

BARE FEET, HAIR DOWN

ENI In May last year, *Rain*, one of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's most memorable choreographies, was featured in the repertoire of the Ballet de l'Opéra national de Paris. How classically trained dancers learned the specific Rosas movements by trial and error can now be seen in a documentary by the young filmmakers Olivia Rochette and Gerard-Jan Claes. PATRICK JORDENS

Rain, the third dance production for which De Keersmaeker found inspiration in Steve Reich's wonderfully compelling, repetitive music, premièred here in 2001. It is a breath-taking, technically demanding creation for ten dancers, with a carefully considered mathematical structure. But as always in De Keersmaeker's work, beside the pattern there is a lot of room for the contributions and emotional tones of the dancers themselves. But that is where the ballet shoes started to rub, as Gerard Jan Claes says: "In opera-ballets like this, people generally think very

hierarchically: there are *étoiles*, *premiers danseurs*, the *corps de ballet*, etc. For each level, you have to pass exams to attain a so-called higher grade. But *Rain* is actually a production for ten soloists, and at the same time a pre-eminent group piece. The hierarchy is completely abolished, and that produces an interesting tension. Mutual communication - really dancing together - is at least as important as technical articulation. Moreover, purely physically, it was a major adjustment for the ballet dancers to perform in a contemporary dance production: a lot more ground-work, using different muscles, dancing barefoot, being onstage for a whole hour, etc. Some dancers even had difficulty dancing with their hair down and their bras off."

We do not discover very much about the sophisticated architecture of the choreography itself and its close connection to the music.

GERARD-JAN CLAES: We weren't aiming to make a kind of explicatory documentary, we wanted it to be a sensual and poetic experience. We were particularly

interested in the strange world of the opera house, which is almost like an isolated island, and what happens when you introduce a different conception of movement and dance. We were interested in that fascinating encounter between two worlds. Although we also show that it was no sinecure for the Rosas dancers to convey the complex vocabulary to the ballet company.

Apart from on Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker herself, there is an explicit emphasis on one of the youngest dancers in the company: a blond, angelic apparition, so to speak. Why her?

CLAES: Oh, that wasn't a strategic choice or anything. Olivia (Rochette) and I simply had an instant rapport with that character. She is one of the central figures throughout the whole piece, as are a number of other elements. Perhaps we focus more on her because she embodies that confrontation between those two worlds particularly well. She exudes a profound and searching fragility, while other dancers were quicker to assume a certain pose when there was a camera around. 



NLI Vorig jaar stond Anne Teresa De Keersmaekers choreografie *Rain* op het repertoire van het Ballet de l'Opéra national de Paris. De jonge cineasten Olivia Rochette en Gerard-Jan Claes legden de manier waarop de klassiek geschoolde dansers zich de specifieke Rosas-bewegingstaal eigen maken vast in een intimistische documentaire.

FRI L'année dernière, *Rain* d'Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker est entré dans le répertoire du Ballet de l'Opéra national de Paris. Dans un documentaire intimiste, Olivia Rochette et Gerard-Jan Claes immortalisent la manière dont les danseurs formés au classique se sont appropriés le langage chorégraphique spécifique de Rosas.

RAIN

BE, 2012, dir.: Gerard-Jan Claes, Olivia Rochette, act.: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, 80 min.

Kaaitheater (18/10, 20.30, avt-pr. + meet dir. Gerard-Jan Claes & AT De Keersmaeker), Flagey (24 > 31/10)

