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## The herra skella patsu patsu's have landed: "dbddb" by Daniel Linehan/Hiatus



A [haka](#). But an updated contemporary version of that Maori war cry. That's what it made me think of. But [Daniel Linehan's](#) new piece [dbddb](#) was in fact inspired by dadaist [sound poems](#). It combines nonsensical words and sentences with marching rhythms. Sounds weird? Don't be afraid. The Belgium-based American choreographer ends up with a piece that is both experimental and enjoyable.

*Coro coro coro coro. Herra skella herra skella. Patsu patsu patsu patsu.* Don't even think of trying to understand what they're saying. It's all nonsensical. Throughout the whole piece. Five talking dancers marching to a pulse. The same, continuous pulse. Following one marching order: one step always leads to the next. All of them making the same gestures, or making different gestures. Under a great looking structure consisting of lots of fine, long tubes. Now and then one of the dancers makes a couple of them swing, lightly. It was [designed](#) by Belgian duo [88888](#), based on the idea of a multiplied pendulum. (They designed the set for [Bára Sigfúsdóttir's](#) wonderful piece *The Lover* as well.)



Costumes (by [Frédéric Denis](#)) and make-up (yes, make-up) reflect the idea of a group of people who've ended up here from the future. Hence their strange, futuristic language. Their dancing? Some sort of post-traumatic rituals they perform when the body is all they're left with. Moving at a digital speed. But that's just one way to "read" this piece, Linehan explained at a post performance talk at [Kaaitheater](#) (Brussels).



Shouting, puffing, hissing, reciting... Unrelenting the five dancers keep on going at it. Steadily. *dbddb* as a piece is made up of a series of short fragments. Sometimes you wish that a choreographic phrase would be repeated. But on the other hand: each time your mind starts drifting off, Linehan captures your attention with something new.



And that's what makes *dbddb* a step forward for this choreographer. In previous pieces his experimental mindset would sometimes get in the way. This time around he succeeds in integrating his slightly intellectual, formal approach in a playful piece. In *dbddb* he nicely fuses dance, costumes, set-design and lighting (warm pinkish purple tones). Funny how, in a way, it reminded me (the group dynamics; individual versus collective) of two other recent choreographies for a group by Belgian choreographers: Lisbeth Gruwez's *AH-HA* and Jan Martens' *The Dog Days Are Over*. But: great piece of work.

You'll find a short Vimeo-clip [here](#). More on the set design on *Urdesign* web mag, [here](#). And a recent interview with Linehan [here](#).

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