

ARTSTALK

Colour Supplement

Number 19

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Not much space for blurb this month as there is a very long list of contributors. Some really excellent events to report. Our main articles are on the history of NDT, the major retrospective of Michael Raedecker at Kunstmuseum in The Hague and the amazing Circusstad in Rotterdam. Plus the return of Holland of Laurien Schreuder's *Snowapple* and singer Robbie Williams making his debut as a painter at the Moco Museum in Amsterdam. All this and much more in the May *Colour Supplement*.

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Camilla Pessi and Simone Fassari of Compagnia Baccalà who appear in this year's Cicusstad Festival in Rotterdam.
Photo by Geri BORN



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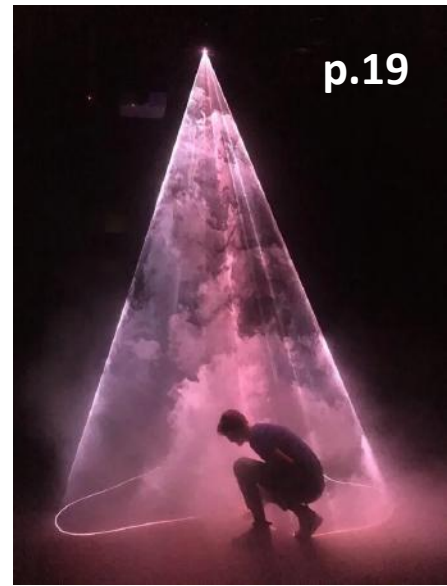
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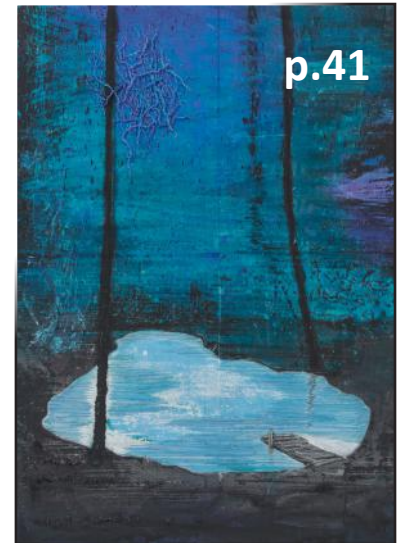
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Compagnie Modo Grosso *Entre Cordes*
Photo by and © Denis Rouvre



CIRCUSSTAD

Festival

Amazing acts from around the world converge on Rotterdam for the tenth international circus festival, the highspot of which is the spectacular Gala at the Nieuwe Luxor Theater

Circusstad Gala is back! Circusstad Festival proudly presents the second edition of this unique circus evening on Friday, 3rd May at the Nieuwe Luxor Theater in Rotterdam. With artists of the highest international level including a top act selected for Monte Carlo, a world champion, medal winners of the prestigious *Cirque de Demain* in Paris plus acts that have attracted an audience of millions in dozens of countries.

The public and press responded enthusiastically after the first edition in 2022. Such an event had not yet existed and the level was breathtakingly high. For example, after the first Circus City Gala, Theaterkrant Rotterdam proclaimed 'Circus City of the Netherlands' and trade magazine *De Piste* called the Gala 'the climax of recent Dutch circus history'.



Raven by Still Hungry. Photo by Andy Phillipson

Expect another thrilling evening full of surprises, spectacle, humour and emotion in short performances that bring current circus art to the stage in all its diversity.

Artistic director of Circusstad Festival, Menno van Dyke, puts it this way: 'With festival artists and 'special guests' we show the innovative power of contemporary circus, with respect for tradition.' Before the start and afterwards, the atmosphere of a grand circus ball fills the foyers with surprising acts and festive music. A unique and unmissable circus party!

The acrobatics of the Australian Circa Contemporary Circus are world-leaders. As the absolute vanguard of contemporary Australian circus, the company has captivated one and a half million people in more than forty countries with standing ovations, enthusiastic reviews and sold-out halls. Especially for the Circusstad Gala, the ten acrobats raise the bar even further in an impressive scene from the performance *Humans 2.0*.

Humour also plays an important role this time. The contemporary clowns Camilla Pessi and Simone Fassari from Compagnia Bacçalà have been acclaimed in more than fifty countries but never performed in a theatre in the Netherlands. The refined humour of this duo from Switzerland is inspired by the silent film era.

The humour of the crazy guitarists of Trio Olé is of a completely different nature, but just as hilarious. In these 'Gypsy Kings of comedy' the guitars even fly through the air.

The trapeze act of Lisa Rinne, who graduated from Fontys Circus in Tilburg, is of an unprecedented high level. She is the first Dutch alumna ever to be invited to the famous circus festival in Monte Carlo. Her use of the rope ladder as a prop is innovative, and her somersaults and pirouettes in full flight are breath-taking.

Winning the prestigious Paris Circus Festival ensures success for any up-and-coming circus artist. After winning Gold in 2018 Spaniard Jimmy Gonzalez is in demand all over the world. He appears for the first time in the Netherlands, and exclusively at the Circusstad Gala, with his beautiful act *d'Argile* in which he miraculously juggles with clay.

Other special winners of Cirque de Demain will also perform, such as Tay Lane & Laura Stokes who gracefully and gracefully experience the ultimate freedom of movement with the art of hair hanging for which they won Silver in 2020. Or take the stunning act of Diana Salles (Bronze 2019), who confronts gender identity with her 'aerial silk act' *Genesis*.

