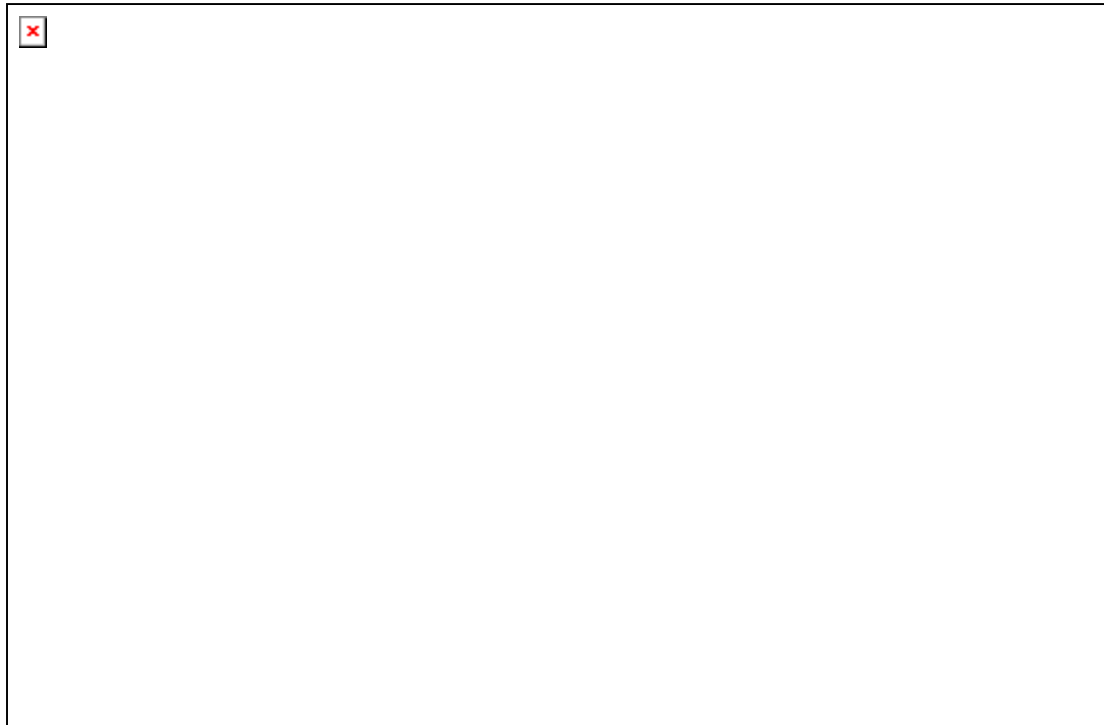


DANCE: INTERVIEW: Marija Šćekić, dancer and choreographer

IN SEARCH OF THE SOUND OF DANCE

Interviewed by Maja Đurinović



“The dance is a visual art but I think that the impression of dance is not so strongly achieved through body movements but more through body-mind energy balance of dancers together with all other stage elements which interconnect in order to create a mutual experience of one entity or, a stage harmony.” (Marija Šćekić)

On Monday, 24th January 2005. At Theatre ITD, the premiere of *Sjena*, is being presented. The author, Marija Šćekić graduated contemporary dance and choreography from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Her *second name* is *Histeria Nova*, a word that represents her existence as independent artists, author and producer in Croatia. Her dance-theatre productions symbolize a rare consistence, where she is not interested in communication in terms of sending a *message* by transforming an idea into movement, but rather detailed analyses and exploration of movements' natural logic, which can seem hermetical. She points that her work is the synthesis of her 15years of classical ballet training, the *Open Form* choreography and application of laws of the sound wave transformation to human bodies. The last sounds like scientific approach?

