





# Kassia Undead



**Kassia Undead** - a project by  
Lara Barsacq (creation 2025-2026)



Creation and performance : Marta Capaccioli, Aymara Parola, Tarek Halaby, Clara Verkindere, Els Mondelaers, Agnès Potié and Emma Laroche

Original music: Cate Hortl

Music: Kassia de Constantinople

Light design: Estelle Gaultier

Artistic advises: Gaël Santisteva

Objects and stage design: Ateliers Indigo

Costumes design: Lara Barsacq, Catherine Somers

Technical direction: Emma Laroche

Sound: (in progress)

Administration & production : Myriam Chekhemani, Elisabeth Maréchal

Communication & distribution: Quentin Legrand - Rue Branly

Production: Gilbert & Stock Coproduction (in progress): Charleroi danse - Centre Chorégraphique de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Théâtre de Liège, Concertgebouw Brugge (BE), Cité musicale - Metz (FR)

Residencies (in progress): Charleroi danse, Théâtre de Liège, Grand Studio (BE), Cité musicale - Metz (FR), CSC - Centro per la scena contemporanea (IT)

With the support of Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles

Lara Barsacq is artist in residence at Théâtre de Liège (2024-2028) and at Cité musicale-Metz (2024-2026).



# The project's sources



This new work explores the rich legacy of Kassia of Constantinople, a 9th-century Byzantine poetess, composer and hymnographer. She remains one of the first medieval composers whose scores have been preserved. Her life and work will be a source of inspiration for stage and choreographic research, but will not be the main subject of the piece. She will not necessarily be evoked as a historical person, but rather the focus will be on the appreciation of her works and their significance, from the Middle Ages to the present day, and even into the future.

On stage, seven performers, a mix of dancers and singers, will bring to life, scenes illuminated by Kassia's forgotten works.



# Scenography

A rich yet simple stage design





The set design will involve the collaboration with Atelier Indigo's artists, They will be assisted by Lily Sato and Corinne Chotycki, two artists specializing in textile art and drawing at Ateliers Indigo.



Launched in 2015, Ateliers Indigo supports around 20 artists with disabilities, active in plastic art, performance and music workshops. The association provides them with a personal space to develop their practice, as well as a team of qualified artists to support and work with them. The aim is to improve their working conditions while promoting their creations, when these artists wish to become part of a cultural and artistic identification process. Indigo's aim is to introduce the art world (gallery owners, collectors, curators, media, institutions) to these artists and the works created on their premises, through exhibitions, concerts, performances... and to offer a professional future to these special artists.

I want to provide to the Indigo artists a variety of images, both medieval and contemporary, so that they can imagine textiles as well as banners that evoke 9th century art in juxtaposition with a current pop aesthetic. Once completed, the performers in the piece will be framed by banners, offering the possibility of creating various environments and modifying the scenic occupation at will. The banners will be interchangeable, sometimes representing a medieval work of art, sometimes an artistic abstraction, sometimes a K-pop painting, or even colorful characters. The whole will be in constant transformation.





*« I'd like to create a setting in perpetual evolution, a changing landscape made up of textiles evoking poetic, colorful and naive materials. »*

The aim of this scenography is to offer to the performers a variety of possibilities for evolving through the use of different spectacular mediums, in order to heal or tame the emptiness caused by the absence of their respective dead. This will be an opportunity for the public to discover a unique perspective on poetic attempts at exchanges with the afterlife, but also to question their own relationship with their departed loved ones. Could Kassia, a little-known female composer, guide this group in their desire for offbeat utopias of communication with the dead?

## **The performativity**

The performers will sing and dance to honor their deceased, seeking to connect with them. They will summon different forms of resolution to paranormal questions, exploring the boundaries between eras. Past, present and near future will merge in a spellbinding dance where the mystery of necromancy and divination will be explored without distinction of time.

Adopting a hybrid appearance at the crossroads of troubadours and extras, the performers will sing ardently in tableaux vivants positions, sometimes reminiscent of the Middle Ages and sometimes blurred, colorful figurative tableaux, just like their costumes.





Their frontality, consciously and strangely marked, will raise questions: are they apparitions? Are they themselves assigned to reality? If so, to which reality? This frontal style is the ideal breeding ground for horror films, dramas and ghosts, straddling the border between mysticism and delirium.

