

# MOTHERLAND

UK PREMIERE: 5 OCTOBER 2012

AVAILABLE FOR TOURING INTERNATIONALLY 2013/14



Charlotte Vincent

Directed and Designed by Charlotte Vincent

Composed by Alex Catona

Dramaturgy by Ruth Ben-Tovim

Lighting Design by James Harrison

Made and Performed by Aurora Lubos, Janusz Orlik, Patrycja Kujawska,  
Robert Clark, Scott Smith, Greig Cooke Andrea Catania, Alex Catona,  
Leah Ben-Tovim, Emily Maynard and Benitta Oakley

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*'For a long time I have hesitated to write a book on woman.  
The subject is irritating, especially to women; and it is not new.  
Enough ink has been spilled in quarrelling over feminism, and  
perhaps we should say no more about it.... After all, is there a  
problem? And if so, what is it?'*

**Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (1949)**

60 years on from Simone de Beauvoir's astonishing text, Vincent Dance Theatre's international ensemble of performers aged 10-78 reflect on the gender they were born into and the price they are paying for it, and asks 'What place do both sexes occupy now?'

**VINCENT DANCE THEATRE'S MOTHERLAND** is a production that characteristically cuts across dance, theatre and music to create 'total theatre', mixing powerful ensemble work with live art installation, some movement, a few songs and a bit of misguided musical theatre thrown in for good measure. Shot through with a healthy dose of British humour, the production has at its core and examination of contemporary feminist issues. **MOTHERLAND** is a lamentation for all that has been lost, a spunky protest song, a manifesto against oppression and a visual flight of imagination. The women and children onstage will bare their souls and the men will probably bare their chests. They will come together and fall apart, grappling with contemporary notions of feminine and masculine energy and everything in between.

Drawing on seminal texts and personal stories collected from the general public via a series of curated events programmed by **VDT** and **Encounters** in venues across the UK in 2012, **MOTHERLAND** boldly dismantles the feminist promise of 'having it all' and (with our collective tongues held firmly in our collective cheeks), this new production asks 'What has become of women?'

## THE COMPANY

**MOTHERLAND** is performed by an accomplished, multi-tasking ensemble, aged 10 to 78, from Poland, Costa Rica, Romania, the United States and the UK. Professional cast members have previously worked with Kneehigh Theatre, Charles Linehan, Felix Ruckert, Sasha Waltz, Troika Ranch, Steve Paxton, Les Petits Poissons, Dance Theatre of Gdansk, Dada Von Bzdulow and Nigel Charnock. Non-professional performers in **MOTHERLAND** are Liuba Catona (age 1), Emily Maynard (age 10), Leah Ben Tovim (age 12) and Benitta Oakley (age 78).

## NEW TOURING MODEL

**MOTHERLAND** is offered as part of an innovative new touring model for VDT, where the performance acts as the culmination of a programme of events, discussions, practical workshops and classes, civic and cultural debates curated by VDT around the gender, equality, sexuality and social issues raised in the work. This new model allows VDT to work in advance with host venue managers and education / outreach gatekeepers to programme a series of events that will attract diverse audiences and encourage participation by those who may not usually attend 'contemporary dance' at their local venue.

## COLLABORATION WITH ENCOUNTERS

VDT's curated programme will be developed in collaboration with Ruth Ben Tovim, Artistic Director of **ENCOUNTERS**. **ENCOUNTERS** have developed a distinctive and innovative body of socially engaged participatory arts practice that also has an ecological focus. **ENCOUNTERS** position their work at the intersection between the arts, sustainability, personal growth and transformation. Working creatively with peoples memories, stories, ideas and experiences of past, present, future everyday life, **ENCOUNTERS** feed these back to the wider community through performance, interventions, exhibitions, print, public events, and gatherings. **ENCOUNTERS** create imaginative spaces and processes for people of all ages and backgrounds to explore their relationship with themselves, each other, where they live and the natural world, in arts, education, community, conflict resolution, environmental and regeneration contexts.

## MODEL ONE

The ideal model is for VDT to work in partnership with each venue to curate a **bespoke programme of varied events** in the lead up to the **MOTHERLAND** performance/s. This model maximises the opportunity for participants and audiences locally to get involved and may take the shape of a week long company residency hosted at the venue, or be structured as a series of linked events with groups in associated agencies and partner venues.

## MODEL TWO

The company is in residence for 2-3 days and offers a bespoke programme of curated events leading up to the **MOTHERLAND** performance/s. A post-show discussion is included in the performance fee.

