is also used during the performance)

Attachments

Photos: Lighting plan + Décor plan

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Production Data Sheet

Décor

The décor consists of a 'catwalk' of 2 strips of Laquefloor (Highshine ballet floor), with a total width of 3m. In an ideal situation, the catwalk continues to the end of the stage extension.

The floor is covered with carpet tiles measuring 50 cm x 50 cm along both sides of the catwalk. These are fixed with double-sided tape. This could possibly cause damage to the floor. To avoid this, a ballet floor or ballet floor tape may be provided if so desired.

A printed mesh cloth (w x h: 15m x 5m) is hung behind the carpet tiles. This cloth is attached to a truss. This truss is hung onto a batten or fixed grid. The truss with cloth is raised in the course of the performance. In auditoriums with a fly system, the line set is used to this end. In venues with a fixed grid, please install a counterweight with electric hoists and a truss. The exact location of this setup will be determined in consultation with the stage manager.

Two fans are installed behind the cloth. These are used to produce wind in one particular scene. During the wind scene, a 1000 or so flyers are blown onto the stage and into the auditorium. After the performance, these should be removed both from the auditorium and the stage. The fans are controlled from the changes direction area. We bring our own cables for the fans.

During this scene, if possible, flyers are also thrown from the balconies into the auditorium. Please provide at least 2 persons for the throwing and subsequent cleanup of the flyers (in the auditorium and on stage).

Stage right, there is a LED-screen placed against a pallet with planters. Video fragments are played on this LED screen. Another pallet with planters and plants is placed stage left.

In the course of the performance, a shoe is dropped from the ceiling.

The receiving theater provides:

- A truss equal to the width of the grid and/or the auditorium. We prefer a triangular truss, but a ladder truss or a square truss is also possible. If the venue only has a fixed grid, please provide a vertical moving batten to the truss by means of electric hoists. Control should occur from the changes direction area.
- Approx. 20 weights
- If an extension is possible: 2 Pratikabel elements of 2x1m. Height depending on the height of the stage.

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Production Data Sheet

Planning

Beforehand (prepared by the technical team of the receiving theater):

- If necessary because of possible floor damage: black ballet floor, covering the entire surface of the stage
- Stage cleared of all material that is not needed for the setup

First performance day:

- Arrival KVS technical team according to agreement.

Last performance day:

- Estimated takedown time: 2 hours.

The theater provides:

- 3 technicians for set-up
- 2 to 3 (depending on the size of the auditorium) technicians and/or attendants to throw flyers during the performance
- 2 persons to help with the cleanup of the flyers after the performance
- 3 technicians for takedown

Stage at the start of the performance



Stage during performance

