



*I DON'T
WANNA
DANCE*

PRESSKIT

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Logline

Joey (15) needs to decide whether to pull out of the destructive dance with his mother, or stay with her at the cost of his own happiness. A true story, told and acted by the boy who lived it.



Synopsis

After having lived with their aunt for two years, fifteen-year-old Joey (Yfendo van Praag) and his younger brother move back in with their mother (Romana Vrede) to their great delight. At first everything goes well: the house is tidy, the fridge is filled, Daphne has a job and Joey finds his place in a dance group. It promises to be a beautiful summer. But the family joy soon comes under pressure when Daphne falls back into her old patterns. Joey does everything to keep child services out, but how long can he keep up this destructive dance with his mother, at the expense of his own happiness? *I Don't Wanna Dance* is a true story, told and acted by the boy who experienced it himself.



Project Details

Release **10TH OF JUNE 2021**

Length **89 MINUTES**

Genre **DRAMA**

Rated **12**  

Language **DUTCH**

Distributor **GUSTO ENTERTAINMENT**

Cast

JOEY **YFENDO VAN PRAAG**

DAPHNE **ROMANA VREDE**

ROY **DANIËL KOLF**

RICARDO **ELIYAH DE RANDAMIE**

ROXAN **CHARDONNAY VERMEER**

JULIAN **SEAN WILLIAM BOGAERS**

AUNT RITA **AISA WINTER**

UNCLE KENNETH **BENJAMIN VLIJT**

CARMEN **TRINITY JADE O'BRIEN**

FROUWKJE **LILITH VERMEULEN**

MICHAEL **MIKE REUS**

GENA **GENASARIO KOORNDIJK**



Crew

Director **FLYNN VON KLEIST**

Screenwriter **JEROEN SCHOLTEN VAN ASCHAT**

Producer **THE ROGUES (GUUSJE VAN DEUREN, RIANNE POODT, HARMEN KREULEN)**

Executive producers **YFENDO VAN PRAAG, ROMANA VREDE**

Director of photography **TIM KERBOSCH**

Production Design **TIM BALK**

Costume Design **JOSINE IMMOOS**

Editor **FATIH TURA**

Sound Design **REGARD IBRAHIM**

Componist **TERENCE DUNN**

With music by **NAO FT. GLACK** If You Ever **RINA MUSHONGA** NARCISCO **BOEF** MEMORIES **AFRO BROSS & KALIBWOY** BUN DEM

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*I DON'
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Biographies and Interviews
MAIN CAST AND CREW



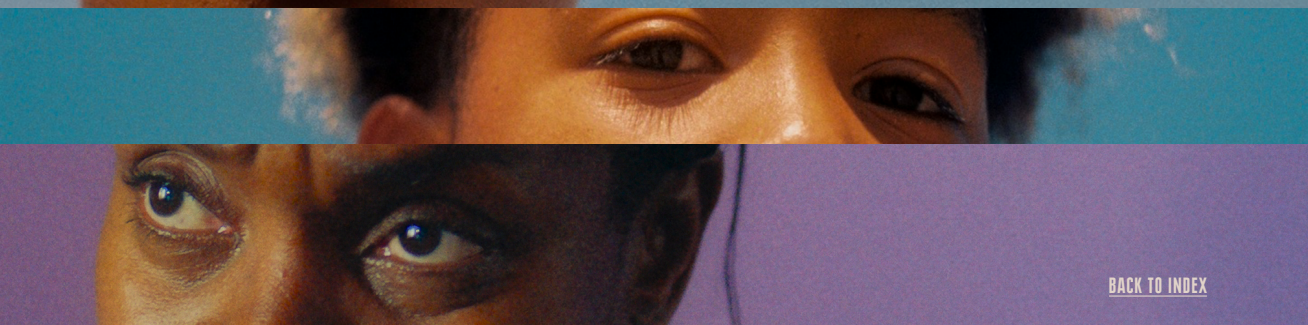
JOEY YFENDO VAN PRAAG

DAPHNE ROMANA VREDE

ROY DANIËL KOLF

DIRECTOR FLYNN VON KLEIST

PRODUCER THE ROGUES



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Joey & Executive Producer

YFENDO VAN PRAAG

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Biography **YFENDO VAN PRAAG**

Yfendo first started acting in 2018 when he starred in the short film 'Crow's Nest' under the director Flynn von Kleist. He had gotten to know Flynn in the years before when he was the subject of his documentary 'Because my name is Yfendo'.

