

The symphony of the jump

Dance ****

The dog days are over

Seen on April 3rd in Campo (Ghent).

Jumping seventy minutes as if your life depends upon it, would you dare to do it? Jan Martens left his team no choice. Whatever starts with eight dancers who put on their Nikes to stretch their legs for a short time, leads to an impressive 'symphony of jumps' that challenges their stamina and coordination. Sweat drips from their bodies, but they continue their mission as crazed robots, while the rhythms get more complex, the patterns more geometrical and the counts faster and faster. These are the resilient bodies on *techno speed*, drilled like an army of soldiers. Nevertheless for Martens it is not about abstract minimalism, but about the personalities that show up from beyond this uniform dance. Seldom you get to see a human being standing in front of you in as many different appearances in the theatre. But don't be mistaken, this is above all a show that questions its own value of entertainment.



Crazed robots. © rr

Like the dancers the audience is being mocked at, by not dimming the lights on the audience for the first half hour. 'In God's name, what do you want from us?', the performers seem to think when they are standing in front of us. It remains quiet. The final ten minutes create the biggest holes in your consciousness: after two jump battles, the dancers are past the boundary of exhaustion, we as an audience are done as well, but we're bound to build bridges across the emptiness before we get to the deserved applause. When there is nothing new left to consume your desire of voyeurism uncomfortably turns inside out. *Dog days* is the most critical performance by Martens up until today. It reveals the mechanism of looking in the theatre and our longing for entertainment, by demanding the stage to be a place for an encounter between one man and another.

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