

Coup Fatal

KVS & les ballets C de la B

Genesis of the project

In July 2009 KVS organised a first arts festival in Kinshasa, centred around the final performances of *pitié!*, the show in which director Alain Platel and composer Fabrizio Cassol worked together with countertenor Serge Kakudji. After a long journey, the production at last came 'home' to Serge Kakudji's native country.

In 2010 followed the second edition of the festival (in the meantime baptised 'Connexion Kin') for which KVS wished to programme a recital of Serge Kakudji and therefore sought appropriate accompaniment. Paul Kerstens - coordinator of the Africa Project of KVS, who in 2009 had worked on the recording of Baloji's *Kinshasa Succursale* - knew many creative and inventive musicians in Kinshasa, some who focused on popular dance music and others who played jazz and traditional music. He brought ten of them together and invited them to listen to the arias chosen by Serge. They were then asked a simple question: "Does this music say something to you, and are you interested in working with it?" They all responded with an enthusiastic "yes!" Each musician received a discman with the arias, and they then began to rehearse amongst themselves, without any interference from outside. Guitarist Rodriguez Vangama quickly became the musical leader of the project. Serge Kakudji arrived two weeks later, and they all worked together for another week. The result, a presentation held on 18 July 2010, was an overwhelming success.

The group continued to work together in 2011 and 2012. The basis remained the same, but several changes were made to the line-up, likembes (thumb pianos) were added, and several times they worked with the slammer Alesh from Kisangani, who composed new recitatives. Fabrizio Cassol became involved as musical advisor. The group of *Coup Fatal* developed into a tight-knit orchestra.

The project evolved over these years, and the different performances received more and more of a scenic character. A new, important step imposed itself: the project had everything necessary to grow into a full-fledged show. Alain Platel became aware of the project through the involvement of Fabrizio Cassol and the enthusiastic stories he heard from dramaturge Hildegard De Vuyst, and he immediately agreed to get involved in it. KVS and les ballets C de la B assumed responsibility for the production, and the creation of *Coup Fatal* could begin.