

Mezi tvůrci současného tance, kteří sázejí na podívání a vizuální bohatství, lze rozlišit skupinu choreografů výjimečně zaměřených na nezvykle fyzický tanec, mnohdy plný rizika. Zaměřených na tělo maximálně plné napětí a první energie. V rámci této skupiny je jistě nejslavnějším tvůrcem Wim Vandekeybus, zakladatelem souboru Ultima Vez, který pracuje v Bruselu a jehož inscenace se staly symbolem fyzického přístupu k současnému tanci. Cesta Vandekeybusa k choreografii byla však velmi ne typická. Narodil se v roce 1963 v nevelkém městě Herenthout v Belgii. Jako syn veterináře strávil dětství sledováním zvířat, což mělo vliv na jeho představivost. Tanec objevil velmi pozdě, a to v momentě, kdy byl unaven studiem psychologie a zamířil se na divadlo. Prvním impulsem se stal workshop s režisérem Paulem Peyskensem patřícím společně s Janem Decorte, Josse de Pauwem či členy Maatschappij Discordia k vlně inovátorů vlámského divadla 80. let. Všichni titi tvůrci šli stopami brechtovského divadla tím, že odmítli divadelní iluzi, psychologii a realismus ve jménu hledání nových způsobů konstruování inscenací i herecké práce.

Vandekeybus se vydal po stejně cestě. Vyučoval se na studiu psychologie, aby se mohl věnovat divadelné-tanečním zájmům. Učil se různým technikám – od klasického tanče k tangu, dle se věnoval fotografií a filmu, což mělo značný vliv na jeho pozdější práci. Iž na samotném počátku své kariéry pochopil, že se chce vydat cestou nekompromisního tělesného jazyka, a v roce 1986 společně se skupinou nezkušených, ale nadšených tanečníků začal v Madridu pracovat na první inscenaci *What the Body Does Not Remember*, která měla premiéru o rok později.

Už toto první dílo ukázalo potenciál choreografa, který v něm odhalil fascinující styl stojící na třech podpěrách – sile, rychlosti a riziku. Desítka tanečníků (mezi nimi i sám Vandekeybus) tančila jako o život. Mnoho situací se vrylo do paměti, stačí si připomenout nad hlavami létající cípy vrhané a chytané tanečníky a nebo padající tělo chytané v rychlém běhu partnery. Když už celá inscenace vypovídala o momентах, kdy tělo nad sebou ztrácí kontrolu – jak vteřinu před havárií – muselo být riziko součástí choreografie, což samozřejmě vyžadovalo precizní kompozici a techniku. Vandekeybus přizval diváků k prohlidce extrémních stavů, ovšem za úžití již známých kompozičních postupů (jako například opakování) i tolik typických pro mistry vlámského tanče – Fabra a De Keersmaeker, ke kterým však přidal originální charakter díky neobvyklé rychlosti a tělesnosti provedení. Ze scény dýchala zvídavé energie, která strhávala publikum a byla právem oceňována.

Další inscenace *Les Porteuses de mauvaises nouvelles* a *The Wight of Hand* byly opět fyzicky namáhavými kusy, v nichž důležitou roli hrála provázanost tance s hudbou. Tělo zde stálo na prvním místě a všechna téma byla nahlžena z jeho perspektivy. Obě inscenace z konce 80. let měly zaslouženy úspěch a Vandekeybus, který má velký dar pro to, vycítit, co právě letí, se rozhodl využít své zkušenosti s choreografií ve filmu. Nejdalo se ale o jednoduchý zájem fragmentů inscenací, ale samostatnou produkci dokazující, že má talent k vytvoření filmového vyprávění. Film se jmenoval *Roseland* (1990) a na jeho vzniku spolupracoval s videoartistou Walterem Verdinem a fotografem Octaviem Itur-

Among creators of contemporary dance whose work is based in spectacle and visual richness, a group of choreographers can be distinguished who focus exclusively on unusual physical dance, often full of risk, where the body bursts with tension and primordial energy.