'Crow's Nest' was followed by the feature film 'I Don't Wanna Dance' which will premiere at this year's Movies That Matter film festival. The film is about 15-year-old Joey but is inspired by Yfendo's own story. Therefore, in addition to being the lead actor, he is also involved as an executive producer. In both films, Yfendo plays alongside Romana Vrede, who plays the role of his mother.

In 2020 he played in a commercial for the donor registry and you saw him pass by in the web series 'Locked Out' alongside Bente Fokkens, directed by Ivo van Aart.

Acting is a new love that has grown on Yfendo, his first love has always been dance. He is a skilled freestyler and will start next year at a renowned dance education Urban at the Rijn IJssel in Arnhem. His plan is to then continue on to a HBO theater training.

Interview **YFENDO VAN PRAAG**

"What makes *I DON'T WANNA DANCE* so beautiful to me is that it paints a realistic picture but hasn't become a puffed-up tissue drama. After all, in real life, things don't always go only well, nor do they always go only badly. The story also contains beautiful and lighthearted moments. That doesn't detract from the hard truth. I don't mind people who don't know me forming an image of my personal history on the basis of the film. My own people know me, they were there at the defining moments and



they know what I've been through. And everyone has something in life that doesn't go well. The film has a positive message in that respect, that you don't have to be someone else because others want you to be. You have to have confidence. That's a good message for everyone. The big difference between Yfendo and Joey, the character I play, is that he is more insecure. Joey has to find his way more, he's constantly looking for confirmation and encouragement. Another difference is that my passion for dancing is greater than Joey's - in the story he is initially nonchalant about it and only does it because he has to. A bit lazy, in other words. "

"I saw the end result last week during a special screening at EYE. The whole room for my father and me alone! That was the first time I had seen the footage again, because Flynn deliberately didn't let me watch any of the footage back during the shoot. He also did that for self-protection. We were only able to make this film because we were friends, otherwise it would never have turned out so beautiful. I had to wait a long time for it, because we shot it some time ago and I am now 17. It was actually nice to look at a certain period in my life with some distance, when there was real pressure. In that respect, making the film itself was really a life changing process. Romana taught me to be professional. She could be strict and firm, but she was also right: making a film is not a hobby, it's work. I am super happy with how the film turned out. At the screening I was speechless, and that really doesn't happen to me very often. I realize that it's very special to get a leading role in your first film and I try to stay calm about that. I can't wait to hear what the world thinks of it. And my mother? I have since watched the movie with her in Lab111, along

with Flynn. It was pretty tough, but she understood me and that was very important to me. She said she is proud of me and I am very happy that we were able to watch it together. It has been a great experience to tell our story and it can help people who are in similar circumstances."

"You could say that I have fulfilled my dream. But I've only just started, it can still go in any direction. Rapping, dancing or acting - why should I choose? I want it all! But my first goal has already been achieved: to get a stage and a role that is motivational. And most of all I want to be able to be myself, no matter what happens next."





Daphne & Executive Producer

ROMAMA VREDE

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Biography **ROMAMA VREDE**

Romana Vrede moved with her family from Suriname to the Netherlands when she was four years old. After her childhood and an introduction to the arts, she went to the Arnhemse Toneelschool, where she graduated as an actress in 1999. She then played for years at the Onafhankelijk Toneel, Compagnie Dakar, Bogaerdt/VanderSchoot, Bonheur, Artemis and the Noord Nederlands Toneel. In 2016 she made the performance 'Who's Afraid of Charlie Stevens' about her mentally impaired and autistic son. Vrede played in several TV series such as 'Overspel', 'Nieuwe Buren', 'Moordvrouw' and 'Morten', but also in feature films such as 'TBS', 'De Eetclub' and 'Doom Henk'.