In 2022 Shu Takada from Japan amazed the jury of TV show *America's Got Talent* with his yo-yo act, a new discipline for the circus in which he has been world champion for five years.



Les Colporteurs *Meanders*.
Photo by Christophe Raynaud de Lage

“With festival artists and 'special guests' we show the innovative power of contemporary circus, with respect for tradition.” Menno van Dyke, Artistic director of Circusstad Festival



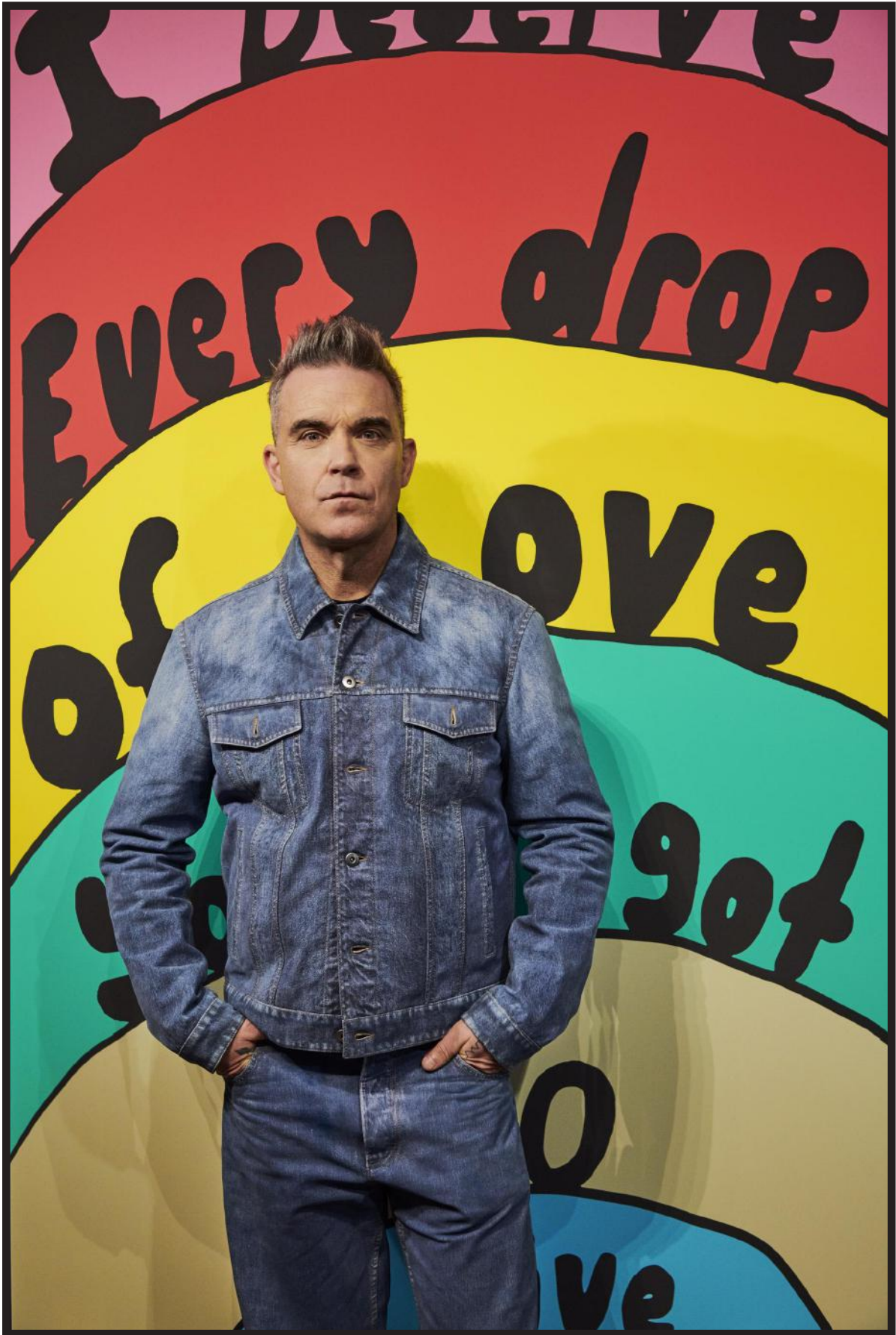


Australian Circa Contemporary Circus
Humans 2.0. Photo by Yaya Stempler

A scene from *Glorious Bodies* by Circumstances masterfully shows how trained older circus artists between the ages of 55 and 67 can still use their bodies. Innovation in the circus emphatically also comes from our own country. Acrobat trio Knot on Hands shows how the new generation of circus makers are developing their own intriguing movement language.

Circusstad Festival takes place around Rotterdam from 1st – 5th May with more than a hundred circus artists in dozens of performances and workshops on the Schouwburgplein, in the de Doelen, Theater Rotterdam, Luxor Theater, Laurenskerk, Maritime Outdoor Museum and other locations. Last year the festival attracted 37,500. □





Pride and Self-Prejudice

Robbie Williams

at Moco Museum in Amsterdam

In the presence of an invited group of guests, Robbie Williams opened his first one-man exhibition at the Moco Museum Amsterdam on 8th March. He said at the opening, "Partly because of making art, my inner demons live in the suburbs and no longer in the centre of my brain."

Williams further said: "I think it is an honour that Moco Museum has asked me to exhibit my art. Making art and showing it here is fantastic, also because I am old enough to appreciate what is happening to me. With the music it happened when I was sixteen. With the artworks I try to create a smile in myself and if I manage to put a smile on the faces of others, then that makes me happy."

