

BODIES IN MOTION

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The Invisible Someone, Somehow concept and choreography by **Krassen Krastev**, directed by **Guillaume Gex**, sound by **Frédéric Morier**, lighting design by **Laurent Junod**, photography by **Philippe Weissbrodt**, dancers **Emilie Camacho/Celina Chaulvin**, **Krassen Krastev**

Points of Support concept and choreography by **Krassen Krastev**, lighting design by **Laurent Junod**, metal structure by **Eric Emery**, sound by **Frédéric Morier**, video installation by **Edouard Laloy**, photography by **Philippe Weissbrodt**

Krassen Krastev's company from Lausanne (Switzerland) presented two dance performances as part of the Salon of Arts at the National Palace of Culture and Varna Summer International Theatre Festival 2004.

It seems to me that what is increasingly happening and being experienced in contemporary dance and in dance theatre, respectively, is a series of personal stories and our imagination integrates those stories and transforms them into ones of its own.

Hybrid images are created through dance and body, and various interdisciplinary forms of arts – visual, musical, literary – have started recently to exist next to each other and to communicate with each other on stage. The face of that new form of art is constant motion.

After many metamorphoses, today dance theatre has its own face made up of the multicultural mix of the 1990s and the rapid penetration of high technologies in the field of visual and stage arts. Since then Bulgarian choreographers have created

numerous successful performances in Bulgaria, working also in Europe and the USA. Rossen Mihailov, Galina Borissova, Boryana Sechanova, Tanya Sokolova are just some Bulgarian artists working internationally in the field of contemporary dance. One of them is Krassen Krastev, who presented this year in Bulgaria two projects realized in Lausanne. Choreographer Krassen Krastev graduated from the School of Choreography in Sofia, then he was part of Arabesque Ballet Company as a dancer until 1993. In 1992, he made it to the finals of the International Contemporary Dance Competition in Paris and then returned to Bulgaria and established Amarant Dance Studio together with four Arabesque dancers. In 1994, he was admitted to Maurice Béjart's school in Lausanne. Krastev works with the Linga contemporary dance com-

pany, and in 2002 he founded a company of his own: *Krassen Krastev Company*. His productions *The Invisible Someone*, *Somehow* and *Points of Support* premiered in Sofia and Varna. And although their authorship is the work of the same choreographer and performer in the person of Krassen Krastev, they belong to different semantic and stylistic concepts, which suggests that they should be examined separately.

The invisible someone, somehow

According to a theory, the tangible world has its own life and energy that continues to exist even after it vanishes as matter. Going back to experiences and people who remained in the past is usually accompanied by colours, music and spaces that restore the memories through our senses. Such motives set the meanings in *The Invisible Someone, Somehow*, which studies the state of the soul that feels the invisible energy next to it at a time when its physical body has disappeared. This is the personal story of its author: someone he has lost who continues to exist. In order to resurrect those intimate and apparently painful moments, Krassen Krastev, with his partner Celina Chaulvin, uses simple but powerful and effective movements. Stage space is surrounded with fragments of music and voices that open up the intuitions of both the participants and the spectators. The lighting colours are warm yet muted rather than vivid. They resemble the evening lamp, usually lit in yellow, which we turn on in the evening before going to bed. The visuality originates in combining white polyethylene bands that we can associate with our white bed or with a road we are taking to the other per-

son. The invisible someone is always that fantastic figure which we see in our dreams, which we aspire after and which we are afraid of in the dark, which we have always known. The performance presents to us the dialogue with the figure of our nearest person, as if we are not conducting it with that person but with ourselves and the odd states of mind we are passing through to find it. Krassen's and Celina's bodies can be deciphered in this semantic combination with their constant quest, intertwist and repulsion. The spectator's expectations fit the general digging into the personal emotional memory rather than the feel of the overall rhythm. The dance performance thus assumes the face of sharing memories and notions of the



Photo Cie Krassen Krastev

The Invisible Someone, Somehow

person we love and whom we want to recover for ourselves. The question of how this quest ends is open, and the audience is left to build up that story and freely interpret what is happening. The bodies' movements along the black-and-white floorings, under the yellow chamber lights and the sounds of music, set the atmosphere of a shared experience. The joint work of the entire team – choreographer, director, light and sound designer, photographer, and dancers – proves the assertion that a prime quality theatre product is the product of many people's efforts. The valuable contemporary artistic works are found on the borderline of the individual arts and they are created on the basis of using various materials and sign systems. Such type of theatre events carries the European theatre's topicality. They transform our stages into an adequate recipient of new ideas that provoke our artists and provide them with a free impetus for creative work.

Points of support

If monodrama as a genre generally presents the condition of the "modern soul" as a self-sufficient life in loneliness, then the one-man dance show can hardly be reduced only to the lonely life of the body thrown into the post-modern world of "words and things." It could be seen as a genre where the text is the body itself, and the performers are music, sound, rhythm, lights and space.

Points of Support provides us with an opportunity for such thoughts because this performance is organized around the experiences of the body moving into several parallel spaces. Krassen Krastev is a performer and author of the concept for

this labyrinth of vision and meanings. The filmed installation is presented on a large screen: a metal structure and a body as the emphasis is on the hands and feet combined with the uniform, perfectly straight metal tubes. The part of the multimedia image is twofold. At times it is the main character on stage onto which Krassen Krastev's body is projected, at others it is a background that gives context to the dance. The human, his/her body, his/her life is studied as part of a substituted reality through what is happening on stage. The effects produced by the medium and the equipment are essential components of the performance. Everything can assume a new face of its own on the screen, be it exaggerated or distorted. At the same time the dancing man is a common one, his dimensions and possibilities limited. Thus an opposition between the performer playing here and now and the digital image is formed. The question is whether it is possible to have points of support in the dialogue between these two heterogeneous materials as far as the author's idea is to make use of the multimedia technique and his own body in the same manner.

As my personal experience, *Points of Support* is a present-day remark to *Las Meninas*, my favourite Velázquez painting. It presents several observation points in a two-dimensional space, it emanating a unique movement, the one we can see today in cinema. Such an interpretation can be legitimised by taking into the fore the numerous reincarnations of Krassen Krastev's body as a multimedia image projected in the moment of the performance, as part of a pre-made and shot installation of metal and body, and as a body moving here and now.

For the creators of the performance apparently there is no hierarchy of what is the most essential element of the whole. It is left to the spectators to choose or merely trace out what is happening and feel that time and space lose their outlines and merge into a visual mix.

In this sense dance theatre is to a great extent a compilatory form, and its heterogeneity is really appealing. In the times of Modernism such type of aesthetic programmes has mainly remained in the written manifestoes. Today, dance theatre responds to post-modernism mostly in terms of practice. The initiative for creating such a performance usually comes from the director-choreographer. This position, also twofold, makes an exceptional contribution to the compilatory nature of the dance performance and it is based not only on

the movement score and on the moments fixed in the course of the rehearsal process but also on inventiveness and improvisation. It is also characteristic that in this case there are almost no mandatory forms for the author. What is mandatory is the provocation of imagination and genuineness. The sources of that genuineness might be various and freely electable as a whole, and certainly this is the reason why we prefer dance theatre as a new provocation to our senses.

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