

Rare-UK

Rare

INTERVIEW for the « KUNSTEN FESTIVAL DES ARTS » may 2003

For me, Rare is about moving through different artistic languages: poetry, music, video, dance.

They all devote themselves to taking the participants through an experience removed from time.

I think that as soon as someone penetrates Rare's space, that person becomes an integral part of the performance.

It makes no difference whether this person is a performer or a member of the audience.

Myriam Gourfink

What was it exactly that you experienced, read or saw that triggered off the idea behind your creation?

As the choreographic score for *Rare* was being written – done sitting at a table, prior to rehearsals with the dancers – I read Danielle Collobert's *Dire 1 et 2*. It's a book that was given to me by François Bon. When I'm working on a creation I like to be infused by a book. But there's no direct connection between what I read and my choreography, just a palpable infusion.

Is the project positioned literally or metaphorically in the context of the society in which you live?

I hope all my projects express the present, the here and now, and speak of cities, roads and what's around me.

How do they achieve this?

What I'm concerned by in an urban environment is the order of the perceptible, like spaces between two lines, 'It' penetrates the air, 'it' is in the metro, at shop counters, in papers, in the speed of the city when we take time to look. 'It' is a relationship, a link between my environment and an attitude, making a token appearance. One can't exist without the other.

Your project integrates a text. How did you choose the author?

We share the same aims, and there's been a long-standing collaboration between François Bon and Kasper T. Toeplitz, the composer of *Rare*'s music. François talks of cities, of nothingness, of emptiness. His writing is physical and carnal, it passes through bodies. Also François Bon is a living writer (which I find essential) and the texts are original, tailor-made for *Rare*.

How are you dealing with his texts to turn them into language for theatre?

François Bon's sentences move along video screens arranged more or less all over the performance space. They flow by and occasionally a word will catch your eye and perhaps make itself heard, resounding inside a 'body' space – the spectator's, the dancer's, the musician's. François's text remains a poetic text and is fully integrated into the installation.

Do you feel that you're involved in a process of 'choreographic' writing? If you do, how do you define your language?

I think about choreographic language, its writing, its modalities of creation and invention. I resort to abstraction and new technologies in order to create.

With *Rare*, I wanted to write an 'open' choreographic score, a score where nothing is fixed and where the writing isn't connected with the functional analysis of movement or a dramaturgy about bodies.

The body and the space are considered more as volumes with strange contours or abstract surfaces. With this piece I'm hoping to continue work I've already tackled in other projects where I use elements like breathing, focus points of thought, concentration moving from one volume to another etc. In using parameters that are more subtle and more abstract (breathing, thoughts) and by imagining another cut-out of the body, I've actually been able to verify that we're working physically with the notions of flux and energy. The resultant locomotion is slow and evades all notion of a "bodily technique". Writing these currents passing through the body is therefore the driving force behind the dancer's desire to move. It is elasticity, possibilities of interpretation, and all this whilst moving radically away from a form of improvised dance. The score lasting a total of 6 hours will be offered to three dancers. One or more dancers will appear, one will disappear, it will be performed in shifts, occasionally overlapping, sometimes just emptiness.

What is the common theme running through your approach for the stage?

I try to avoid the spectacular and remain in an abstraction, allowing an orchestration of the sensory. As if every piece were an opportunity for exploring a new spectrum of perceptions. I like inventing devices and situations where the performer is obliged to give what is most 'rare' in him.

What situation have you devised for *Rare*?

There is no head-on relationship with *Rare*. The centre of the space is empty and there's very little light. So it's not about having a view of all of it. This device contributes to bringing the audience and performance closer together, creating an intimacy. Not everything in *Rare* will be seen (even if you were to stay for six hours in the performance space). Each person passing through the device has a unique view of it.

What new techniques have you turned to for this creation?

To create the score for *Rare*, I used LOL environment software for choreographic composition.

Unlike a choreographic journey, this device tends to surprise spectators and lose them. Screens will serve as sources of light and will give dancers information in real time. The information they're given will complete the score by deflecting it from its foreseeable course. As well as this, I'd like the image not to appear clearly on the screens but to take some time before becoming legible, lending a fuzziness to the information and stimulating the imagination, the performer's creativity. The treatment of the image will be musical and abstract.

The music will be composed by Kasper T. Toeplitz and performed by three musicians. Here too, music will perhaps come suddenly where you don't expect it, without having any idea where the sound is coming from.

What is the music like?

The three musicians are going to play 'traditional' instruments (percussion and brass instruments) hybridised by computers (one per musician, as an integral part of the instrument being played) all connected by a network (audio and commands) managed by a network of neurons – artificial intelligence. The idea here is make ONE instrument – played by three musicians spread out in the space and only communicating via the network.

In the way it's written, the music is going to rely on time –of extended duration here – to construct a long sound mutation. Much more than a development, it is in part a written mutation (in scores and computer programs) but also in part influenced by the management of time as shaped by the dance.

What baggage have you acquired and which one seems the most precious in your work today?

Never having studied, I've acquired nothing. I have no baggage and I feel I never have anything to lose.

What role should the performing arts ideally play in contemporary society for you?

I can talk about what I offer: somewhere else, an escape. In other words, I'm trying to invent performances that create an inner disturbance, producing it and allowing it to happen.

Why have you specifically chosen choreographic language as a means of expression?

For *Rare* (and all the other pieces) I've chosen several artistic languages because bringing them together leads to rethinking the modes of performance. I'm definitely not looking to express myself. I'm trying to upset habits (above all my own) and question proprieties.

What do you consider to be the lowest level of misery?

Living. But there's a dish in Poland with cucumbers in it called 'mizeria' which is very good.

What do like doing most?

Dancing.