M.Š. Yes... *The dance is primarily a visual art but I think that the impression of dance is not so strongly achieved through body movements but more through body-mind*

energy balance of dancers together with all other stage elements which interconnect in order to create a mutual experience of one entity or stage harmony. For this reason, I rarely feel any need to watch, but rather to listen the way my dancers move. I am in search of their "dance sound", which I detect, write and further combine in a way that fits the best to predetermined form of my choreographies. In effort to learn how to compose these dance sounds, I study laws of sound wave manipulations (frequency, timbre, envelope, Fourier theory...) and further apply these laws to human bodies in space.

Your brother, Zoran Šćekić, composed the music. This is not your first collaboration and it must be quite advantage to have your own composer?

M.Š.: Well... Zoran is not really my composer but he is definitely my brother, a great musician and artist who continuously showed his interest for my projects. Being my brother means that our collaborations can sometimes equally be hard and difficult as they can be successful because we are both perfectionists and we do our job consistently, without much compromise to what we believe is right or wrong. This can sometimes leave us in non-verbal communication and literary, "sound of silence", which is, I believe, the point of our so far, successful collaboration.

In "Sjena", you are accompanied by Japanese artist Tadashi Endo (founder of MAMU School and Butoh&Jazz Festivals in Gottingen and Tokyo) who comes from eastern tradition and butoh. This intensifies the visible contrast (of different worlds) that is obvious in bodies: woman-man, east-west, young-old.....?

M.Š.: In his solo dances, Tadashi tries to present tension between things.... and since psychophysical tension inside the body of human being is also main theme in almost all of my previous works (Modulations, Ludilo, Time..Sindrom 4A, Me-Myself-She) it seemed interesting to me to invite Tadashi to participate in this project, in which we wouldn't need to create our obvious differences but to use our own separate lives, experiences, knowledge and dance styles to reveal our common beliefs, through movements, of course. That way, those hidden movements in between our separate existence on stage would become clearer. It is that specific space, the movement in shadow, which connects our bodies and our thoughts while making us equivalent human beings.

You created very specific choreographic net, which follows the energy flow of the entire performance, used the model of Wu Xing's cycle of dynamic exchange of five natural elements and applied that model to space? Endo arrived to predetermined parameters of space-time-movement?

M.Š.: Yes. That was a big pleasure for me to realize that our freedom to improvise and interpret this piece was possible, among other things, due to very precise structure, which I was writing and working on for over two years. Then, when I met Tadashi I believed that more clearer my structure becomes, more chances I have to gain his professional trust and what is even more important to me, his friendship. The

choreography is written in such way that our interpretation, no matter how free it becomes, cannot destroy the dance. Through "choreography net" I captured certain musical and dance parameters (dynamics, chronological time, shape of movement...) which later helped composer and light designer to have a clear picture of what and how the energy transforms during performance, and this enabled them to create dramaturgy of music and lights without even needing to come and watch the rehearsal. The light (Branko Cvjetičanin) followed our movements in a free, hand-manipulated way and succeeded to carry out even most subtle, delicate movement details without destructing a predefined space design. In such way, all performers (including musicians if music was played live) are enabled to enter their own fantasies, imaginations and memories through "free improvisation" without destructing, but complementing each other.

Question for Tadashi Endo: What made you accept Marija's invitation to this project?

T.E. Great meeting in life. At first, I wasn't sure about this collaboration because I thought Marija wanted to use butoh to create her piece, but later I realized how honestly she understands my own style, Butoh-MA, and then I decided to join this project, and now I am glad. She never tried to dance butoh but I believe that what she dance is very similar to butoh, but in her own dance style, of course.

The premiere of Sjena was broadcasted through live streaming. Can a camera and computer transfer energy, muscle tension, bodily shades and interrelations in space?
From my friends' in Montreal and Berlin, I heard that picture was a fragmented, and that it was arriving with slight delay, which, of course, means that it, was not possible to follow performance energy. However, this generous effort by "Vodatel" and UKUS to promote Sjena earns big respect from anyone in this country who works towards development of non-commercial dance and modern technology.