

Love, ambition, and vengeance during WWII, staged by a master-storyteller

The Turntable

TOM LANOYE

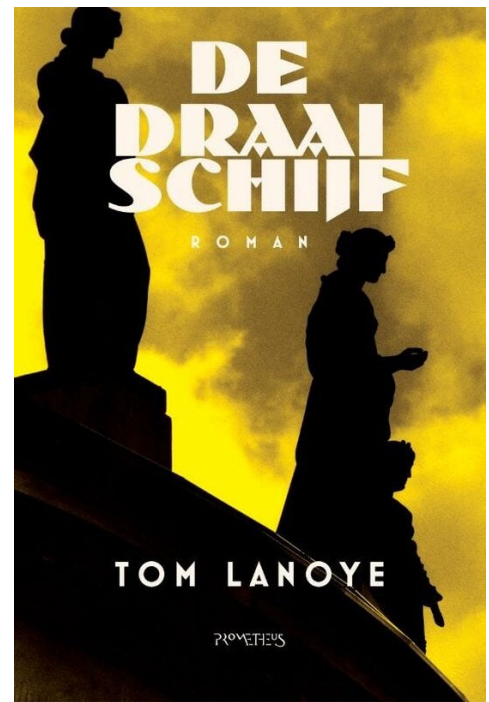
'The Turntable' brings together three closely connected lives in Flanders at the time of the Second World War. Alex, a gifted theatre director and actor, is appointed director-general of Antwerp's municipal theatres during the German occupation. His wife, Jewish star actress Lea Liebermann, with whom he has met with great success, languishes and roams about in a city where round-ups for deportation cost the lives of thousands. Rik Desmedt, also a director and brother to Alex, throws himself into collaboration and helps to set up the Flemish SS. 'The Turntable' is suffused with theatre. It is Alex Desmedt who speaks to the reader from beyond the grave and takes us with him through a dubious apology for what he did during the war.

'The new highlight of Dutch war literature.'

DE TIJD *****

Although the characters are inspired by the lives of real people and some important passages are drawn from Flemish history, 'The Turntable' is and remains above all a novel. In Alex Desmedt, Lanoye has created an unreliable narrator and master manipulator, continually in search of recognition from an audience. As a director he introduces to Antwerp the technology of the rotating stage. What goes on in the theatre is a reflection of the political mechanisms of the time.

With this magnum opus, Lanoye places question marks beside important issues concerning the collaborative past of Flanders. A narrative in which the Flemish collaborator is imagined as a victim rather than a perpetrator has been dominant in Flanders for decades. What appears in the foreground and in the background? Who plays the main and supporting roles? Can a person who claims to be stagnating be guilty of the position assigned to them by 'fate'? These are questions that make 'The Turntable' a timeless novel in which the author mercilessly exposes the inner workings of a European war.



AUTHOR



Tom Lanoye (b. 1958) is a literary one-man business, and one of the most popular authors in Flanders and the Netherlands. His theatre work, novels, short stories, novellas, columns, poetry and performances can only be described as exceptional. He established his reputation with the autobiographical coming of age novel Cardboard Boxes. His bestselling novel Speechless was shortlisted for the most important literary prizes and won the Gouden Uil Readers' Prize. In his magnum opus The Turntable, Lanoye places question marks beside important issues concerning the collaborative past of Flanders. *Photo © Arthur Los*

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