## MODEL THREE

The company performs **MOTHERLAND** at your venue for 1-2 nights.

## MOTHERLAND CURATED EVENTS

### VDT / ENCOUNTERS COLLABORATION

By engaging the public in an authentic, accessible way **VDT** hope to move away from belonging purely to the 'contemporary dance' context, which for some new audiences can seem intimidating and exclusive. Instead, irrespective of the seriousness, contemporary and political nature of the material we produce, we want to reach a place where audiences associate 'dance' with 'movement', natural and innate, theatre with real, personal stories and politics with individual experience and struggle.

**MOTHERLAND** will be designed so that solos, duets and graphic elements from the middle scale work can be taken out of context and used in a participatory / community context to provoke physical explorations and public debate. **VDT's** curated programme leading up to the performance/s of **MOTHERLAND** may involve the following types of creative, participatory events and processes:

- Mini-residencies at the venue or associated community venues
- Critical Debates (eg: 'Choosing to be Childless?' 'Where are all the women?' 'Should we have more female leaders of more feminine leadership?' ' Why do women write more letters than they post', 'What is woman now?')
- Hosted Dinner Discussion Events / Salon Evenings at the venue
- Talks / Lectures – Provocations by women who have it all
- Weekend symposiums (in association with universities/ businesses/ agencies)
- Networking events, discussions and creative workshops for women
- Intergenerational movement / performance workshops
- Safe space discussions
- Writing / Song / Drawing workshops
- Cross-disciplinary workshops
- Compositional workshops
- Intensive community performance projects (that might act as a curtain raiser for **MOTHERLAND** in the host venue)
- Over 55 performance and movement projects
- Workshops in dance, performance, music, animation and live art
- Investigation of Improvisation scores
- Writing workshops
- Choreographic residencies
- Professional development residencies
- Performance orientated and choreographic workshops
- Open rehearsals
- Special needs and disability projects
- Talks by the Artistic Director on making work in the contemporary climate
- Workshops to collect histories and stories that document men and women's experiences and contribute to an online diary / letter exhibition publication

The company will also deliver the more usual dance, performance, workshops and music master-classes and offer pre- and post-show discussions using **Liz Lerman's Critical Feedback Technique** to ensure quality discussions. Ultimately the company aims to develop a much richer working partnership with venues to genuinely engage local communities in **VDT's** distinctive work and whilst so doing to build new audiences in a meaningful, sustainable way.

Through these themed, curated events and residencies we also aim to collect public stories that will feed into the work. There will be an opportunity for these satellite events to run both at the venue and beyond, retelling gathered stories and experiences that emerge from these inclusive and intimate processes to a wider community through public art, exhibitions, happenings, performance projects, online publications and tailor-made events.

The events may include working with the following types of groups -

- Local Women's Groups
- Feminist and Women's Studies Associations
- All female / all male sports groups
- Guides and Scout Groups
- Existing Dance and Theatre Groups attached to venue or local agencies
- Specialist groups - over 55's, young people, disability and special needs groups
- Young Mothers Groups
- Older Mothers support groups
- Adoption and IVF Support Groups
- Parent and Children Groups
- Young Adults on Probation
- Gay and Lesbian Groups
- College and University Students
- Peer Artists

Also running alongside this project will be **VDT's** development of **THE TABLE**, an artist led online / live platform to curate, promote, process, research, document and disseminate interdisciplinary arts practice by and for experienced female practitioners, working in a range of forms led by Charlotte Vincent and Dr Claire MacDonald which may offer opportunities to develop professional and academic events as part of your venue's curated programme.

## AUDIENCE

**VDT's** work is accessible to diverse audiences, aged 15+ and with differing experiences of dance. **VDT** has a solid track record of producing exceptional, provocative dance theatre, made by an ensemble of unusual, committed and experienced performers. The work has high production values and features original music. European in outlook and devised and performed by an international cast, **VDT** produces dynamic work at the cutting edge of contemporary practice in the UK.

## FEES

Performance fees for **MOTHERLAND** will depend on number of shows programmed and the shape of the associated bespoke programme of curated events. Please call **VDT's** General Manager Tessa Howell on +44 (0) 0114 2210369 to discuss the project.

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

**MOTHERLAND** is suitable for middle-scale and larger small-scale theatre, dance and gallery venues with a minimum performance area of **10m x 8m** with a sprung floor.

## BOOKING CONTACT

**Tessa Howell** + 44 (0) 114 2210369 / [tessa@vincentdt.com](mailto:tessa@vincentdt.com)

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