

GRACE ELLEN BARKEY & NEEDCOMPANY

MUSIC COMPOSED BY
THE ICONS OF
THE AMERICAN UNDERGROUND

THE RESIDENTS

JULIEN FAURE
YURIKO FUNAYA

BENOÎT GOS

SUNG-IM HER

MAARTEN SEGERS

MONAMED TOUKABSI

CATHERINE TRAVELLETTI

LOT LEMM

MUSH-RUMM

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GRACE ELLEN BARKEY, NEEDCOMPANY & THE RESIDENTS

We're not kidding! Dreams do come true, wishes are fulfilled: the iconic avant-garde American performance art collective **The Residents** has written music for Grace Ellen Barkey and Needcompany!



© Maarten Vanden Abeele

It's a great mystery how The Residents and Grace Ellen Barkey came to be collaborating. Neither of them wants to tell exactly how it happened. The Residents claim that Grace shut them up in a cellar and only gave them stale bread and water until they had written the music for her. Grace says 'They just jumped on my shoulders, grabbed hold of my hair and we galloped off together into a different dimension.' Just imagine: The Residents, **the masters of weird**, and Grace Ellen Barkey, **the president of the movement against melancholy**.

"This is just the beginning of the worldwide conceived movement of acceptance of all fungi that were considered potentially dangerous."

In this latest production, entitled **MUSH-ROOM**, we find ourselves in a forest full of mushrooms. These mushrooms unite and rise in rebellion...

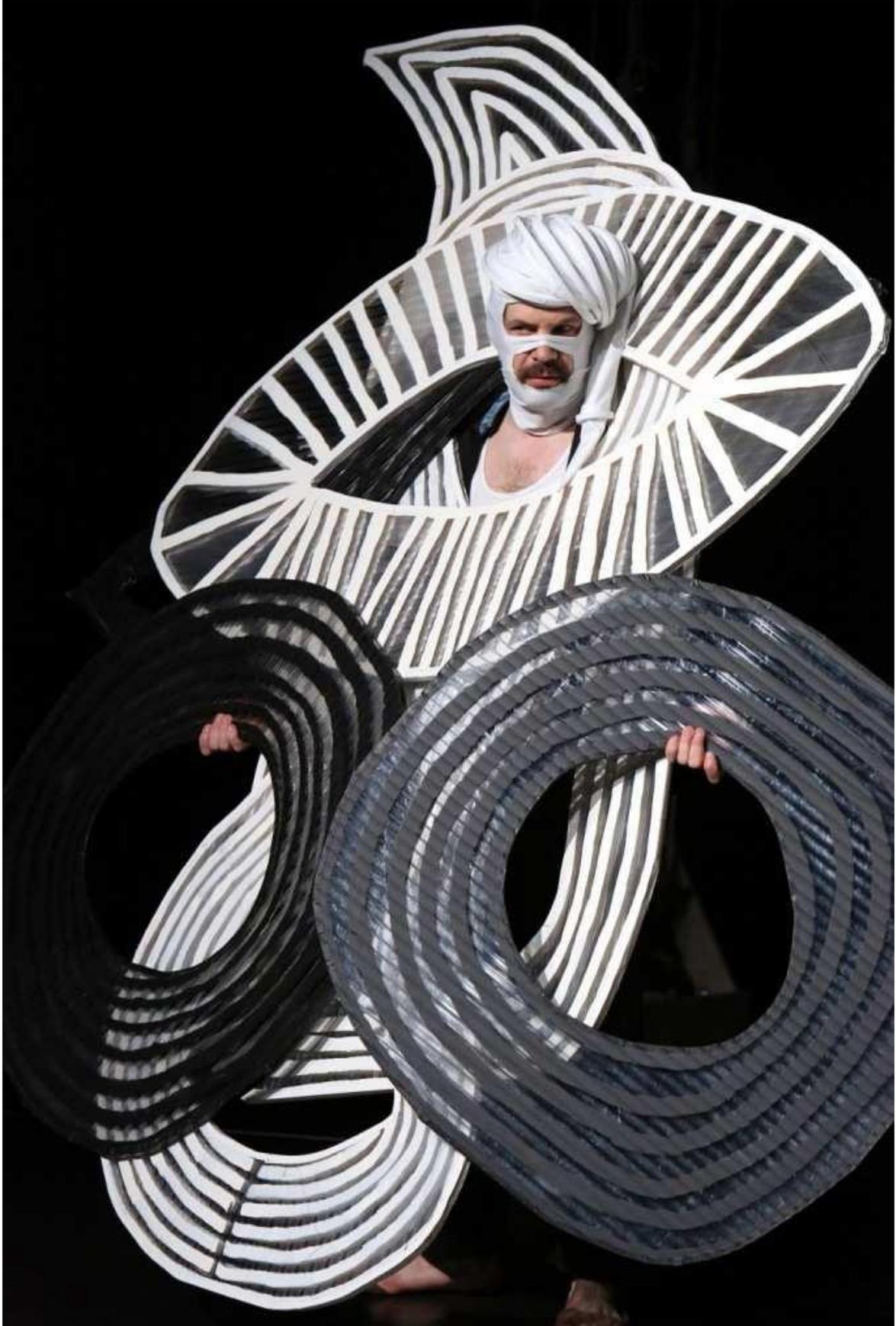
"We are alive and kicking! Full of exceptional dreams and cosmic wishes!"