Because the exhibition focuses on mental health, Robbie Williams led a special 'fear fighting ceremony' during the opening event. He invited the guests present to write down their greatest fear and then burn them together in the garden of the museum.

WOAH THAT ONES A BIT FROSTY

PLEASE DON

I've JUST SAID SOMETHING WITTY

JUST SA ABOUT IT,

THIS GUY IS LOOKING AT ME LIKE HE WANTS TO FUCK ME

I have JUST AND NOW THAT ON

I LIKE THIS ONE BUT WE HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON

THAT WAS A JOKE AND BEING SERIOUS.

OH FUCK I'VE ALREAD

IM GETTING ON SO WELL WITH THIS PERSON ITS DRAINING ME

hello young PERSON WE CAN 'VIBE' IM COOL

IM SO NOT COOL / YOU NEED





JUST SAID SOMETHING SEUPID

I HAVE ABSOLUTLEY NOTHING TO SAY

REPLY TO THE THING I'VE
ASK ME A QUESTION
I SAID IT TO SOUND SMART

I FEEL VUNRABLE

SOMETHING STRANGE
THERE IS JUDGING ME

COMFORTABLE IN UNCOMFORTABLE
SILENCES?

THEY THOUGHT I WAS

I DONT BELIEVE, INFAC T I THINK.

Don't eat all of the things.
Don't eat all of the things

THEY LOOK PUZZLED NOW

aking but making me feel sad

FUCK THIS IS TAKING SOMUCH ENERY TO CONCENTRATE

OH SHIT I JUST ASKED
Where shes

FUCK ME MASH



Robbie Williams' exhibition was put together with the singer and by curator and founder Kim Logchies-Prins and consists of artworks that all focus on mental health or Williams' inner struggle. In his first exhibition, he takes visitors into his psyche and inspires them to look inward, to promote self-love and acceptance. Because in a fast-paced world full of stimuli, opinions and conflict, mental health is more important than ever. The exhibition also invites self-reflection. During the exhibition, visitors receive a card on which they can write five positive things about themselves, something Robbie himself was unable to do during his lowest years.

The international superstar and singer of songs like *Angels*, *Rock DJ* and *Let Me Entertain You*, Robbie Williams has had a turbulent life in the public eye. The downside of fame takes a heavy toll on his mental health, as can also be seen in the successful Netflix series about his life, which was recently launched. What many people don't know about him: during his first drug rehabilitation period in the 1990s, he started making art as a way to deal with his inner demons. He has continued to do this every day over the years. For the first time, some of his work is now exhibited. □

Modern & Contemporary Museum - Moco - aims to make art accessible to everyone. It is an independent museum with a wide range of inspiring modern, contemporary as well as digital art. With two locations, in Amsterdam and Barcelona and a third location in London that will open this summer, the museum offers a unique collection that makes visitors think about modern society. This collection includes works by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Banksy, JR, KAWS, Keith Haring, Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, Yayoi Kusama, Andy Warhol and Studio Irma. More than five million visitors have now visited the Moco Museum, including Barack Obama, Steven Spielberg, Venus Williams and Dua Lipa.

Robbie Williams' *Pride and Self-Prejudice* exhibition can be seen until 8th July.



Photo by Stijn te Hennepe

NEW EUROPEAN ENSEMBLE with NICK VERSTAND

Michael HASTED saw them at De Doelen in Rotterdam





Photo courtesy of Nick Verstand

It is always a joy to be at a New European Ensemble gig, not least because you don't know exactly what you are going to get. Will it be a straightforward concert with the musician sitting in a formal semi-circle or will there be lots more going on besides like the last time we saw them in a concert involving the work of M C Escher? This show is very much of the latter type, adding two more dimensions - smoke and light. And very spectacular it was too.

This evening's reduced line-up of NEuE consisted of Felicia van den End on flute, James Meldrum on clarinet and pianist Malgorzata Walentynowicz with Rada Ovcharova on violin, Willem Stam on cello and Pepe Garcia at the back with his vibraphone and percussion. Brilliant though they all were they were often in danger of being up-staged by the visual effects and at times played in almost total darkness. This really was a concert for ears and the eyes and a few more senses as well.

The concert started as dramatically as it meant to continue. Spotlights arranged above the musicians pointed straight down, their beams picking up the swirling smoke that engulfed the stage. Terry Riley's piece *In C* started very slowly, each instrument slowly picking up the theme until it was like an express train thundering through a series of tunnels punctuated by a few peaceful pastoral scenes in between. There is a certain amount of improvisation in this powerful piece, allowing each musician to express themselves more freely.

The main part of the concert consisted of a couple of pieces by Salvador Breed, also responsible for the overall sound of the event, which melded seamlessly with Steve Reich's potent *Double Sextet*. This spellbinding work, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2009, provided the hub around which this concert was designed. For this composition, the on-stage line-up was the same but augmented by another on tape creating a strange effect whereby one wasn't sure where the music was coming from – was it live or recorded?

It would be unfair to say this part of the evening was a vehicle for Nick Verstand but the two sequences involving his light sculptures were probably what we would remember most.

World renowned Dutch artist Verstand has worked alongside such eminent sculptors as Ai Weiwei and Anish Kapoor. He devises and creates the technology, both hardware and software, for his work which seeks to break down the barriers between music and the visual arts. He has created light art for the MTV Music Video Awards, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, SXSW and recording artists including Björk.

Verstand's installations and live performances explore how emotional experiences can be materialized through collaborative design processes that break social boundaries, resulting in intuitive experiences that create a mesmerizing environment for the subconscious. This was evident in his contributions to this evening's concert.

