

David Weber-Krebs  
**BALTHAZAR**

*We are training each other in acts of communication we barely understand.*  
(Donna Haraway)



**CONTACT**

**Management** Elisabeth Hirner [elisabeth@davidweberkrebs.org](mailto:elisabeth@davidweberkrebs.org)

# Credits

**Concept & Direction** David Weber-Krebs

**Concept & Dramaturgy** Maximillian Haas

**Performance** Julien Bruneau, Alondra Castellanos, Philipp Enders, Sid Van Oerle, Noha Ramadan

**Costumes** Ebba Fransén Waldhör

**Assistant** Marie Urban

**Production** Elisabeth Hirner

An Infinite Endings production in co-production with HAU Hebbel am Ufer and NEXT arts Festival.

Duration: 60 minutes

Language: English

Teaser: <https://vimeo.com/140054689>

Balthazar (1, stories) <https://vimeo.com/76975445>

## SHOWS

Balthazar (version 2015)

**HAU Hebbel am Ufer Berlin** 12 - 14.06.2015 (première)

**NEXT Festival, schouwburg Kortrijk** 28.11.2015

# Project

*Balthazar* is a longterm artistic research project by theatre maker David Weber-Krebs and dramaturg and theorist Maximilian Haas that explores our cultural relationship with animals using the means of theater. Three research versions of the piece have been made in Amsterdam, Brussels and Hamburg in collaboration with local art schools and international festivals. In 2015 the final touring version of *Balthazar* was created and premiered at HAU Hebbel am Ufer with a new cast.

In this piece the protagonist is nor a professional dancer nor an actor, but a non-trained animal – the donkey Balthazar. He is confronted with a group of human performers who involve him in choreographies and stories. The piece emerges from this live and active communication between the species.

The human performers try to grasp the animal by constructing meaningful narratives, movements, gestures, and images. But the animal undercuts constantly this attempt to define him and pulls the performers and the performance into a process of becoming-animal. Naturally, the untrained animal never fully behaves according to the artistic intention. The fragile communication with the donkey requires a fine sense for the responses and propositions (or even demands) of such an unequal and unpredictable stage partner.

*Balthazar* puts the spectator in a weird position: The performance seduces us into identifying with the animal, fully knowing that our projections can only be: inadequate. We may assume that the donkey is complying with the performance, that Balthazar is participating in the piece, that the animal develops it further using artistic means. The point is: We don't know! And we never will.



## About the creators

**David Weber-Krebs** (BE/D) is an artist and a researcher based in Brussels. He studied at the University of Fribourg (CH) and the Amsterdam School of the Arts (NL). David explores various contexts as a basis for an experimental process, which questions the traditional relationship between the work of art and its public. Recent works are the performances *Tonight, lights out!* (2011/2013), *Balthazar* (2013) with Maximilian Haas, *Into the big world* (2014), and the installation *Immersion* (2014) at the Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt. David collaborates on a regular basis with different artists and theorists and he teaches at different visual arts and performance academies.

David Weber-Krebs creates situations engaging the spectator in a complex game between getting absorbed or merging with an art piece, and keeping his critical distance towards it. Be it by staging actors (ex. *into the big world*), a donkey (*Balthazar*), a minimalist sculpture (*Performance, Robert Morris revisited*) or a public space (*Miniature*), the form is ever reduced to its simplest expression. It becomes like a projection screen, inviting the spectator into a mode of active contemplation where meaning is not given but produced by the spectator. The theatre performance *Fade out* (2005) for example, is based on the slow extinction of the lights until the whole space lays in complete darkness. Two performers accompany this drama of irreversible disappearance and until its final consequence. The public is both witness and active participant of this highly sensitive process. While the lights are fading-out, the eyes of each spectator must adapt to the new situation until everything is plunged into darkness.

**Maximilian Haas** is a cultural theorist and dramaturg based in Berlin. He studied at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies in Gießen and recently employed by the Volksbühne Berlin. Since 2011 practice-based PhD project on *Animals on Stage: An Aesthetic Ecology of Performance* (KHM Cologne). As part of the project he made a series of performances confronting a live donkey and a group of human performers on stage with David Weber-Krebs titled *Balthazar*. Haas collaborates with performance-makers and choreographers and teaches in art academies and universities. His research interests and publications primarily address the field of Animal Studies and Performance Aesthetics as well as Poststructuralism, Actor-Network-Theory, New Materialism, and Pragmatism.

