

Reviewers have described "Pour la fin du temps" as follows:

"In an indefinable way dance is a seemingly direct consequence of emotions. Children are very good at this: with borrowed or improvised movements they make their own little ballet on music they love. Just for a short while they are wrapped up in a dreamworld of lightness, movement and sound. Such a formal naive little dance tells a miraculously complex story.

When I saw Ritsema making wild jumps or spinning round with his arms spread out wide suddenly this image of a passionate child appeared. His face did not seem to be from a 51-year-old man, but from a little boy who enjoys dancing and the attention he shares in the process."

Belgium, De Standaard, 18-5-1996

"Initially Jan Ritsema was to dance to the composition *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, which was written by Olivier Messiaen in 1940 when he was imprisoned in Silezia.

The source of inspiration for this quartet is a fragment from the *Apocalyps*, in which an angel proclaims that from then on time does no longer exit, only eternity. Because Messiaen's widow had indicated that the music could only be used for musical performances, Ritsema now makes do with short fragments of Alban Berg, J.S.Bach, Anton Webern, Gustav Mahler and Charles Ives. The puzzle of these gathered pieces resembles the structure of the *Quatuor*."

Belgium, De Morgen, 17-5-1996

"The Springdance Festival has produced an absolutely unique performance this year: Jan Ritsema's dance debut."

"What I want is what I do: that is his exquisite charisma. He deprives dance of its boundaries, maybe all art for that matter. He turns art into life and into its beautiful qualities: guts, belief, concentration, victory, joy, vanity."

The Netherlands, Algemeen Dagblad, 22-4-1996

"Starting point is often a semi squated position from which he lashes out at the world with an expression of amazement in his eyes. A nice variation is created when after a series of exuberant steps - with the force of overwhelming nature by movement - he suddenly slows down. The 'actor' Jan Ritsema then implies to see a beautiful panorama which evokes so many impulses that a few seconds of rest are necessary to consider all possibilities.

More often Jan Ritsema reminds us of a football player who does not enter the pitch to kick the ball but to evoke exciting vibrations. Vibrations are very strongly evoked in this dance-concert by the four musicians who play musical miniatures of Berg, Bach, Webern, Mahler and Ives. With their fine phrasing and subtle playing they evoke the real miracle of the performance."

The Netherlands, Haarlems Dagblad, 25-4-1996

"In the turning world, or the gray-white space with the soft daylight of a former church (now Ottone) this time playwright/actor/director Jan Ritsema, as an uninhibited mover was groping for the immovable point where time can only be defeated by time. Better now than never..... With a piercingly roguish look in his eyes - no glasses, wearing a tie and with a ring around his little finger - he faced his audience. Immune even before he started? Not with the falseness of words but with the honesty of his medically so sorely tried body he wanted to allow the unruliness in himself and in our world."

The Netherlands, Trouw, 23-4-1996

A serene and astonishing dance.

The man sits slightly withdrawn, beside the musicians under the big glass roof of the Bellone. As soon as the "Adagio aus dem Kammerkonzert" by Alban Berg starts he slowly rises, walks around his chair and places himself behind the musicians. In a sudden move he lifts himself up. His chest and arms reach for the sky. A slight but radiant smile has appeared on his face. He walks, squats down, almost lies down, slowly playing with his shadow. Horizontally he leans, unsteady, on two feet and one hand, he seems to look for a way out, a means to break away from himself, from his entangled body. Maybe he simply looks for a possibility to verify those balances. His free hand in turn rests on a knee, a thigh. Even in these unfamiliar positions he seems to contemplate his next move and how the music evokes his inner feelings.

He lifts himself up, launches himself without restraint while turning his hands, the palms wide open in an upward gesture. Everything seems to originate from these hands that welcome us, embrace us. Like a light and joyful Christ he moves to the side, surrounds the *quatuor* with his presence. The smile blooms. His expression bears the promise of intense concentration, overcome by an astonishing inner peace. One feels a deep sense of enjoyment in this man to simply be here, together with us.

Berg is followed by Bach, Webern, Mahler and Ives, played live by an ideal foursome Takashi Yamane (clarinet), George van Dam (violin), Geert De Bièvre (cello) and Yutaka Oya (piano).

The man now jumps up and down, gyrates. Then he lays himself to rest only to regain those long waving movements in which the hands seem to carry the body along in a twist. All his limbs seem to originate from one central point. The body jumps towards the sky as if to embrace the unreachable. A radiant smile. Not one of those practised smiles glued to the face to mask tension. This man does not mask anything, this smile comes from deep within, from the soul.

On the tones of the cello he throws himself into a little ballet resembling a court dance. Little jumps, a quick swerve followed by new twists. With lightness, grace and endless elegance he dances like a child, delighted to surprise us. One hand placed on his hip as if to say: *Did you see it !?* Without boasting. With the amazement and the amusing pride of a happy child that enjoys the fact that it has played a trick on its surroundings and is still surprised about it.

Periods of rest are followed by lively accelerations. His arms spread out he's spinning round. He now embraces the whole audience in a gesture of unconditional love, with incredible simplicity. The smile is there again, while the man is spinning round faster and faster in a dance with cheerful and nostalgic touches. A magic dance because it is so profound and deeply human. A liberated dance, serene, never artificial and perfectly mastered.

The man is lying on his side, his head rests on one arm. He lifts himself up again and starts to move again with little gnome-like jumps, lies down again and turns his back to the audience for the last time. The music fades away. The audience catches its breath, its senses. And suddenly comes to realise that this man, supported magnificently by Kitty Kortès Lynch in this solo performance, is Jan Ritsema. Who has never danced on a stage before in his life. Who is 51 years of age and who called his performance "Pour la fin du temps", "For the end of time".

Belgium, Le Soir, 18-5-1996.