The first involved a horizontal beam of blue light which shone the entire length of the room. It contained swirling shapes which in turn looked like water or clouds. The shaft of light gradually widened until it became like a probing searchlight until slowly receding and disappearing. The second piece involved a similar blue light, this time in the shape of giant cone, the full height of the stage. It shone down, directly onto the musicians, swaying gently as it moved, its probing movement like the ominous searching ray of an alien spacecraft. The effect was breath-taking and, with the music, made for a memorable evening which I really enjoyed and set me wondering what the New European Ensemble would come up with next □





Nederlands Dans Theater

Michael HASTED has been delving into the archives to discover more about the sixty-five year history of the world renowned contemporary dance company based in The Hague . . .



Impressions 1967 Photo by and © Anthony Crickmay

I first saw Nederlands Dans Theater at Sadler's Wells in London many years ago. At the time the repertoire of most dance companies mainly consisted of classical ballet with a few modern pieces occasionally thrown in for good measure. But these "modern" pieces were very much based on, and referred to, traditional styles so to see contemporary dance for the first time, performed by NDT, was for me a moment I never forgot. So, when I moved to The Netherlands one of the definite bonuses was that NDT was based and performed in The Hague, just a twenty-minute tram ride from where I lived. I have seen most of their productions for the past six or seven years and they never cease to amaze.

I guess Isadora Duncan could be said to be the grandmother of contemporary dance but it was Martha Graham who was the mother, creating the first formal company and school in New York in 1926. Almost thirty years later another marker was laid down in the unlikely location of North Carolina with the arrival on the scene of Merce Cunningham. In Europe there was no real dedicated contemporary dance company until the establishment of Nederlands Dans Theater.

NDT was created in 1959 in the seaside resort of Scheveningen, a suburb of The Hague. A group of dancers from Nederlands, later Dutch National, Ballet -

Benjamin Harkarvy, Aart Verstegen, Carel Birnie along with sixteen others, unhappy with the authoritarian regime under its then director, Sonia Gaskell, left to form their own company. They proposed a new way of doing things with the emphasis on innovative forms of expression and demonstrating the artistic personalities of its dancers. It aimed at a more egalitarian structure without the formal hierarchy of the traditional companies. Each dancer should be as proficient *en pointe* as barefoot and be comfortable both as part of the ensemble or as a soloist.

Nederlands Dans Theater gave its first performance in the Belgian seaside town of Ostend on 5th September 1959. In addition to works by Harkarvy - his *pas de deux* from *Don Quixote* and the new *Four Times Six* - the performance consisted of new works from Dutch choreographers

Rudi van Dantzig with his *Giovinezza* and Hans van Manen with the premiere of *De Maan in de Trapeze* along with *Feestgericht* from a couple of years earlier.

Finances, as always, were a problem but the new company was finally granted financial support from central government and the municipality of The Hague at the beginning of the sixties. Meanwhile Sonia Gaskell's Nederlands Ballet and Marscha ter Weeme's Amsterdam Ballet merged into the Dutch



Hans van Manen directing *De Anatomische Les* 1964. Photo by and © Sven Ulsa

*“So much beautiful movement and images.
The musicality, the movement – that’s what it
takes for dance.”* Rudolf Nureyev on Jiří Kylián







Strictly Business 1987 Photo by and © Hans Gerritsen

National Ballet, but the new kids on the block were, by then, providing a very real alternative for dance lovers in The Netherlands as they moved confidently towards a more modern identity.

While company's dancers still received classical training from Hanny Bouman, as well as a foundation in American modern dance by Charles Czarny, the repertoire started to contain more works by choreographers known for their innovative style like Glen Tetley, for example, who seamlessly combined ballet and modern dance in pieces such as the 1962 *Pierrot Lunaire* and *De Anatomische Les* two years later. John Butler morphed theatre, music and dance into one in his 1962 *Carmina Burana* while Anna Sokolow introduced socially engaged pieces into the repertoire. But it was Hans van Manen whose name quickly became synonymous with NDT in those early years. After joining the company in 1960, first as a dancer and later as a choreographer, he became artistic director. He would hold this position until 1970, together with Benjamin Harkarvy and, for a short time, Glen Tetley.

During that decade van Manen created up to three or four ballets each season in which he experimented with conventions and boundaries of genres, space, movement and sound. He declared that he, "didn't pursue a particular style", but wanted to work with people who remained individuals, notwithstanding the uniformity of his movements.

Even from the very early days the company has always seen its stage as an international one. After its very first performance in Belgium it toured to Israel in 1960 followed by an appearance at the 1966 *Festival of the Two Worlds* in Spoleto Italy. The next year it made its debut at Sadler's Wells in London and in 1968 at the City Center in New York, followed by its participation in the cultural programme of the XIX Olympiad at the Teatro Bellas Artes in Mexico.

In 1973 a new figure arrived in The Hague who was to be possibly the most influential director in the company's history. 26-year-old Czech Jiří Kylián burst onto the scene with the premiere of *Viewers* on 26th November. Its impact was so profound that it would inspire a generation of dancers and audiences alike. He was invited back by NDT to choreograph *Stoolgame* in 1974 and, the following year, *La Cathédrale Engloutie*. From this point onwards Kylián's career would prove to be unstoppable. In 1975 he would become the company's joint artistic director together with Hans Knill who had been a dancer and ballet master and would later also become the company's Head of Video. Kylián became sole director in 1978, a position he would keep until 1999.

