

Third Space

Daniel Linehan (concept & choreography), Stefan Prins (concept & composition)
Klangforum Wien / Nadar Ensemble & HIATUS Dance Company

for 7 dancers, 10 musicians and conductor, live-video and live-electronics
premiered at Münchener Biennale June 2018 with Klangforum Wien & Bas Wieggers

1. Concept



From Isolation to Exposure: The Ambiguity of Privacy in an Increasingly Transparent World

Today, do we have less privacy than ever before? Or perhaps we have more? On the one hand, it might seem that many people today are retreating further and further into the private sphere, isolating themselves and reducing their participation in public life, staring into their private screens and wearing earbuds to block out the surrounding noise. On the other hand, social networking tools offer the possibility to connect people near and far who want to unite in solidarity around common issues and fight for a common cause. Yet governments, technology mega-corporations, and hackers are finding ways of gaining access to some of our most intimate activity and correspondences, which now take place online, so perhaps the private world of our screens is not so private after all. It is clear that issues surrounding privacy are some of the most important issues of our day.

To quote novelist Dave Eggers, our world is becoming more and more “transparent”. In his novel “The Circle”, Eggers writes about a not-so-distant future in which a Facebook-like

company believes that all information needs to be available for everyone, all the time. For this purpose, the company develops a very cheap surveillance camera in order to cover as many locations as possible worldwide, from the work place to isolated beaches, continuously streaming its live-feed to the web, literally making the world “transparent”. This is still fiction, but one could wonder for how much longer. A recent study showed that on average there is one security camera for every 32 persons in the UK, making it the most surveilled country on this planet. Another study implies that we are already close to becoming transparent to companies like Facebook, which can, for example, predict with reasonable accuracy how great the chances are that a couple will break up in the next two months.



Performance Set-up

Working in close collaboration, composer Stefan Prins and choreographer Daniel Linehan will create a hybrid musical–choreographic performance concerned with the themes and paradoxes contained in the idea of privacy. The performance takes place in two parts. At first, the entire audience is sitting in the tribune, as in a conventional stage performance, and is watching the conductor who faces the audience. The conductor stands in front of a curtain behind which the ensemble plays and the dancers perform; there is no direct contact between conductor and ensemble, only a mediated one through video. The conductor’s video image is sent behind the curtain in order to coordinate the music and dance on the stage, and videos of the musicians and dancers are projected onto the curtain, behind the conductor. The audience sees the performers through the video images, in hints and fragments; they witness only the partially obscured surveillance of the

performance and have to fill in hidden details with their imaginations. The sound coming from behind the curtain is sometimes muffled, sounding hazy and far away, and at other times the sound is amplified, sounding very intimate and close at hand.

In the second part, the choreography and the score of the first part is re-iterated, but from a new perspective. The curtain rises, and the audience will have direct view of the live bodies of the musicians and dancers. Some of the audience (50–100 people) are invited onstage to get even closer to the musicians and dancers, who at times direct intimate gestures directly to individual audience members. This onstage audience will sit in different small clusters of between 5 and 20 people, getting a more zoomed-in experience of individual dancers and musicians. The rest of the audience remains in the tribune, witness to the more private experiences of their fellow audience members, and vicariously experiencing these more intimate exchanges. The conductor has left the scene and is conducting the ensemble from another room, while the ensemble continues to see him on private screens/projections.

In the middle of this second iteration, another shift of perspective occurs. Tablets and smartphones that are scattered throughout the audience in the tribune are activated, and these devices begin to relay some of the sounds of the musicians and close-ups of the bodies of the dancers in a way that is mediated, yet eerily intimate. The audience in the tribune now has a *virtual* access to the more zoomed-in kinds of experiences that the onstage audience has been privy to. The phones and tablets are also used as a loudspeaker scattered amongst the audience itself, creating new zones of private space, as well as invasion of private space, with people looking over each other's shoulder to see what's on the tablets.

The performance is structured like a loop that happens twice (except for some irregularities), but the same set of performance events will be perceived very differently each time, since the audience will be in an entirely different environment: one environment largely mediated through broadcasted video and audio (with the exception of the live conductor and some brief live appearances by the other performers) and the other environment largely live (with the exception of the video image of the conductor and the sounds/images from the smartphones). In each iteration, the audience will be privy to an entirely different set of information, with new details being revealed when the curtain rises, and they discover aspects of the performance that were hidden during the first iteration.