The friction of eras, applied to beliefs and choreographic art, offers a substantial and varied terrain for interdisciplinary exploration. Inspired by paintings, songs composed by Kassia and medieval dances, the piece will take its cue from the Middle Ages to create a new, transformed and contemporary aesthetic.

A famous anecdote surrounds Kassia. She is said to have won the admiration of Emperor Theophilus when she presented herself as a candidate to become Empress. The emperor commented on her intelligence, but added that the woman should repent for original sin. In response, Kassia is said to have uttered a memorable phrase that roughly translates as: *"From woman came the condemnation, but also the redemption of the world."* - emphasizing her intelligence and contribution to the preservation of Byzantine culture. She is celebrated as one of the earliest known female composers in the history of Western music.





In Europe, medieval dances, often linked to religious festivities, royal events and community celebrations, enlivened the various strata of society. Dances around the world in the 9th century were diverse, rooted in local traditions, celebrating the life, spirituality and social fabric of each community. Although the specific details can sometimes be obscure, the cultural heritage of these dances has shaped artistic expression down the centuries.

The choreographic research will explore the universe of tableaux vivants, drawing inspiration from the 9th century and plunging into the heart of powerful beliefs and carnal narratives. By subjecting the body to the sacred echoes of the past, this approach engages in a meticulous dissection and skillful exploitation of the tools of the flesh, revealing their powerful and unsuspected potential. The exploration of this duality between the divine and the demonic offers a profound reflection on the nature of our existence and creativity.

In this context, we stand at the confluence of East and West, at the dawn of polyphony, which would mark a major revolution in European musical practice. A parade of images will awaken the performers, setting them in motion. Figures and tableaux vivants will sketch out a haunted world, where humor will emerge from ever-changing sadness, creating a space where nothing is what it seems.

The themes explored, such as religion, martyrdom, mourning, romanticism, tradition, psychosis, time and melancholy, will serve as anchor points. They will be transformed through music and lyrics, which will act as essential building material to create a strangely enveloping show. It is in this artistic alchemy that emotions and ideas will be transformed, giving rise to an experience where creativity transcends cultural and temporal boundaries.



# Performers and the process



The performers will be either dancers or singers. Kassia's songs are difficult to interpret, so I'm calling on 2 professional singers and 2 singer/dancers. Together, they will be able to support the group polyphonically and infuse the creation with their voices. The group will also include 2 professional dancers. A light technician will also be on stage, manipulating lights and set.

The creative process will take place in several phases. A first group of performers, made up of 3 dancers, will work for 11 weeks on the creation. At the same time, a group of singers will devote 8 weeks to working on the songs, joining them at a later date. The composer will join the project intermittently, particularly towards the end of the creation.

The songs created by the group will be developed and conceptualized during the creative process, drawing inspiration from the themes proposed during this process. My aim is for the spoken word to be expressed essentially through song or prosody.





# Creation Calendar

## Season 24 – 25

- 1 : - 9th - 13th of September 2024 { Lara alone } **CHD La Raffinerie BE**
- 2 : - 30th of September - 4th of October 2024 {Lara alone } **CHD La Raffinerie BE**
- 3 : - 9th- 13th of December 2024 { Lara alone } **CHD La Raffinerie BE**

## Season 25 – 26

- 13th - 17th of January 2025 { Lara + Marta + Aymara} **Grand Studio BE**
- 17th - 21st of March 2025 { Lara + Marta + Aymara+ Agnès } **CHD -Charleroi Ecuries BE**
- 7th - 11th of April 2025 { Lara + Marta + Aymara+ Agnès } **Bassano del Grappa IT**
- 12th -16th of May 2025 { ALL } **Théâtre de Liège BE**
- 19th - 23rd of May 2025 { ALL } **Grand Studio BE**
- 10th - 14th of June 2025 { ALL } **Arsenal de Metz FR**
- 16th - 20th of June 2025 { ALL} **La Briqueterie CDCN FR**
- 15th - 19th of September 2025 { TECHNIQUE} { ALL } **CHD La Raffinerie BE**
- 22th - 26th of September 2025 { TECHNIQUE} { ALL } **CHD La Raffinerie BE**
- 29th of September - 3rd of October 2025 { TECHNIQUE} { ALL} **Théâtre de Liège BE**
- 6th - 10th of October 2025 { General et PREMIÈRE} { ALL} **Théâtre de Liège BE**

Premieres are planned in the Théâtre de Liège, in the frame of the Biennale de la Danse of Charleroi dance during the Objectif Dance plateforme.