**Julien Bruneau** is a Belgian dancer, choreographer and visual artist based in Brussels. He graduated from La Cambre (Brussels) in 2002 and completed a master in choreography at the Theaterschool (Amsterdam Master of Choreography) in June 2014. At the intersection of movement, drawing and language, his work investigates the dynamic interplay between interiority and collectivity. Since 2010, he gives his research the name *phréatiques* (aquifers) a project developed with the collaboration of M. Dalinsky, A. Llaurens, L. Myers, S. Si Ahmed and J. Peeters. In this frame he creates performances and dance pieces, but also drawings and installations shown in exhibition. Discursive event and on-line publication are other formats he used recently. He collaborated with David Weber-Krebs, Stefan Dreher, Lilia Mestre, Christine Quoiraud, Anouk Llaurens and Claude Schmitz as performer and with Norberto Llopis Segarra and Anouk Llaurens as artistic adviser/ dramaturge. In 2014, he joined the team of Sarma, working on the technical and artistic follow-up of artist on-line publications on Oral Site.

**Alondra Castellanos Arreola** was born in 1985 in Guadalajara, México. Before turning to dance and performance she earned a BA in Fashion Design in Mexico City. In 2010 she moved to Amsterdam study at 'The Mime School of Amsterdam' where she has developed her skills as a performer as well as her own work as a theatremaker. Her work lies in between the areas of performance and visual arts, often related to the use of space and questions regarding materiality and the placement/movement of bodies in the altered conditions of perceptibility. She has been working as a performer for the theatremaker Boukje Schweigman and artist David Weber-Krebs.

**Philipp Enders** born 1985 in Bremen, lives and works as a choreographer and performer in Berlin. He studied Jazzpiano at the Prins Claus Conservatory Groningen and *Comparative Literature* at the Free University (FU) Berlin, before he graduated from his study in *Dance, Context and Choreography* at the Inter-University Centre for Dance Berlin in 2014.

He presented own works e.g. in *Tanz im August 2012 (Everyday Dances*, as part of the group project *Constructing Resilience* by Ehud Darash) and at the Skohorod Theatre in St. Petersburg (with his solo *Balken* in March 2014).

Recently, he received the grant *Einstiegsförderung 2015* from the Berlin Senate for his upcoming research project “Mehrstimmigkeiten”. As a performer he was last seen in “Thingamajig“ by Martin Nachbar, which had its premiere at the sophiensaele Berlin in October 2014.

**Sid van Oerle** is a performer and studied at RITS in Brussels. He collaborated recently with Sanja Mitrovic *Do you still love me?* (2015) and with Thomas Ryckewaert in *Genesis*(2014). He creates his own work, among others *Into the Woods* (2014) and *A Horny Deer grunts through the Woods* (2013). Currently he is developing a short film.

**Noha Ramadan** Noha Ramadan is a dancer, choreographer and dramaturge living between Amsterdam and Berlin. Her recent piece *Deeply, Really, Truly* (Martini/Ramadan 2013) is a choreographic ‘speech act’ on the art of public apology. Her new solo *Los Angeles* premiered in January 2015 in Berlin. Noha performs regularly in the work of others such as David Weber-Krebs, Martin Nachbar, An Kaler, Diego Gil and Ivana Müller. She recently edited Issue 3 of *Critical Dialogues*, published by Critical Path, Sydney.

**Ebba Fransén Waldhör** is a textile, costume and set designer and currently a part of the e-Textile research group at the Design Research Lab at the Berlin University of the Arts. Ebba studied textile and surface design at Weißensee Academy of Art.

**Marie Urban** has a degree in theater studies from Paris and Montreal and a diploma in cultural studies from Marseille and Hildesheim. She works as a freelance assistant director among others with Philippe Quesne, and as a dramaturge, with the prison-theatre *Aufbruch* and *Chang Nai Wen*. From 2009 on, She works together with David Weber-Krebs and the visual artist Alexander Schellow, conducting artistic research for various projects since 2009.

# Publications

[Balthazar, ein Tier auf der Bühne in Scores, Tanzquartier, sept. 2014](#) (in german)

[Balthazar in Antennae, the journal for nature in visual culture n.31, spring 2015](#)

[J. PEETERS, Waarom kijken we naar dieren in Etcetera, sept 2013](#) (in dutch)