With the conductor's video image being sent to the live performers, issues of the power of the mediated image arise. The dancers and musicians are responding to the conductor, but they are one degree removed from the conductor's live presence, leaving the viewer to wonder, Who or what is in control? Who or what is driving the performance? The conductor's image, or the live performers? With the asymmetrical experiences of different audience members in the second iteration, several related issues of power and information

are opened up. Since the onstage audience and the audience in the tribune will not have the same layers of information at their disposal (as is the case in the world outside the performance space too), the audience may feel excluded from the “full experience”, but also potentially curious, and eager to talk to the other part of the audience to see what they “missed”.



2. Collaboration

Prins and Linehan have been speaking about a collaboration for years, after seeing each other's work and finding that they share similar artistic interests, particularly with regard to the relationship between the live and mediated body. In Prins's *Generation Kill*, four performers with game controllers manipulate the sounds and video images of four live musicians. In Linehan's *Gaze is a Gap is a Ghost*, the performers wear a tiny camera near eye-level, and a projected video image reveals to the audience the viewpoint that the performers see as they dance onstage. In their collaboration, Linehan and Prins would like to further develop their ongoing investigations into the interaction between live performance and digital mediation. *Third Space* will blur the boundary between what is live and what is virtual. In the modern world, our digital avatars (our profiles on Facebook and Twitter, for example) can sometimes have as much real-world impact as if we were engaged in live interaction. The shared performance world of Linehan and Prins will assume this principle: that the interactions among live and virtual bodies has genuine consequences in reality. Prins will compose music for 13 musicians of Klangforum Wien (including live-electronics) and Linehan will choreograph for 8 dancers, but the goal is to create a united performance

in which the bodies, spatial configurations, and gestures of the musicians are considered as part of the choreography, and the sounds made by dancers' movements are considered as part of the musical composition. The dancers at times will also respond to the movements of the conductor. Linehan and Prins will together develop the overall set-up, and direct how the live performers will interact with the transmitted sounds and images.

With this performance, Linehan and Prins are interested in creating a "third space" which cannot easily be categorized according to conventional binaries. The space they hope to create is not entirely *real* and not entirely *virtual*, but instead it occupies a territory in between the two. In a similar way, the performance will blur the distinction between music and dance, opening up the divisions between the roles of musician and dancer. In a more disturbing way, the performance will examine the public-private divide, suggesting that perhaps we now live in a world where these two categories are becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish.

The hybrid music-dance performance and the hybrid live-broadcast set-ups will respond to the hybrid physical-virtual environment in which we live our everyday lives. The surveillance cameras and screens/projections/smartphones/tablets will create a multidimensional immersive space which will incorporate the bodies of the performers as well as everyone sitting in the performative space. As the surveillance cameras reveal the hidden corners of the performance space, the work will address the question: what are the advantages and dangers of this new transparent world in which information is instantly accessible from all possible hidden corners? And is the world really becoming transparent, or isn't there always something private/hidden/internal that can't be fully exposed to the public's eyes and ears?



3. *Line-up*

Daniel Linehan (concept & choreography) + **Stefan Prins** (concept, composition & sound)

88888: **Karel Burssens** + **Jeroen Verrecht** (scenography)

Frédéric Denis (costume designer)

(light designer To-Be-Determined)

(video-engineer TBD)

(sound engineering: ICST Zürich)

Klangforum Wien (Fl, sax, bssn, tpt, hrn, tbne, perc, pno/keybrd, egtr, acc, vn, vc, dbss + sound-engineer)

Hiatus (dancers & production)

4. *Partnerships*

Commissioner: Münchener Biennale 2018

Coproducers (so far): HIATUS (<http://www.caravanproduction.be/?lang=1>), deSingel

(<https://www.desingel.be/en>), ICST Zürich

THIRD SPACE



5. *Biographies*

Daniel Linehan

Daniel Linehan's choreographic work is intent on softly obscuring the line that separates dance from everything else. He approaches performance-making from the point of view of a curious amateur, testing various interactions between dance and non-dance forms, searching for unlikely conjunctions, juxtapositions, and parallels between texts, movements, images, songs, videos, and rhythms.

