

EXCITING DANCE FROM VANDEKEYBUS ABOUT MEN AND NATURE

Marcel-Armand van Nieuwport
Het Financiële Dagblad, Amsterdam, July 1994

With the production **"Mountains Made of Barking"**, which premièred in May this year and played recently during the July Dance Festival in Amsterdam, the Belgian theater-maker Wim Vandekeybus has made his best show in years.

Vandekeybus made his debut in 1987 with "What the Body Does Not Remember" and since became one of the most important newcomers in contemporary movement theater. With striking performances such as "Les porteuses de mauvaises nouvelles" (1989) he became the Belgian representative of physical dance-theater, such as that performed by the English DV8 Physical Theater of Lloyd Newson and the Canadian Lalala Human Steps of Edouard Lock. His work is spectacular with many risky leaps and dynamic stampeding on stage, but there are also many theatrical elements in this performance. Moreover, Vandekeybus attaches much importance to the visual aspects of his performance. He designs the set and lighting himself. The reknown idiom of running, jumping, falling, flying and rolling of Jan Fabre's pupil comes into its right in this new production "Mountains Made of Barking" because it balances with the more theatrical elements. Contrary to his previous show "Her Body Doesn't Fit Her Soul", the choreography carries the production more than the text, film, decor or attributes do. The rediscovery of this balance is probably partly due to the fact that Vandekeybus is dancing again himself and thus becomes an inspiration for his dancers. Because he went through the physical experience he seems to have gotten back the right rhythm.

For the musical score of "Mountains Made of Barking" Vandekeybus worked once again with his usual collaborator. This time though, the music doesn't only come from Peter Vermeersch's hand, his usual partner and frontman of the band X-Legged Sally, but also from George Alexander Van Dam and Charo Calvo. The original and exciting jazz-rock compositions match perfectly the risky and exciting dance variations (...).

Vandekeybus himself points out that "this production is in first place a mystery. It is not about the conflicts between men and women, about this era, about this world... It goes beyond this. It's about the invisible. I am trying to catch a glimpse, get hold of just a small piece of the supernatural energy tht holds us all in its spell, and never tells us why. Nature is indifferent to human passion".

What really makes "Mountains Made of Barking" so exciting is the theatrical quality of the thrilling dance variations, full of unexpected turns and intruding images(...).