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On the Dutch hothouse and the blossoming of dance, cont.

7/15

Play It Again

Each city of any size in the Netherlands has its own *Stadsschouwburg* (city theater). Jerry Remkes, van Dijk's manager, estimated their number at roughly 150, each subsidized by the government and hosting a full season's programming of all performing arts disciplines. Following a premiere it's not unusual for a dance piece to be presented within the Netherlands for a series of 28 or 35 performances. And this is happening in a country with the population the size of metropolitan New York City. Imagine the same situation in the US—playing a new work for over a month to sizeable audiences without even needing to tour.

This distinctly Dutch phenomenon means that there is an audience ready to see new work, a network to distribute it, and, artistically, an opportunity for choreographers to incrementally deepen and amend their productions. Performers are able to feel utterly "at home." I think it may be this developmental time that allows the work to ripen which, even more than providing funds for producing dance, distinguishes the Netherlands's ability to nurture the evolution and maturity of an artist's *oeuvre*.

One project that received numerous performances was *Kamerdans* (*Living Room Dance*). Created by Jérôme Meyer and Isabelle Chaffaud in The Hague in fall 2006, it is described this way: "Two Angels can be called to come to your home. They will perform a special dance for you only. This action will be gratis. These angels will bring a breath of peace in your home, genuinely with simplicity, and beauty. They will not speak, they will respect your home and they will go the way they arrived, by the door after 22 minutes."

Their intention recalls the quote from Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." Aware of war, they want to BE and to bring peace. Rather than charging money, they solicited contributions for *War Child*, an organization that provides humanitarian aid to children affected by war. Queen Beatrix herself opened her royal palace to this work. It's a pretty cool country where the Queen takes part in a *kamerdans*. I wonder what the flower arrangements looked like!

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