Since 2017 she has been part of Het Nationale Theater (HNT). With Eric de Vroedt she worked on 'The Nation', where she was nominated for a Colombina in 2018, and on Race for which she received the Theo d'Or for Best Female Supporting Role in 2017, among others.

In recent years, Romana could also be seen on television as a sidekick in 'De Wereld Draait Door', 'De Vloer Op' and episodes about her were made by 'Volle Zalen' and 'Zomergasten'. At the National Theater she could be seen in the HNT performances 'We zijn hier voor Robbie', 'Liefdesverklaring' and 'Onze Straat'. She can be seen this year in the film 'Chronos' and she plays a lead role in the feature film 'I Don't Wanna Dance'. She released her book 'De Nobele Autist' in 2020, which is about her relationship with her autistic and mentally challenged son Charlie. She is currently working on the multi-media narrative 'Tijd Zal Ons Leren' in TV, theater, podcast and talk show form, outlining the unknown, near-forgotten and hushed stories of resistance fighters during our colonial era.

Interview **ROMAMA VREDE**

"I DON'T WANNA DANCE tells a really personal story that flowed from a documentary and the connection between Yfendo and the director. In that respect, I am an outsider who was brought into the project from my profession as an actor. I'll be perfectly honest: normally I'm not so keen on 'based on a true story'; that kind of information can sometimes get in my way as a viewer. But in this case it has become a beautiful story. Fiction. When I watch a movie, I don't want to see real life, I want to see a work of art. I think that is what I DON'T WANNA DANCE has really become. Of course with direct roots in personal



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history. I draw from that in my own work as well. I wrote a book and made a play about my son with autism, now I'm working on a project about the history of slavery. But there is always a boundary between private life and art. It's not the intention to turn it into therapy. With I DON'T WANNA DANCE, the acting, the beautiful imagery, and that lovely light makes the story in all its fierceness not scare you off after all. I was also struck by how effective the camera direction is: the camera identifies with the character Yfendo is playing. The focus is on the child; that point of view draws you in as a viewer, but also creates a safe distance."

"I already played the mother role in KRAAIENEST, the short for I DON'T WANNA DANCE. When we shot the short, we already knew that the feature film was coming. Of course, it was also a great way for Yfendo and me to get a feel for each other as actors, to try things out. There is of course a difference in age and experience. Working with a counterpart who has no acting experience, requires a different approach. Sometimes you have to be more careful, while other times you have to give two hundred percent to get the other person to the same level. Yfendo is a natural when it comes to understanding texts, and as a dancer he can use his rhythm and musicality for the performance. Because it is his story, he is also closely involved with the scenario and the course of this production. That also applies to me, which is why we both appear in the credits as executive producers. Needless to say, I am very happy to have such a big role. Together with HET HIERNAMAALS by Willem Bosch, this is the second big role in a film in a

row. It's not as if opportunities like this are easy to come by in the film world. Anyway, not that many films are made in our area starring a black woman and black boy."

"What I learned from Yfendo? That, even though he didn't have any training for it, he can really switch gears and follow through when the moment demands it. I've been acting for twenty years, but he made me realize that acting is also - or maybe especially - a matter of having guts. Don't whine, but do it. Whether an acting career awaits him? I think dancing would make him happiest, but I don't think he necessarily has to choose between the two trades. He's only 17, of course, and that includes having grandiose self-confidence, ha ha. But important to know about him: you might expect a walking childhood trauma, but he is very cheerful and tries to make everyone happy. He's quite chatty, but he's really a very sweet guy."



