

An expedition to a possible truth

Stanley

PETER DE GRAEF

For nearly three years, Henry Morton Stanley chopped a path through a hot and impenetrable African jungle in search of the mouth of the river Congo – without knowing where he was or how much longer it would take. In this play Peter De Graef takes this quest as his starting point, at the behest of Bo Spaenc, who composed the music for the performance.

‘Stanley’ confirms De Graef’s majestic talent for capturing the complexity of living and surviving, of forgetting and forgiving setbacks, of dealing with guilt and regret or love in a seemingly simple narrative performance

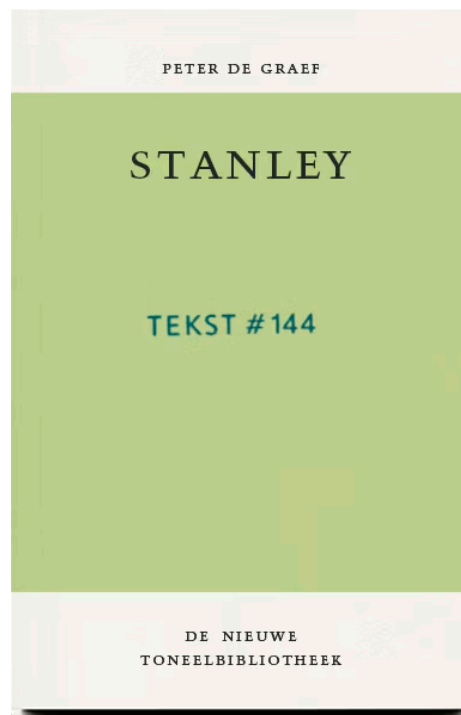
FOCUS KNACK

While letting go of the historical figure of Stanley, De Graef retains man’s journey of discovery through the history of our psychology and human-ness. Every day, man cuts a modest path through the chaos of existence, and tries to hold his own with the help of theories (religion, philosophy (of language), science, etc.). But meanwhile, he/she has no idea where he/she will end up and when.

In a tragicomic text full of surprising plot twists the main character keeps wondering which story best approaches the truth about himself. The powerful narrative blends with music and songs: at times quiet and intimate, at other times hilarious and exuberant.

What makes De Graef so compelling as an author is that he openly helps his audience deal with what is elusive about themselves and life

FLEMISCH CULTURE PRIZE FOR DRAMA



AUTHOR



Peter De Graef (b. 1958) is an actor, author and director. He studied speech and drama at the Royal Conservatoire in Antwerp under the direction of Dora van der Groen. De Graef has been an associate of various theatre companies, including T.I.L., Eva Bal-speeltheater, Theater Malpertuis, Huis aan de Amstel, De Werf, De Kolonie MT and Paardenkathedraal. He has also taught at the Herman Teirlinck Institute. His texts stand out for the humorous way they take viewers on a journey through a world marked by cruelty, insanity and fantasy, in which they are confronted with themselves and reality at every corner. His work has received multiple awards. Photo © Vinck & Partners

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