Here is what Grace Ellen Barkey has to say about her new production: “In my productions, the debate on matter or emotion, on real or surreal, on form or content goes back and forth or, rather, round and round: performers are deprived of their humanity, their bodies take on grotesque forms and becomes matter, emotion grows so huge that it becomes still, an image in itself, and then ends up in the intimacy and clumsiness characteristic of humanity. (Dance-) theatre is ultimately about watching and the spectator can decide for himself whether they are tears or rain and wind.” Grace cites the Dutch writer and poet J. Bernlef: “*They are not tears, it’s rain and wind.*”



© Ursula Kaufman

The Residents are an oddball American arts collective best known for their avant-garde music and multimedia work. Their first official release was the single *Santa Dog* (1974). Since then the group has made more than sixty albums. They are also the inventors of the video clip (it’s really true!). Their work can be roughly divided into two categories: deconstructions of Western popular music and complex pieces centered on a theme, a theory or a plot. Their lyrics are often nonsensical and the sound over the top. Their video clips have a nightmarish quality, as if they had been conceived by creatures chewing on Martian mushrooms. The Residents’ songs always contain some great mystery and are exceptionally sensory. The members of the band have succeeded in remaining anonymous throughout the time it has been in existence. For several decades they have often appeared in costumes that include a big eyeball over their heads, crowned with a top hat.



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MUSH-ROOM

GRACE ELLEN BARKEY & NEEDCOMPANY

ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY THE RESIDENTS

Opening night
22 March 2013

Choreography, direction, text Grace Ellen Barkey

Visuel concept Lemm&Barkey

Music The Residents

Created by/performed with
Sung-Im Her, Romy Louise Lauwers (replaces Yumiko Funaya),
Benoît Gob, Maarten Seghers, Julien Faure, Mohamed Toukabri, Catherine Travelletti

Installation & costume design Lot Lemm

Objects Lemm&Barkey

Dramaturgy Elke Janssens

Sound Bart Aga, Pierrick Drochmans

Lighting design Luc Schaltin

Technical manager & lighting technician Marjolein Demey

Stage technician Clive Mitchell Loemij

Assistance Lemm&Barkey Lieve Meeussen

Intern assistant to the director Myrto Vagiota

Production of the creation Luc Galle

Language coach Helen McNamara

Photography Phile Deprez, Maarten Vanden Abeele

A Needcompany Production.

Coproduction: PACT Zollverein (Essen), Internationales Figurentheater-Festival (Erlangen).

With the support of the Flemish authorities.