Linehan first studied dance in Seattle and then moved to New York in 2004. During his four years in New York, he created and presented several solos, duets, and group choreographies. Linehan was a 2007–2008 Movement Research Artist-in-Residence. In 2007, Linehan premiered the solo *Not About Everything*, which has since been presented in over 75 venues internationally.

In 2008, Linehan moved to Brussels where he completed the Research Cycle at P.A.R.T.S. His works created in Europe include a choreography for two dancers and a sequence of photographs (*Montage for Three*, 2009), a danced rock concert (*Zombie Aporia*, 2011), a choreography for the dancer's gaze (*Gaze is a Gap is a Ghost*, 2012), a choreographic blending of six literary classics (*The Karaoke Dialogues*, 2014), an exuberant interpretation of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (*Un Sacre du Printemps*, 2015), a dadaist quintet (*dbddb*, 2015), and a choreography which accelerates into physical impossibility (*Flood*, 2017). Linehan has also initiated a workshop for the unemployed (*Vita Activa*), created a book (*A No Can Make Space*), and created a performance for the internet (*untitled duet*, as part of the Performance Room Series at Tate Modern).

Linehan was Artiste Associé 2012–2014 at deSingel (Antwerpen, BE), New Wave Associate 2012–2014 at Sadler's Wells (London, UK) and Artist-in-Residence at l'Opéra de Lille (FR) from 2013–2016. He is currently Creative Associate at deSingel International Arts Campus 2017–2021. Since 2015 Linehan's company, Hiatus, is supported by the Flemish authorities.

Stefan Prins

In his compositional work Prins seeks to critique received convention, to break the framework of the usual, and dispose of aesthetic axioms. He envisions a musical art form beyond the safe confines of the »scene«, wherein the connection to the larger cultural discourse has gotten lost. A central pre-condition for the making of a new music with a future is the role of the aware, critical observer, one who is prepared to exploit the technologies and mechanisms of the prefabricated media with a view to their possibilities for new music. – Stefan Prins lives up to this calling. (Michael Rebhahn, 2012)

After graduating as an engineer, Stefan Prins (Belgium, 1979) started to study fulltime piano and composition at the Royal Flemish Conservatory in Antwerp, Belgium, where he obtained his Masters degree in Composition magna cum laude. Concurrently, he studied "Technology in Music" at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, "Sonology" at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and "Philosophy of Culture" and "Philosophy of Technology" at the University of Antwerp. Since September 2011 he divides his time between Europe and the USA where he pursues a PhD in composition at Harvard University under the guidance of Chaya Czernowin.

As a composer he received several important awards in Belgium and abroad, such as the "Berliner Kunstpreis" (Berlin, 2016), "ISCM Young Composer Award" (2014), "Kranichsteiner Musikpreis for Composition" (Darmstadt, 2010), a "Staubach Honorarium" (Darmstadt, 2009) and the "International Impuls Composition Award" (Graz, 2009). In 2012 the Union of Belgian Music Journalists elected him "Young Belgian Musician of the Year". In 2014 he became laureate of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for the Sciences and Arts in the Class of the Arts.

Stefan Prins is closely involved with the Nadar Ensemble, as a composer and co-director, and was, together with Thomas Olbrechts & Joachim Devillé one of the founders of the long-standing trio for improvised music "collectief reFLEXible".

His music has been played by a.o. Klangforum Wien, Nadar Ensemble, Ictus Ensemble, Nickel Ensemble, Ensemble Mosaik, Trio Accanto, Ensemble Dal Niente, Ensemble Recherche, Athelas Sinfonietta, Ensemble Proton Bern, Zwerm Electric Guitar Quartet, Champ d'Action on festivals such as the Donaueschinger Musiktage, the Darmstadt Ferienkurse, Wittener Tage für Neue Musik, Eclat, Warsaw Autumn, Gaudeamus Festival, Musica Strasbourg, Ars Musica, Tzllil Meudcan, Impuls Festival, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival & Ultima Festival.

His preferred color is blood-red.

www.stefanprins.be

www.soundcloud.com/stefan-prins

www.vimeo.com/stefanprins

www.youtube.com/klangklank

www.soundcloud.be/stefan-prins