His pieces were acclaimed for their extraordinary use of music and visualization of the score. According to revered British critic Clive Barnes, Kylián's, "movements engulf the music and are themselves engulfed." Rudolf Nureyev said his works revealed "so much beautiful movement and images. The musicality, the movement – that's what it takes for dance."



The entire Nederlands Dans Theater company at Koningsstraat in 1965. Photo by and © Fotobureau Stokvis

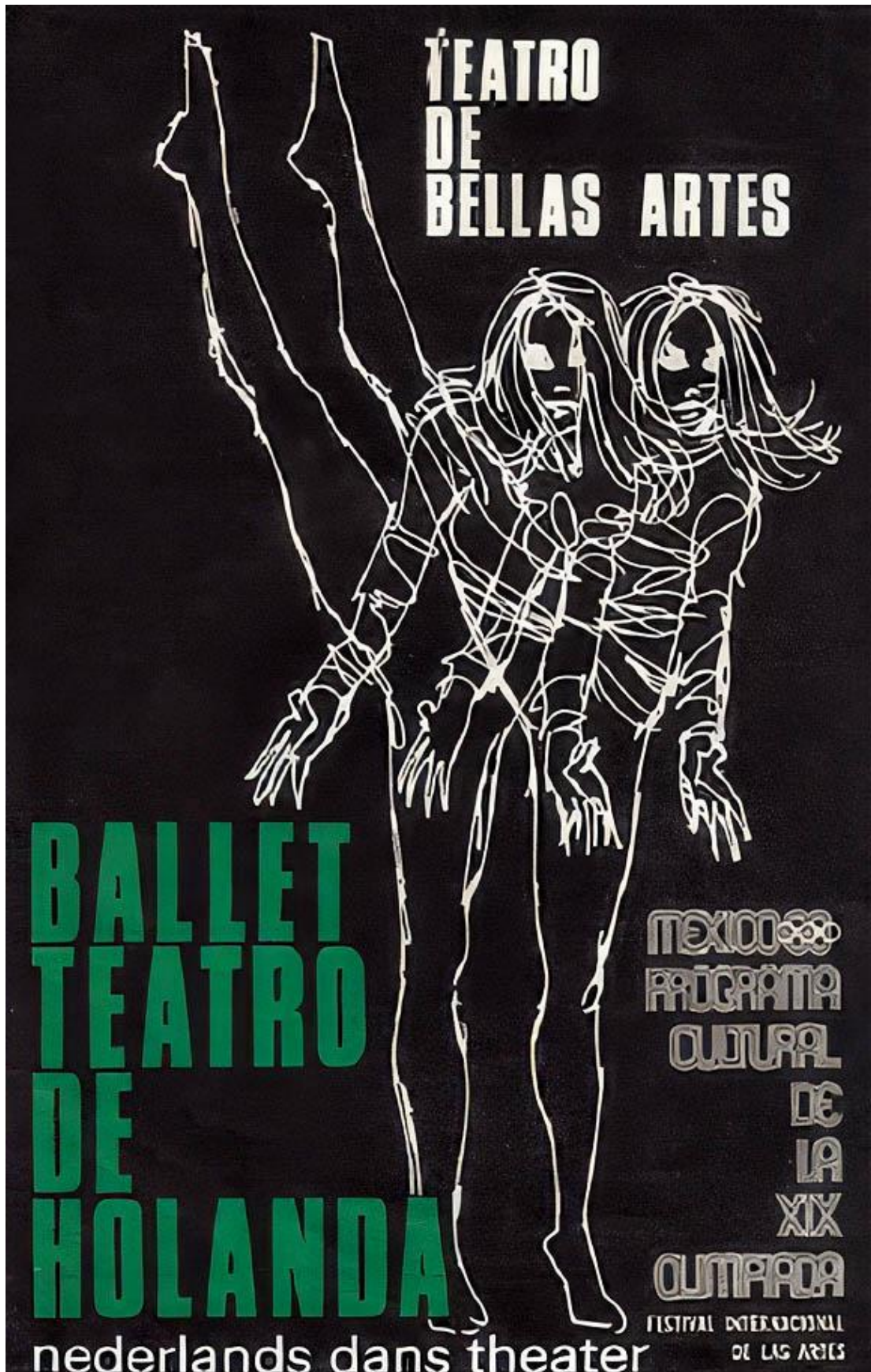
While using a temporary home in Scheveningen plans were laid for a permanent base for the company. This was finally established with the opening of the Dr. Anton Philipszaal Lucent Danstheater on the Spuiplein in the centre of The Hague. The complex was opened on 9th September 1987 as Danstheater 's-Gravenhage. The theatre was given a new name in 1989 following a sponsorship deal with the Dutch telecommunications group AT&T. The thousand-seater AT&T Danstheater later became The Lucent Danstheater and remained NDT's home for more than thirty-five years.

Jiří Kylián remained as director of the company until 1999 but continued to be involved and his work is still frequently performed. He was responsible for the creation of NDT 2 which was founded in 1978 as a feeder for young dancers to NDT 1. NDT 2 has now grown

into a troupe in its own right and its work is virtually indistinguishable from that of the main company.

Each new director has brought his or her own style to NDT without changing its core identity. Of the artistic directors since 1999 perhaps Paul Lightfoot is the most outstanding. He was artistic director from January 2012 until the end of 2020. The British former dancer of NDT 1, together with his partner Sol León, was also the company's resident choreographer, a post that has since been abolished.