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR SEASON 2012-2013

PACT Zollverein, Essen (D)	22, 23 March 2013
Dansens Hus, Stockholm	4, 5 April 2013
Kaaitheater, Brussels	19, 20, 21 April 2013
Internationales Figurentheater-Festival, Erlangen	10 May 2013
De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam	24 May 2013
Dubbelspel, STUK, Leuven	27, 28 May 2013
Malta Festival, Poznan	25, 26 June 2013
ImPulsTanz, Vienna	2, 4 August 2013

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR SEASON 2013-2014

Theater in Bewegung, Theaterhaus, Jena	30 October 2013
De Velinx, Tongeren	6 March 2014
Kunstencentrum Vooruit, Ghent	12, 13 March 2014
CC Strombeek	15 March 2014
Monty.kultuurfactorij, Antwerp	26, 27 March 2014

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR SEASON 2014-2015

SPAF, Seoul, South Korea	4, 5 October 2014
Théâtre Garonne, Toulouse	4, 5, 6 December 2014
MaZ, Bruges	15 January 2015
Korzo, The Hague	17 January 2015
Scène Nationale de Sète et du Bassin de Thau, Sète	31 January 2015
La Filature, Scène nationale - Mulhouse	27 May 2015

[Click here for the complete list](#)



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THE MUSH-ROOM MANIFESTO

An introduction to the performance

*Some people say a man is made out of mud
A poor man's made out of muscle and blood
Muscle and blood and skin and bones
Sixteen Tons, Tennessee Ernie Ford*

Earth and fire!
Muscle, blood, skin and bones!

They sing: 'We Are Alive and Kicking' as hard as they possibly can.

My God, how soft we have become. Have we forgotten how to scream, forgotten that theatre/life is rock 'n roll? Have we forgotten that theatre is life and that at its dullest life is bad theatre? How boring politics has become, and how pointless newspapers. We have to return to theatre to remind us what life is. No longer as a mirror of reality, but as more real than life itself.

We live in a place that is becoming increasingly complex. Information multiplies exponentially. What was the truth yesterday may today be a lie. Words lose their meaning and symbols become hollow. What we take for the truth has to be questioned. The priority is to make new associations, trust one's gut feeling and develop a new language. What is necessary is a healthy confusion, feeling without restraint and an associative approach.

Vitality and virility have become two of our most valuable raw materials. Isn't it time to yell very loudly again? Shouldn't we learn to shout again? Learn to burn? Isn't that the essential question: what do you burn for? *That's* what I mean by rock 'n roll. And sharing that burning. A sort of artistic pyromania. Setting people alight in the hope of transcendental resurrection. Burn away the world's landscape because that is the most fertile ground.

It is Grace Ellen Barkey's mushrooms that shout and grow and swell and attack from under the ground. Barkey's fungi that bombard an invisible enemy, but also themselves and ultimately – no! first of all! – the audience. Because that is what a mushroom wants. To eject its spores and contaminate. Isn't that the essence of theatre?

Not highbrow thought, but learning once again.
Once again. Learning. Contemplating. Fighting.
Fighting is good; if we don't fight we are dead.
Fact: we have to fight to *really* live.
Fact: we live to fight. But not to hurt each other.
On the contrary.



© Maarten Vanden Abeele

MUSH-ROOM is a story based on images. An imploded narrative in danger of exploding. Because images are condensed stories, or in this case artistic parcel bombs. And do not – NOT – hesitate to open this parcel. This performance is explosive, squeezed tightly in the hand. Light the fuse and don't let go.

'BAMGÖTTERDAMMERUNGWHATNEXTWHATWASTHAT!!!'

AND.

'We shall fight them on the beaches.'

AND.

'Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.'

AND.

'If you can't go back to your mother's womb, you'd better learn to be a good fighter.'

Is there confusion? Very good.

Because I haven't finished yet.

When is theatre political? I'm not talking about theatre that's about politics, but about political theatre. When it screams for commitment from every fibre, of course. Barkey screams for this commitment. And for whether we want to scream with her. It is essential to be exposed to the irrational. That's the only way to be courageously and vigorously confronted with a world that is not always meaningful. Would we ever have reached the moon without the short film by Méliès, where the rocket ends up in the man in the moon's eye? Imagination is a valuable platform on which to make possible that which appears impossible. And just as a dream is utterly logical when you are immersed in it, so Grace Ellen Barkey's world has a logic of its own that appeals directly to us as humans. To earth and fire! To muscle, blood, skin and bones!

