



the big picture

DOPPELGÄNGER DANCE

Imagine how you'd feel meeting a version of yourself that never ages and will never die. That's what the female lead character in the new play *Robots must deal with*. The machine is one of three (including a butler and a dog) created by the male lead, who's on the brink of swearing off human contact in favor of his preprogrammed companions.

The play's robots are the result of a 10-year collaboration in Lausanne, Switzerland. BlueBotics, a firm specializing in autonomous robots, came up with a laser-based guidance system and a scheme that uses something like a Musical Instrument Digital Interface protocol for controlling the humanoid's every move. François Jodot, a renowned maker of lifelike mechanical moving figures, supplied the faux-female machine's fine motor coordination, allowing "her" to make subtle gestures. (*Robots* ran from 1 to 16 May at a theater in Servion, just outside of Lausanne.)

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