NDT now works extensively with associate and guest choreographers including Johan Inger, Alexander Ekman, Marco Goecke, Sharon Eyal, Gabriela Carrizo, Marne & Imre van Opstal, Marcos Morau, Ohad Naharin, William Forsythe, Hofesh Shechter, Yoann Bourgeois as well as Hans van Manen and Medhi Walerski who



Poster for NDT's appearance in Mexico during the 1968 Olympic Games

still regularly contribute. Crystal Pite has been a frequent maker for several years and her recent work with British theatre director Simon McBirney of the company Complicité has been a particularly exciting and successful collaboration.

The final performance in the Lucent Danstheater was on 15th May 2015 and half the building, including the front-of-house and auditorium, was subsequently demolished. The company offices, rehearsal rooms and a small performing area were still housed in the adapted remaining half but their main performances were staged at the temporary, but very comfortable, Zuiderstrandtheatre which stood in the dunes back in Scheveningen before it too was demolished in 2022.

Nederlands Dans Theater finally moved into its new permanent home in the awe inspiring Amare concert hall complex which opened in November 2021. It was built on the same site as the old Lucent theatre, the remains of which were finally demolished in January 2022. NDT is now firmly established, a few meters away from its former home, with its own 1,300 seat, state-of-the-art theatre, bright spacious rehearsal rooms and comfortable offices.

And what of the future? Nederlands Dans Theater is in a constant state of exploration and development and Emily Molnar, the company's Artistic Director since 2020 gave us her thoughts, 'In my vision for NDT as a house for creation, research and inquiry are a priority. NDT is deeply committed to pushing the boundaries of creativity. At the core of our identity lies a dedication to collaboration, curiosity, and community, driving us to continually innovate and enrich the cultural landscape.

'To be creative, we must continue to let ourselves feel the freedom to experiment and try something we don't yet understand. This means that for us, the process is just as important as the result. My focus is to cultivate such an innovative environment where we can investigate our practice, research new ideas, and work together on a deeper level. It is about the potential of the company as one voice, a passionate house for creation that is filled with many unique individual voices. This approach has empowered us to collaborate with new and diverse artists and partners, facilitating exchanges across various styles and disciplines and expanding our programming while remaining faithful to our rich history. Between 2020 and 2024, NDT will introduce 23 new voices and premiere 41 new works. By fostering creativity and providing exceptional talent development opportunities that support the next generation of professional dancers and makers, NDT is a catalyst for the future of dance.' □



The Lucent Danstheater on Spuiplein in the centre of The Hague, NDT's home from 1987 until 2021. This picture from 1989



The stage-house of the Lucent Danstheater being demolished in January 2022. NDT's new home, Amare, can be seen behind it.
Photo by Michael Hasted

OLD ROOTS, NEW ROUTES

this Spring in Amsterdam,
Utrecht and The Hague



The concert series *Old Roots, New Routes* plays in Amsterdam, Utrecht and The Hague continuing until June. The programme features adventurous formations that set out from their old roots with Dutch kindred spirits on new routes. They tread new paths with music from all corners of the world that are rooted in old cultural traditions which appeal to the imagination today. 'Fairytale-like, genre-transcending, inspired, a meeting of religious and musical traditions', were





the earlier reviews of the performing groups. They typify this season's theme Imagination & Connection, with a leading role for the female voice.

The first concert was on 8th March in Amsterdam and featured the polyphonic singing of Las Lloronas, a trio of young women. In April, the quartet Dareyn Q7, with solid core Emine Bostancı (kemenche, lyra and vocals) and Maya Fridman (cello and vocals), presented their new album. In May and June the series will conclude with the premiere of a new programme by Marmoucha Orchestra with three singers interpreting the richness of Moroccan, Iranian and Turkish-Kurdish culture.

The Amsterdam concert coincided with International Women's Day and featured the polyphonic singing of the Las Lloronas from Brussels. They love "small cafés, village squares, the warmth of a living room". In such familiar intimacy, their melancholic three-part harmony blossoms optimally.

Musicians like Lhasa de Sela, Noname and Ibeyi inspire their overpowering concerts full of feminist poetry. Spanish folk and playful hip-hop fuse with latino and blues influences, and with Las Lloronas you can experience "a moment of powerful vulnerability, on the border of lament, daydream and battle cry".

The trio are Amber in 't Veld from Spain on vocals and guitar, American Sura Solomon, based in the Belgian capital, who sings and plays accordion and ukulele and finally, from Germany, Marieke Werner on clarinet and vocals. They recently released their new album *Out of the Blue*.

Dareyn, with Emine Bostancı and Maya Fridman, played the Amstel church in Amsterdam on 6th April with *Nomen est omen*. In *Dareyn* (two worlds), East & West merge. Four top musicians 'with a passion for creating the unexpected' seduce you through their repertoire full of sonorous purity, sudden bursts and rousing sounds. With the mystically stringing kemenche of Emine Bostancı and the sublime playing of cellist Maya Fridman, they explore the creative boundaries within classical, jazz and world music.

With this spiritual adventure, *Dareyn* penetrates the realm of dreams. Cinematically narrated to the inner seven heavens, music draws from Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish and African sources. In this concert, they presented their debut album *Ghost Secrets*, which was released in January 2024.

Last in the series is the Marmoucha Orchestra who appear in Amsterdam on 25th May and in Utrecht on 22nd June with the premiere of *Old Signs - New Sounds*. The mixed ensemble consists of inspired musicians with a passion for the musical traditions of the SWANA region (South West Asia and North Africa). Their new programme takes you on an adventurous journey. Accompanied by spoken word and images, they follow the Phoenician trade routes (1500-400 BC) across the Mediterranean.