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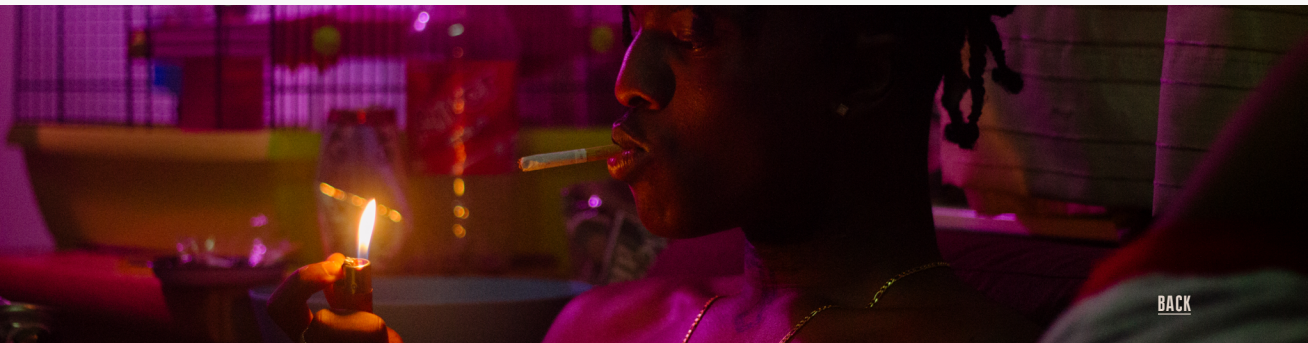


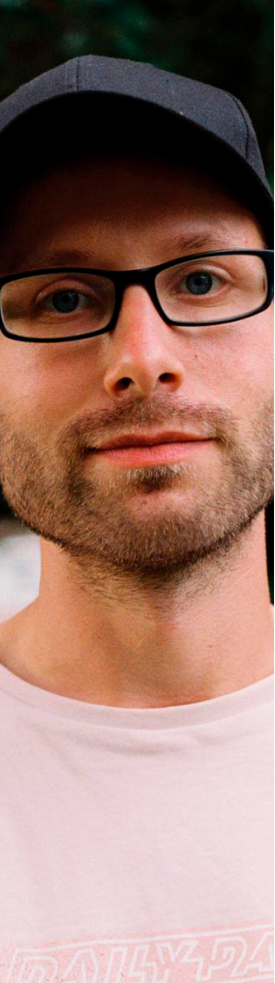
Roy
DANIËL KOLF

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Biography **DANIËL KOLF**

Daniël was born in Suriname where he started at an early age with the youth theater school. So both as an actor and spoken word artist he was on stage a lot in his younger years. In 2016 he emigrated to the Netherlands to study at the Artez Theater School in Arnhem and in 2018 he switched to Amsterdamse Toneel en Kleinkunst Academie. In recent years, Daniël could be seen in 'Mocro Maffia', 'De Slet van 6VWO' and in the films 'Hitte' and 'From Street With Love', among others. On stage he performed in the Bijlmer Theater, with Toneelgroep Orkater in 'Gliphoeve', Theater Utrecht in 'Quake' and at De Parade. He became known to the general public with his role in 'De Libi' and then played in series such as 'Nieuw Zeer', 'Lieve Mama' and 'Edelfigurant'. This year he can be seen in major roles in the series 'Follow the Soa' and the feature films 'Forever Rich' by Shady El Hamus and 'I Don't Wanna Dance'.





Biography Director **FLYNN VON KLEIST**

Flynn von Kleist was born in Amsterdam and grew up in West Cork, Ireland. In 2009 he graduated as a director from the National Film School of Ireland. That same year he moved back to Amsterdam, where he graduated from the Film Academy in 2013 in the field of Fiction Direction. His graduation film *Liquid Steel* was screened at many international festivals and won awards in Seoul, St. Petersburg and Oberhausen, among others.

