

The Middle Ages - Andros Zins-Browne



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Andros Zins-Browne opened the (Im)Possible Futures festival with the premiere of *The Middle Ages*. His dance performance goes in search of time, our time, somewhere between a longing for the past and hope for a better future. He drew his inspiration for this show from all sorts of times and styles. A jumble of influences in a fragmented now.

The illusion that art can save the world is something we have now gotten over. But for **Vooruit** and **Campo**, an accumulation of economic and political crises and many doubts about a radiant future seemed to be a perfect starting point for this arts festival. **(Im)Possible Futures** aims to put our imagination to work using theatre and dance but also their own school full of discussions, walks and even a nightclub. Thinking about the (im)possibility of a future and above all about what role art can play in it. A broad starting point that takes shape in different forms.

Choice overload

Andros Zins-Browne sets the ball rolling. A perfectly chosen premiere for this Ghent-based festival. **With *The Middle Ages* this choreographer tries to grasp our time in his very own way.** This piece is not about the historical Middle Ages, but about **the moment between the future and the past**. Not just the now or the present, but the feeling of being stuck between a longing for the past and the feeling of being moving towards a new future. Waiting somewhere until a decision from outside or from above determines whether we are going along in the maelstrom of future optimism or trying to bring the good old times back to life.

Zins-Browne literally places his five dancers between two walls, two stands. They constantly move between the two. At times facing one part of the audience, and at times facing the other. Choosing a side seems difficult but becomes increasingly unnecessary. They gradually free themselves from one another and from the audience. The conventions with which it began in a Renaissance-inspired choreography seem to become increasingly vague. The diffident steps, affirming nods and the careful forming of pairs disappear.

The golden mean?

Zins-Browne sought his inspiration in different styles, starting with the Renaissance, visible in his choreography and costumes. Contemporary elements inevitably creep in, but the influence is still clear. However, the historical influences become less and less recognizable. The tight suits and movements of the second choreography bring to mind modern dance, but they also have a kitschy, futuristic side to them. The Neanderthals that succeed them are, to put it mildly, not quite historically accurate. History influences the present, but can never be grasped in its exactitude. And the future? We can just guess. The light glides from one side to the next. We are like large beacons of light between which the show takes place. We understand what Zins-Browne's show is about, but get a bit entangled in the concept. **The Middle Ages is a well thought-out play, which demands a lot of attention from the viewer and a willingness to go along with his thought exercise.** Not always equally accessible from a visual perspective, but conceptually very interesting and a perfect opening show for a festival full of questions about the future.

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