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WIM'S FANTASTIC ENERGY

- The performance Spiegel retraces twenty years of history of Ultima Vez

- Wim Vandekeybus is a bomb in the world of dance

By Guy Duplat (translated by Heidi Ehrhart)

To celebrate the 20 year anniversary of his company, Wim Vandekeybus has taken the risk of assembling extracts from seven of his earlier performances. What will today's public think about work that was revolutionary at the time? Every year Pina Bausch revives several pieces from her repertory in order to teach the history of the company to her new dancers, and it's always a pleasure to sometimes see an older piece and sometimes a creation.

Wim Vandekeybus' two most recent performances, (*Sonic Boom* and *Puur*) were less convincing than the fantastic *Blush*. What would *Spiegel* be like? The answer is simple: it's fantastic. It's to be seen urgently by all those who have forgotten that Wim Vandekeybus is dance in its pure state, violent, athletic, exhausting, a sensual and warlike combat.

The nine dancers, all of whom are excellent, are exhausted after almost two hours of mad dance in a performance so well constructed that you hardly notice where the scenes join. Twenty years ago, Wim Vandekeybus dropped a bomb on the world of dance. It's still exploding today, to our great pleasure. *Spiegel* begins with a famous scene taken from *What the Body Does Not Remember*. While some of the dancers roll on the floor, others jump and stamp their feet, each time threatening to severely trample the dancers on the floor, who are only saved by slipping out from under the furious feet at the last minute. The stamping makes a music like primitive drums. This violent and obsessive scene sets the tone for the next. The two hours go by in this rhythm, without any idle time or talk. Of course we also rediscover the famous scene of the throwing of the stones which also comes from *What the Body Does Not Remember*. Each in turn, the dancers throw bricks in the air which risk falling on the head of another dancer, who is saved at the last second by the acrobatic jump of a third dancer. This one twirls, clutches, glides, always at the limit of an accident. The beauty can be wild and aggravated by the danger. But there are also more tender moments, such as when Wim Vandekeybus renders homage to Pina Bausch by dressing his dancers in formal wear in the way that the choreographer from Wuppertal has the habit to, and by a dance to find the ideal match, which will be made by joining the two halves of an orange. Later, pairs form, the dancers leaning on one another like wrestlers. They push, pant, perspire. Their hugs are a combat. A chair hung upside down from the grill of the KVS is occupied one by one by the dancers who pull themselves up on it and perch, head down. Later, the bodies will be deposited on huge hooks. The music by Arno, David Byrne, Thierry De Mey, Pierre Mertens, Marc Ribot and Peter Vermeersch follow each other seamlessly as if they always belonged to the same performance. The public goes out thrilled by all this generous energy, and with modesty, Wim Vandekeybus makes a little dance on the stage as he receives the public's much deserved homage.