Since graduating, Flynn has directed the short films *Empty (KORT! 10')*, *Patagonia (One Night Stand, 45')* and *Crow's Nest (12')*. Among other things, *Crow's Nest* won the award for Best Dutch Film at the Oscar Qualifying Go Short Festival in Nijmegen and cashed in on three of its six nominations at *Shortcutz 2020 (Best Director, Best Actor and Best Cinematography)*. In addition to fiction films, Flynn made a series of short documentaries called *Futurity*, about children with a special relationship with music. From the longest part, *Because my name is Yfendo (40')*, a film plan for Flynn's first feature film emerged, which he developed with screenwriter Jeroen Scholten van Aschat into the screenplay for his debut feature *I Don't Wanna Dance*.

Currently, Flynn is working with producer Topkapi on the production of documentary series *The Psychology of Con Artists* and *The Snowman*. He is also working with producer The Rogues and screenwriter Matthijs Bockting on the development of the feature film *Wood*.

Interview **FLYNN VON KLEIST**

"The story is set in Amsterdam-Noord, Yfendo's home base. It's not unfamiliar territory for me; my grandfather lived there so I always visited as a child and my father was born there. The special thing about I DONT WANNA DANCE is that it is a very personal film - for Yfendo, but also for me. Because I recognize myself in the painful emotions that can be caused by parents who are "broken" in some way. The most important film lesson for me is: write about what you know. I saw parallels in how Yfendo deals with that, and how I had to do that at the time. That makes the story, however specific to that one family, at the same time very universal: something that thousands, perhaps millions of people can identify with."

"Years ago, Yfendo crossed my path as research for a documentary that was supposed to be about power of music on children. Yfendo was twelve and played the clarinet. But when I started talking to him, the conversation quickly turned to his special home situation. He had just moved back into his mother's place after being placed out of home for a while. This shifted the subject of the documentary, and he became the focus of the film. The only thing I missed while shooting it was a reconciliation between mother and son. On the last remaining day of shooting, I decided to have that scene played as a test. And then when I saw that piece of film in the editing room, I knew: there's a feature film in here. The dream was born there and then."

For the feature film, I wanted a classic narrative. It's a fiction project, which is why Yfendo plays the character of Joey, but it is constructed from the building blocks real life provided us. For me, the difference between fiction and documentary is not that substantial. Many events really happened, or could have really happened. This is the only way to give the viewer the feeling of authenticity. For the design of the film, and the use of color, we were inspired by Precious and Moonlight, but also by the Bill Douglas trilogy about his childhood in poverty-stricken Scotland in the 1940s. What do those films have in common with ours? The beauty you can discover and show within the 'ugliness'."



Producer **THE ROGUES**

Since early 2015, GUUSJE VAN DEUREN and RIANNE POODT have been producing film and musical theater projects from THE ROGUES. The name The Rogues is inspired by the famous story of Robin Hood and refers to our mission: to realize, in ever-changing and close cooperation with independent makers, projects that focus the lamp differently on the world around us. The Rogues always want to operate as a group, make the makers visible and collectively bring important, hidden stories into the limelight. After numerous short films, two musical theater pieces, and their debut film De Libi (Shady El-Hamus), The Rogues will release a second feature film, I Don't Wanna Dance (Flynn von Kleist), in 2021.

"I Don't Wanna Dance is an important, quintessential The Rogues film for us, because a very relevant story is told from a special collaboration. We are drawn to stories that are largely born of reality, stories that are lived. Films that empower the creators, that create opportunity, ownership and agency. I Don't Wanna Dance carries these characteristics. Together with writer Jeroen van Aschat and director Flynn von Kleist, leading actor Yfendo van Praag has translated his impressive life story to film. By playing the lead role himself, supported by his strong co-star Romana Vrede, Yfendo allows his audience a direct look into the darkest, most vulnerable moments of his young life. Thanks in part to the work of cameraman Tim Kerbosch, production designer Tim Balk, editor Fatih Tura and sound designer/music supervisor Regard Ibrahim, this has led to an impressive, true look at what it means to grow up in an unstable family situation. What we are most proud of is that the film ends in hope. With I Don't Wanna Dance, Yfendo shows his enormous talent, from which emerges the power to shape his own life."

Main Stills
I DON'T WANNA DANCE