Drawing on ancient writings and musical notations, they illuminate the mysticism of ancient goddesses such as Anahita, Ishtar and Tanit. Embodied by three talented singers who interpret the richness of Moroccan, Iranian and Turkish/Kurdish culture.

In their fascinating fusion of traditional and contemporary music, the Marmoucha Orchestra blends classical history with the present. In doing so, they lend a new sound to the ancient languages and signs of the Mediterranean region. This new programme was created in collaboration with *Old Roots, New Routes* □

Drawing on ancient writings and musical notations, they illuminate the mysticism of ancient goddesses such as Anahita, Ishtar and Tanit.





Michael Raedecker, *Radiate*, 2000, acrylic & thread on canvas. 178.5 x 127.5 cms. 701.4 x 501.4 ins



Material Worlds

Michael Raedecker at Kunstmuseum in The Hague

Fifteen years after its major exhibition showcasing the art of Michael Raedecker (b. 1963, Amsterdam), Kunstmuseum Den Haag is hosting a retrospective of his work. The show is part of a series of exhibitions profiling leading contemporary artists, including Norbert Schwontkowski (2020/2021) and Nicole Eisenman (2022/2023). *Michael Raedecker: Material Worlds* has been curated in close collaboration with the artist and shows his artistic development over the past three decades.



Michael Raedecker in his studio
Photo by Damian Griffiths courtesy GRIMM

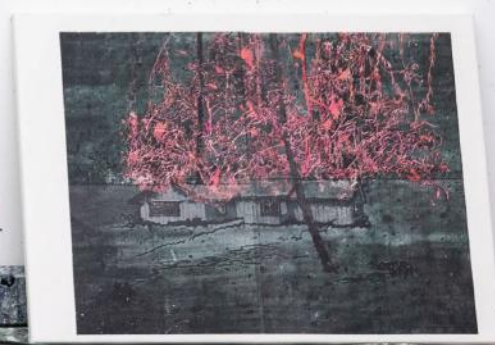




With his unique process, combining painting and embroidery, Raedecker reflects on the world and our place within it. His work captures a melancholy atmosphere, as if he were recording memories that reside in spaces and objects. Landscapes, treehouses and suburban homes float in a realm somewhere between realism and surrealism, in which the boundaries of literal representation and abstraction are blurred.

Raedecker's work is inspired by the collective memory, art history and popular culture. He uses many sources, including photography, obscure magazines, film stills and the internet. Before a work is created, he creates 'demos' of his ideas in paint and thread, which he photographs and digitally manipulates. He then transfers the resulting image to a large canvas on which, again, he builds up a sculpted surface using paint and thread. This creates a certain tension, as the original becomes a copy, which is then incorporated into the final 'original', the artwork that is exhibited. "Looking back, the revolutionary developments of the last thirty years have naturally seeped into my work", says Raedecker. "I have doubted not only life, but also myself, society and painting. Perhaps not so much in terms of 'what' to paint, but 'how'."

Michael Raedecker: Material Worlds features around fifty artworks that the artist has made since 1991, from the collection of Kunstmuseum Den Haag and from institutions and private collectors in the Netherlands



“The landscape, the suburban environment where nature meets homes built by humans. The paintings show where we live, the outside of the interior and also the variety of things we collect to make the environment we live in personal and domestic. I observe, translate and prompt people to think about ‘where’ we exist.”



Michael Raedecker, Stage (detail), 2021, courtesy GRIMM





Michael Raedecker *Parallel Visitation*, 2021

and Britain. One new work – *Inert Pursuit* – will also be presented. “All the paintings in this exhibition are about our presence and our visual absence in relation to our surroundings, both indoors and outdoors”, Raedecker explains. “The landscape, the suburban environment where nature meets homes built by humans. The paintings show where we live, the outside of the interior and also the variety of things we collect to make the environment we live in personal and domestic. I observe, translate and prompt people to think about ‘where’ we exist.”

Raedecker’s early paintings were often autobiographical, but over the years they took on a more surrealist and theatrical quality. Later, reality crept back in, often through portrayal of everyday, domestic aspects of life. His most recent works are of suburbs, on the edge of nature. These places fascinate Raedecker. “Human superiority, intelligence and arrogance have found an impressive way to inhabit and conquer the earth – to create humanity and achieve quality of life. However, in existential terms, we are still growing accustomed to the fact that we are here, and that we are not always sure we belong here. That we are not always able to express what we really want, or what we really mean.”

The work of Michael Raedecker is internationally renowned and has been shown at a range of institutions in different countries. Kunstmuseum Den Haag has several of his works in its collection. Raedecker studied fashion at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and then continued his studies at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam and Goldsmith’s College in London, where he has lived and worked since graduating. He has been awarded the Dutch Royal Prize for Painting (1993), the Prix de Rome basic prize (1994) and the prestigious John Moore Painting Prize (1999) in Britain. He was also shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 1999. The exhibition *Michael Raedecker – In Line* showed at KM21 in 2009 (when it was still known as GEM) , as part of a series of exhibitions focusing on contemporary painters with international appeal, including Daniel Richter and Matthias Weischer □

MICHAEL RAEDECKER Material Worlds continues at Kunstmuseum in The Hague until 11th August 2024



Lita de Ravitz's
DOLL'S HOUSE
at Haags Historisch Museum

Wendy FOSSEN has taken a look inside



Jessie Burton's novel and the subsequent TV series *The Miniaturist* made the doll's house of Petronella Oortman world-famous and hoards of people went to the Rijksmuseum to see it. But did you know they are more showcase doll's houses in Dutch museums? Contemporary ones to Petronella's can be seen in the Frans Halsmuseum in Haarlem and in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht. At the Kunstmuseum in The Hague you can marvel at the 18th century doll's house of Sara Rothé van Amstel.

