

# Dance Advance

Home | About Us | Program Guidelines | Archives | Calendar | Document(s)

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

8/15

Diary entry: July 2006

Meeting near the Philadelphia Art Museum, a civilized Sunday. Brunch place all brick and banquettes. I like them, Jérôme and Isabelle, their unvarnished openness and vitality. He's Swiss, she's French. Both have wavy long hair and inquiring, receptive faces, I think of the image of a hand squeezing itself in a fist, and the way that pumps blood. They feel active even in quietude.

The first word to describe the coming work is physicality, not concept or theme. Meyer and Chaffaud start with the body. They want to offer the dancers a physical way into their work, to pass on body knowledge without being academic. To push them but give them the time and clues it takes to embody the movement. A balance between what is achievable and how far they can stretch themselves as dance artists.

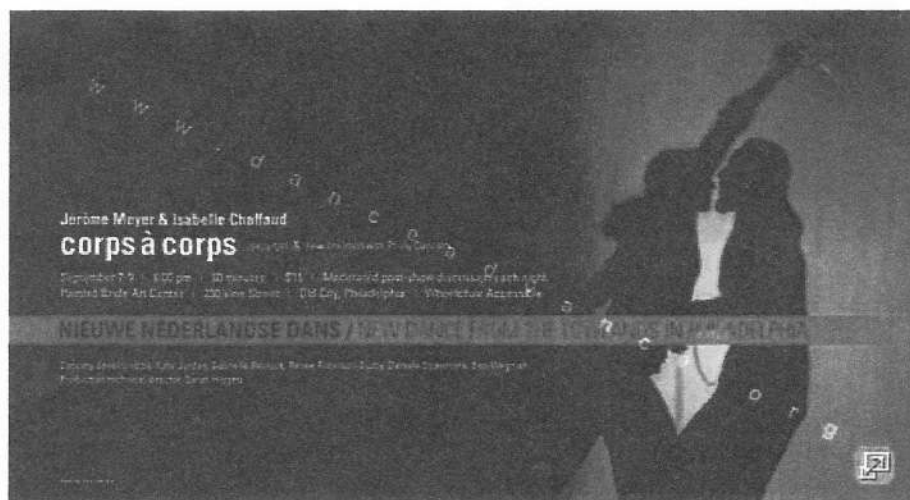


Photo by Joris-Jan Bos / Design by n/a designlab

Watching their workshop, the gap between Meyer and Chaffaud and the dancers is clear. Where Meyer demonstrates his squishy-footed hand twinings, curling fingers like a fast-growing plant, the dancers show more the outer form and less the inner experience.

As Chaffaud shows a phrase, the degree of information she transmits physically is exponentially greater than what the dancers display. Some of what she does is about changing actions without a transition. She goes in one direction and, without a visible in-between, heads in another, with a different energy. Her moving expresses an exhilarating wildness, like a horse tossing its mane, kicking its legs. Powerful. It also trusts that moving far beyond the center axis of movement, of pushing beyond the normal kinesphere, should not be feared: "you don't have to fall or damage yourself, stretch movement out to the max, like a superhero dancer."