

## Kamikaze

Tagesspiegel, Berlin / 8.08.93

Along a hemp rope strung across the stage, the dancers scratch their backs. With the sound of the scratching intensified by the use of microphones, one thinks that the women are skinning their own backs. With Wim Vandekeybus the sensory experiences are intensified to the utmost. The bodies seem to feel only in the moments of extreme tension, pain and danger.

For the occasion of the opening of the festival 'Dance in August' at the Hebbel Theater in Berlin, Wim Vandekeybus, who is one of the *kamekaze* coreographers that Belgium is so well known for, and his company 'UltimaVez', presented his new creation "Her Body Doesn't Fit Her Soul". The furious dynamism of his dance is without equal. Reckless actions play endlessly with danger. The dancers make an uproar like thunder on the stage. It's frantic movement, even a blind anger which rules here. The dance, like rushes of adrenaline, follows a rhythm of explosive eruptions and sudden collapse. Use all ones force up until physical exhaustion is the formula of this dance of brute strength.

The instinct of man is what fascinates Wim Vandekeybus. From a high-tech world he puts his actors in an imaginary state close to nature. Survival combat on stage. The movement of the couples give the effect of rude attacks: the same as lovers who are tangled in a perpetual body-to-body fight of the sexes. The women cling to their partners, throw their arms around the men, only to push them brusquely away after. A *double-bind* of dance in its highest degree of perfection.

Wim Vandekeybus' piece is not only an attack on ordinary esthetic forms of dance, but the Belgian prowler is at war with the conventions of the theater. At all moments the artistic character of the piece is questioned. This struture of phrases of movement, film sequences and simple theater action nevertheless lacks coherence. One doesn't notice right away that two of the dancers are blind, so well are they trained to move about on stage. The liberating actions of the blind dancers have a symbolic character that one cannot deny. With a pair of scissors a blond woman frees four men who are suspended in front of a rope curtain. A man speaking Arabic even uses a knife and a screwdriver to free a blond woman attached to the floor. In the disorder of recited textes resound, sometimes incidentally, the most important themes of Wim Vandekeybus' work: the rehabilitation of instincts; a defiance towards all forms of visual representation. All while concentrating on the physical presence of the dancers, a distrust expresses itself toward all things not immediately accessible as a visual experience, and to all that one cannot feel in ones own skin.

