

Tagesspiegel, 8.08.93 - **Body and soul for dance**

Dance. What can it signify in an era of climatical catastrophe, progressing violence and the destruction of nature? It's the festival 'Dance in August' at the Hebbel-Theater in Berlin which has given us the answer with the newest creation from Wim Vandekeybus and his company 'Ultima Vez', "Her Body Doesn't Fit Her Soul", which had its première at the 'Theater der Welt' festival in Munich.

Their first appearance in Berlin since their sensational success in 1987 has long been waited for. Thirst for excitement of the senses as they are inflamed by the piece reflected itself by the crowd at the entrance, the silent attention of the spectators and their frenetic enthusiasm after the infernal piece, a little less than two hours of physical experiences at the limit of the possible.

It's the intensity of the moment that they stir-up here. The moment where man, confronted with danger and limitation, must use all his instincts of survival, like an animal. Thus the soul learns in an electric shiver to break the body. And not only dream and reality finish by uniting, but also the rich sensual potential of ten dancers, seeing and non-seeing, looking for interior and exterior resistance.

It is with much humour and an complete conclusion that Wim Vandekeybus draws from the visual, acoustic and tactile richness of the art. The poetic phrases mix with the piercing and discordant jazz of Peter Vermeersch, and with scenes of a film about an absurd relationship. He works days, she, nights. Their short-lived encounters and long separations form a world of imagination and aggression which the dance renders abstract.

The bodies, with a frantic passion, collide and push off, bounce and entwine. An infernal dance of combat contact which certainly captures us by its intensity; nevertheless the repetition of the movements produces an effect almost stereotyped. The sight of catastrophe makes one insensible, indifferent. The senses revolt against too many shocks.

The hemp ropes form the limits of the stage, resonant and tactile barriers for the blind dancers. The bodies of the seeing dancers are tied up with ropes and hung in abstruse positions. They are freed by the blind, who, by this act become sensory liberators for the visual. The fourth dimension of perception, or the seventh sense, saves this dance from the narcissism of an esthetic cajoler, which it so often inherits.