Among this group the most renowned creator is no doubt Wim Vandekeybus, founder of Ultima Vez, which is based in Brussels and whose productions have become a symbol of the physical approach to contemporary dance.

Vandekeybus' choreographic journey, however, was very atypical. He was born in 1963 in the small town of Herenthout in Belgium. As the son of a veterinarian he spent his childhood watching animals, which had an influence on his imagination. He discovered dance only late in life, at a time when he was getting fed up with the study of psychology and began focussing on theatre. The first impulse was a workshop with director Paul Peyskens, who together with Jan Decorte, Josse de Pauw and the members of Maatschappij Discordia belonged to a wave of Flemish theatre innovators in the 1980s. All of these artists followed in the footsteps of Brechtian theatre in the sense that they rejected theatrical illusion, psychology and realism in the name of searching for new ways of building a production and acting.

Vandekeybus embarked on the same journey. He quit the study of psychology in order to focus on his theatre and dance interests. He learned various techniques – from classical dance to tango – while also studying photography and film, which had a major influence on his later work. From the very start of his career he understood that he wanted to engage in uncompromising language of the body and in 1986 together with a group of inexperienced but enthusiastic dancers started in Madrid to work on his first production *What the Body Does Not Remember*, which premiered a year later.

This first work already revealed the choreographer's potential, uncovering a fascinating style based on three pillars:

strength, speed and risk. Ten dancers [including Vandekeybus himself] danced as though their lives depended on it. Many situations burned in one's memory, like the flying bricks which the dancers hurled and caught above their heads or their bodies falling through the air and caught at a run by their partners. The productions showed moments when the body loses control over itself – as in the moment before an accident – the dangerous choreography requiring precise composition and technique. Vandekeybus invited the audience to witness extreme states, of course with the use of well-known composition approaches [such as repetition], so typical for the masters of Flemish dance, Fabra and De Keersmaeker, to which he added his own original flavour thanks to the unusual speed and physicality of the performance. Animal energy breathed from the stage, which roused and captivated the audience.

Their next productions, *Les porteuses de mauvaises nouvelles* and *The Wight of Hand*, were again physically challenging pieces, in which an important role was played by the interconnection of dance and music. The body here took precedence and all of the themes were explored from its perspective. Both productions from the end of the 80s received deserved praise and Vandekeybus, who has a great gift for keeping abreast of trends, decided to use his experiences with choreography in film. This did not mean simply recording fragments of productions, however, but the creation of an independent production that demonstrated his ability to use the medium of film. The film was called *Roseland* (1990), which he created in collabora-

tion with video artist Walter Verdin and photographer Octavio Iturbe. Thanks to this combination of talent the film was a great success, because it demonstrated how suggestive dance could be in the film form. Vandekeybus' other films (*La Mentira, In Spite of Wishing and Wanting*) show how perfectly he knew how to use this potential. The love for film media led to *Her Body Doesn't Fit Her Soul*, where the film projections function as autonomous components of the performance, whose theme was perception of the senses. Here Vandekeybus surprised audiences with the high degree of tenderness, but also the pair of unseen actors. This work demonstrated how the director combines spectacular dance with acting passages, suggestive scenography, lighting effects and ferocious music.

Although Vandekeybus never abandoned his love for wildly dynamic movement and sequences full of risk, his later productions became increasingly complex, both dramaturgically and visually. The original rawness was transformed into precisely designed forms and Ultima Vez also underwent a similar transformation. At first this was also direct and flamboyant, but later became increasingly poetic and open (*In Spite of Wishing and Wanting, Scratching the Inner Fields, Blush, Spiegel*).

In several of Vandekeybus' latest works, which do not have much in common with the original physicality, existential gloom contrasts with dance pieces by young dancers, as in *nieuwZwart*. The energy and style of the performance has changed; the new generation of dancers no longer have to risk their lives on stage, because the choreographer's language has grown into other forms, which nevertheless sometimes lack the varied range of colours from the famous works of the 80s and 90s.

One thing is clear: Vandekeybus is at a turning point in his work. But as long as he continues to create movement and directorial qualities in the new productions, it will be possible without doubt to call him a genius.
(abridged)