Colours, forms and plot constantly mutate. Characters shoot up out of the blue in just a few seconds, from supersoft to megabitch. And the consistent becomes consistently inconsistent. Mutation is inherent to growth. To wanting to move on. Change now! Mutate! NOW! To battle, not only now, but always, but now more than ever. To become bigger or smaller, so as not to remain yourself, to come closer to yourself, fight for the sake of fighting, damn it! MUSH-ROOM evokes the world under the microscope. Sex and violence among unicellular organisms! That just swarm and squirm over the stage and speak from instinct rather than reason. In *The Lucifer Principle*, Howard Bloom regularly refers to the wars being constantly fought out at a microscopic level. This production reminds me of that. MUSH-ROOM, not as a mirror of our society, but as a mirror of a fantastic 'subsoil' universe which in this way reflects, parallel with ours.

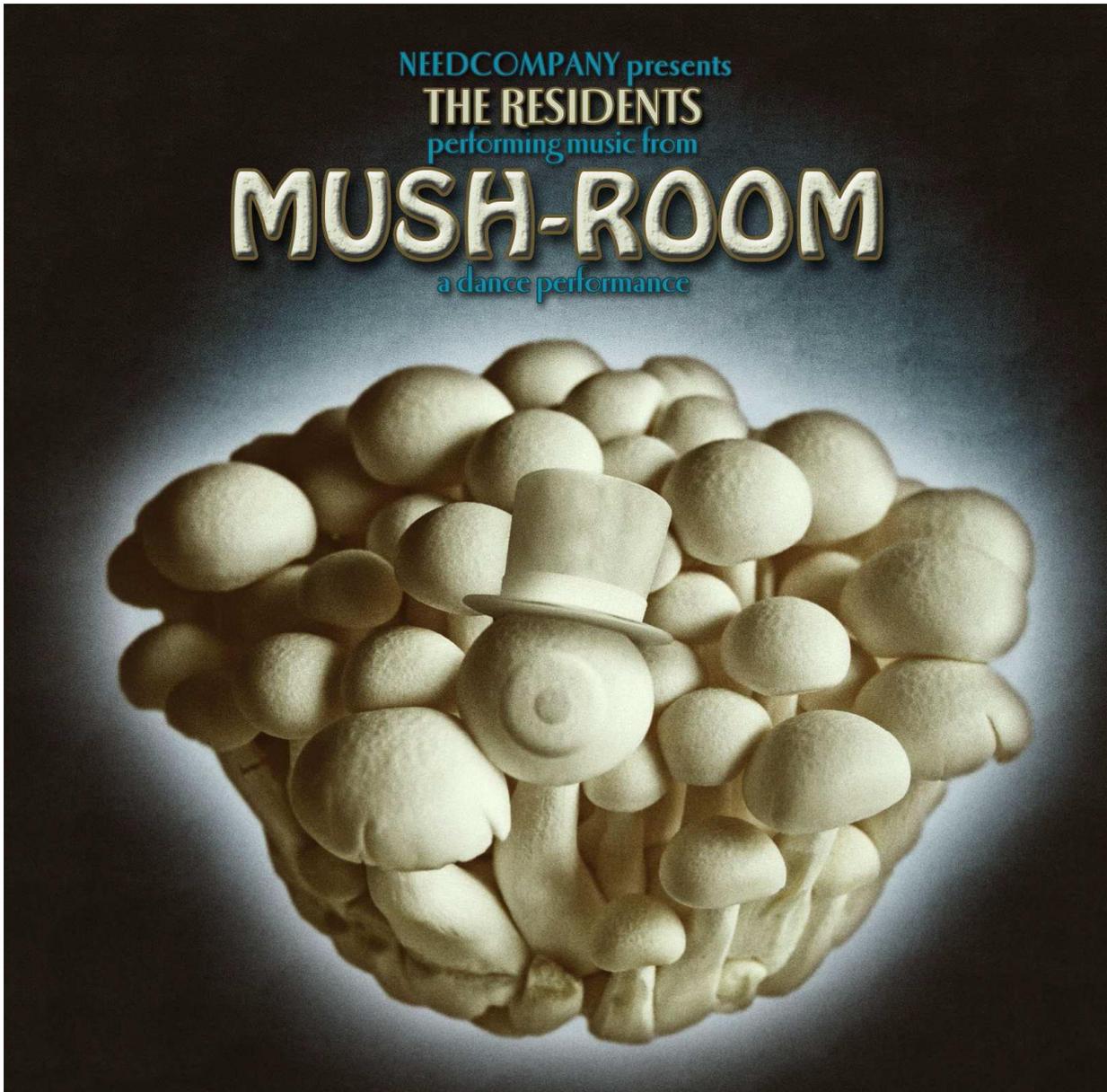
Somewhere in the land of Funguria live the United Tribes of Snotrooms and Mushlings. They dance, scream and fight until they drop. Grace Ellen Barkey and Lot Lemm have together built a tank. A big installation, a *perpetuum mobile* in which mushroom shapes float up and down to the belligerent sounds of The Residents. A war machine that bears down on the audience for an hour and a half. This evening it's war, and we are fighting because we have to.

