

Jean-Marie Wynants, **Le Soir**, March 2nd, 1996

"Diving to the Heart of Chaos"

From the start, Wim Vandekeybus has been more a formidable conceptualist of images than a simple choreographer. This is confirmed once again with "Bereft of a Blissful Union", his latest creation. Chaos is the theme at the center of this new piece which explores material united from the earlier years and shows. Opposites continually knock together, as well as parallels. One comes across a man with no head, a head with no body, a carnival parade, divers, a girl with fascinating facial expressions, a horse-woman, a fisherman, a multiple bearded man, pottery shards under which someone sings "Love Me Tender" for a few crumpled banknotes...

A succession of images, often strong and astounding. In this respect the beginning of the show is especially striking. Saïd, the bling dancer, is alone on stage, under a small lamp which he has just lit. One by one, the others come to him, slipping him a few bills for which he gives a loud yell, always different. Each departs, endowed with their newly bought cries, free to let them ring endlessly in what becomes, little by little, a howling and chaotic jungle. Then again silence. Five girls perch on high pots, baring their backs before the public. Five boys appear, caressing, kissing, almost sculpting the offered backs. Then, suddenly, a terrible explosion blows the pots to pieces. The boys are blown, caught up in a whirlwind of movement, flight. Impassive, the girls rest above the mêlée and the smoking debris, perched on their little pedestals...

The evoked themes are handled in multiple manners, on stage or by means of a film projected on a giant screen. Combat of the head and body, man and woman, material and spiritual, dark and light, order and chaos. Humor appears here and there, and emotion...

Participating fully in this creation, X-Legged Sally and the Smith Quartet sometimes steal the limelight from the dancers. Their strong, varied, explosive, joyful or melancholy music is much more than an accompaniment or an illustration. The twelve musicians sculpt compact, resonant material which sweeps everything in its passage...