

A playful ode to the darkness of womanhood

# Mater

FEMKE VAN DER STEEN

In 'Mater' eight women manoeuvre through the present and the past. Accompanied by a narrator and a choir, they resist stereotypes and expectations, and play with the idea of an alternative future. They explore their own fears and society's reticence towards everything that is seen as 'feminine', 'natural' or 'chaotic'.

With astonishing linguistic virtuosity, in 'Mater' Femke Van der Steen has assembled a many-voiced entity that encompasses generations of women and poets. The script consists of five scenes in which themes such as archetypes, ecofeminism and myths from different cultures intelligently interlock. The play sounds like a mediaeval farce one moment, with women holding sway, and the next it's reminiscent of a rhythmical spoken-word text by Kae Tempest, or the mystical writing of Hadewych or Anna Bijns. Sharp social criticism and sparkling humour go hand in hand. In resounding language that balances between poetry, drama, myth and fairy tale, 'Mater' is above all an ode to darkness and to change.

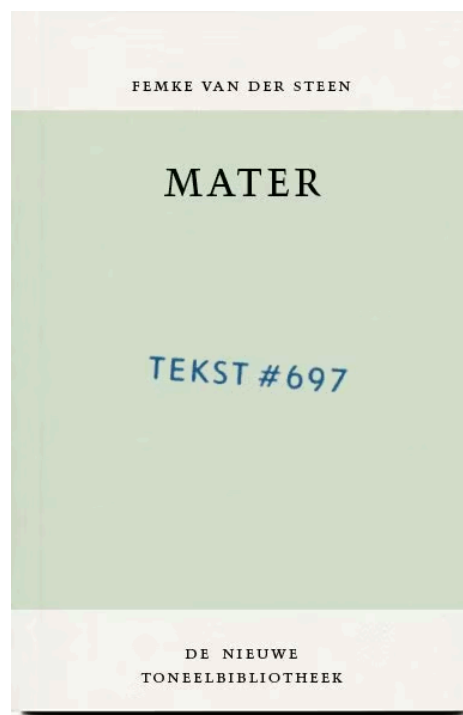
## A play that makes your brain sizzle

PZAZZ

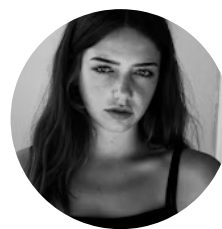
Femke Van der Steen wrote 'Mater' (2022) as a graduation script for her Master's in Drama at the LUCA School of Arts. It was then selected for the theatre festival Theater Aan Zee and nominated for the 2023 Toneelschrijfprijs for best script, winning the 2023 Translation Prize for which that nomination made it eligible.

## An adventurous author who makes the language 'act' and be transformed just like a character.

TONEELSCHRIJFPRIJS JURY



## AUTHOR



**Femke Van der Steen** (b. 1999) is an actress, dramatist and writer. In 2022 she gained her Master's in Drama at the LUCA School of Arts. She is active in television and film as well as the theatre, and has created performances both under her own name and as part of the OVERHERE collective.

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Mater (2022, De Nieuwe Toneelbibliotheek, 97 pp.)

**PRIZES** Nominated for the 2023 Toneelschrijfprijs, winner of the 2023 Translation Prize

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