Stef Lernous



© Maarten Vanden Abeele

THE MUSH-ROOM CD & LP



The CD & LP *MUSH-ROOM* with music originally written for the performance *MUSH-ROOM* (2013) by Grace Ellen Barkey & Needcompany is issued by © The Cryptic Corporation and sold in concert halls on The Residents' international tour. It is also on sale at theatre and festival performances of *MUSH-ROOM*.

OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCES BY GRACE ELLEN BARKEY

1992 One

first night: 26 November 1992, Theater am Turm Probebühne, Frankfurt

1993 Don Quijote

first night: 28 October 1993, Theater am Turm, Frankfurt

1995 Tres

first night: 18 October 1995, De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam

1997 Stories (histoires/verhalen)

first night: 19 February 1997, Brigittinenkapel, Brussels

1998 Rood Red Rouge

first night: 5 October 1998, STUK, Leuven

1999 The Miraculous Mandarin

first night: October 1999, PS 122, New York

2000 Few Things

first night: 7 October 2000, BIT teatergarasjen, Bergen (Norway)

2002 (AND)

first night: 23 October 2002, De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam

2005 Chunking

first night: 12 May 2005, PACT Zollverein, Essen (Germany)

2007 The Porcelain Project

first night: 10 October 2007, Kaaitheater, Brussels

2010 This door is too small (for a bear)

first night: 25 February 2010, Kaaitheater, Brussels

2013 MUSH-ROOM

first night: 22 March 2013, PACT Zollverein, Essen (Germany)

2013 Odd? But True!

first night: 9 November 2013, BRONKS, Brussels

[Click here for the complete list](#)

BIOGRAPHIES

NEEDCOMPANY

Needcompany is an artists' company set up by the theatre-maker and Jan Lauwers and the choreographer Grace Ellen Barkey in 1986. They form the core of the company, and it embraces all their artistic work: theatre, dance, performance, visual art, writing, etc. Their creations are shown at the most prominent venues and abroad.

LEMM&BARKEY

In 2004 Grace Ellen Barkey & Lot Lemm set up *Lemm&Barkey* to give shape to their close artistic cooperation: they designed the costumes for *Isabella's Room* (2004) and were responsible for the concept, set and costumes for *Chunking*, *The Porcelain Project* and *This door is too small (for a bear)*. In 2007 they created a porcelain installation for the production *The Porcelain Project*. It has been shown at several museums including BOZAR (Brussels) and the Benaki Museum (Athens). The curator Luk Lambrecht then invited them to take part in the group exhibition *I am your private dancer* (2008) at Strombeek cultural centre, they created works for the group exhibition *Het spel van de waanzin, over gekte in film en theater* (2008) at the Dr Guislain Museum (Ghent) and were invited to take part in the 'contemporary ceramics' section of the *Down to Earth* (2009) exhibition by its curator Hugo Meert.

The curator Pieter T'Jonck has invited Lemm&Barkey to put together an exhibition on their last three productions: *Chunking* (2005), *The Porcelain Project* (2007) and *This door is too small (for a bear)* (2009) for the Modemuseum in Hasselt in 2012. It will be part of the third Hasselt Triennale / Superbodies: an art project for contemporary art, fashion and design. For this they made 18 video works, in which images are constructed and deconstructed almost in passing. Human figures become forms, matter becomes a part of the body, hesitation becomes eroticism.

In 2013 they made their first children's play together, called *Odd? But True!* A wordless dance performance for all age groups.



Lemm&Barkey © Phile Deprez

THE RESIDENTS

The Residents have been regarded as icons in the world of experimental music for nearly forty years. In addition to their groundbreaking work in the areas of trance, world fusion, electronica, punk, industrial and lounge music, the group has also been credited with being among the originators of performance art and music video. Two of their videos are in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art and their Freak Show CD-Rom has recently been featured in MOMA's "Looking at Music 3.0" exhibition.

Their four decade long career has also taken them into the world of film and television music, having scored several episodes of the PEE WEE HERMAN SHOW, HUNTERS (for the Discovery Channel), THE CENSUS TAKER (1985), HEAVEN (1987), CONCEIVING ADA (1997), CONDO PAINTING (1997), THOMAS PYNCHON - A JOURNEY INTO THE MIND (2001), INVESTIGATION INTO THE INVISIBLE WORLD (2002) and STRANGE CULTURE (2007) as well as several projects for MTV.

Having already released ten DVDs, and a 60 episode internet series, The Residents are also thriving in the world of digital media. In addition, they have recently completed a 70 date world tour, titled The Talking Light, from January, 2010 - April 2011.



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GRACE ELLEN BARKEY

Grace Ellen Barkey, born in Surabaya in Indonesia, studied dance expression and modern dance at the theatre school in Amsterdam and afterwards worked as an actress and dancer. Before co-founding Needcompany in 1986 and becoming its full-time choreographer, she had choreographed several other productions. She created the choreography for *Need to Know* (1987), *ça va* (1989), *Julius Caesar* (1990), *Invictos* (1991), *Antonius und Kleopatra* (1992) and *Orfeo* (1993). She also acted in several of these productions, as well as in *The Snakesong Trilogy - Snakesong/Le Voyeur* (1994), *Caligula* (1997), *Needcompany's King Lear* (2000), *Images of Affection* (2002), *No Comment* (2003), *The Lobster Shop* (2006), *The Deer House* (2008), *The art of entertainment* (2011), *Marketplace 76* (2012), *Needlapb* and *The House of Our Fathers*. She was one of the cast of *Goldfish Game* (2002), Jan Lauwers & Needcompany's first full-length film. For *Isabella's Room* (2004) she joined forces with Lot Lemm to create the costumes under the name Lemm&Barkey.

Since 1992 she has been steadily and successfully building an international career with her own stage creations. Her first pieces, *One* (1992), *Don Quijote* (1993) and *Tres* (1995) were coproduced by Theater Am Turm in Frankfurt. These were followed by the Needcompany productions *Stories (Histoires/Verhalen)* (1996), *Rood Red Rouge* (1998) and *Few Things* (2003). *Few Things* was received very enthusiastically both at home and abroad. With *(AND)* (2002) she transcends all the boundaries of theatre, dance and music with an irresistible flair. In 2005 Grace Ellen Barkey presented her new stage show, *Chunking* and was nominated for the Flemish Community Culture Prizes (2005). For *The Porcelain Project* (2007) she created a porcelain installation together with Lot Lemm. In 2010 she made the production *This door is too small (for a bear)*. 2013 saw the premieres of both *MUSH-ROOM* and *Odd? But True!*

LOT LEMM

Lot Lemm has worked at Needcompany since 1993. She initially started as costume designer on various productions including *Le Voyeur* (1994), *Le Pouvoir* (1995), *Needcompany's Macbeth* (1996), *Le Désir* (1996), *Caligula* (1997), *The Snakesong Trilogy* (1998), *Morning Song* (1999), *Needcompany's King Lear* (2000), *Images of Affection* (2002), *Goldfish Game* (feature film, 2002), *No Comment* (2003), *Isabella's Room* (2004), *The Lobster Shop* (2006), *The Deer House* (2008), *The art of entertainment* (2011), *Marketplace 76* (2012), all by Jan Lauwers, and *All is Vanity* (2006) with Viviane De Muynck. When it comes to Grace Ellen Barkey's productions, her involvement increases with each one. She started as a costume designer on *Tres* (1995), *Stories* (1997), *Rood Red Rouge* (1998) and *(AND)* (2002). On the productions *Few Things* (2002), *Chunking* (2005), *The Porcelain Project* (2007), *This door is too small (for a bear)* (2010), *MUSH-ROOM* (2013) and *Odd? But True!* (2013) she also defines the stage setting.

PERFORMERS

Julien Faure
Benoît Gob
Sung-Im Her
Romy Louise Lauwers
Maarten Seghers
Mohamed Toukabri
Catherine Travelletti



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