Also in The Hague, at the Haags Historisch Museum in a newly designed room, the Large Doll's House of Lita de Ranitz (1876-1960) built in the early 20th century can be admired. Like its illustrious 17th and 18th century predecessors this house is not meant to be played with, these are showpiece doll's houses. Of course, throughout the centuries the majority of doll's houses were toys and only a smaller number were used as a showpiece. However, in the 19th century the toy doll's house became more an instruction model - while playing children would learn how a household was run.





This was also the case when Lita, as a small girl, played with the doll's house her father had made. When in 1908 the exhibition *Opvoeding van het kind (Education of the child)* was organised, she decided to send in her old doll's house. She patched it up here and there to make it presentable again.

After the show closed, the house remained in her room (she was still single at the time) and she started to collect more items for it until no more objects fitted in. At first she thought an extension to the house would suffice, but a teacher at the local vocational school suggested a completely new house. The idea appealed to her, as she writes, 'I could have a house without land, without taxes, without expensive maintenance, at construction costs that were not too much above my means'.

In 1910 the completion of the new doll's house was celebrated by hoisting the Dutch flag on top. It was constructed according to Lita's wishes and modelled after the type of Swiss style houses that were built in the Statenkwartier in The Hague. Like these, Lita's freestanding villa was equipped with modern features such as electric light, a bathroom with bath, a telephone and central heating. There is even a vacuum cleaner!

Many people came to marvel at the house and brought items to decorate it. Even Queen Emma dropped by, signed the guest book and gifted an ivory table with a chess set. Lita's friends and family helped her fill the rooms with all kinds of wonderful miniatures from around the world.

The most impressive items in the house however are the miniature paintings the size of a credit card. Many painters of The Hague School donated a miniature painting for the house. You can spot works by Anton Mauve, Paul Gabriël, Johan Akkeringa and Willem Bastiaan Tholen (whom she married years later). They loved doing that, or as Jan Toorop said to Lita when he saw her doll's house at an exhibition: 'Child, I will also make a painting for your house'.

She was no longer a child but her passion for doll's houses never disappeared and at the end of her life she owned no less than twenty of them and a few doll's rooms, some of which are on display next to the Large Doll's House at the Haags Historisch Museum in The Hague □

A professional microphone on a stand is positioned on the right side of the frame. A vertical beam of blue light illuminates the scene from the right, creating a soft glow on the microphone and the background. The background is dark, with some faint vertical lines suggesting a stage or studio setting.

Laurien Schreuder's

SNOWAPPLE

returns to The Netherlands

Snowapple Collective is a versatile and creative company consisting of musicians, artists, performers and other creatives who combine different artistic disciplines. With Amsterdam's Laurien Schreuder as founder and artistic director it has developed into an international and interdisciplinary collective that explores and pushes the boundaries of theatrical creativity. With her eclectic mix of music genres, visual art and theatrical elements she creates a unique experience for the audience, seamlessly integrating traditional and modern influences.



Cyborg @ vientosflorida 2023
Photo by Consuelo Pagaza Fotografias

In addition to her musical and theatrical productions, Lauren Schreuder also publishes poems, scripts and philosophical explorations. Her artistic scope also includes involvement in various festivals and positively charged activism. Snowapple Collective organizes residencies and workshops to inspire and engage communities in its vision, making it an inexhaustible source of creativity and innovation. The collective has the ambition to grow into an international player in the field of innovative and interdisciplinary art led in a collective manner with enough space for women.

For more than thirteen years Snowapple has been a beacon of creativity and social interaction in the music and art world. What started as a musical trio - consisting of the talented singers Laurien Schreuder, Una Bergin and Laura Polence - has developed into an international and interdisciplinary group that explores and pushes the boundaries of theatrical creativity. Snowapple Collective develops experimental, unique and idiosyncratic art with a feminist perspective, creating awareness for minority groups in an extravagant, theatrical and musical way. Following triumphs in Mexico and France she is now paving the way to success in the Netherlands.

Snowapple's journey started with music but quickly grew into a versatile artist collective that not only breaks boundaries but also connects and inspires communities. What few people know is that the collective has Amsterdam roots. Ms Schreuder strives to create daring, experimental and contemporary art that appeals to a broad audience without prejudice of age, culture or origin. She is committed to creating art that is deeply rooted in the reality of society: committed to current social issues, raising questions and initiating discourse. The projects are multi-disciplinary arising from collaboration and imbued with educational and social values which they convey to the viewer in a playful, non-teaching way.

Snowapple's events are immersive and completely off the beaten track. Sometimes they are in the form of a performance, a short film, a residency, a collaboration or taking part in an international festival like the Jardin Rouge which returns annually on various dates in Mexico City, Paris and Amsterdam. Jardin Rouge Festival creates a space of freedom and inventiveness, provoking moments in which a varied audience comes into contact with new artistic forms while going against what is known and expected. In addition to these and many other collaborations, there will also be a Snowapple Collective tent during Vurige Tongen at Ruigoord, Amsterdam in May, where they will perform the original theatre show Cyborg Experiment #1. □



Cyborg Experiment #1 Photo by Charles Lesuri



Lior Tavori's *Killing the Butterfly*

Scapino Ballet Rotterdam's

ORIGIN

Text by Michael HASTED

Photos by Bart GRIETENS

I can't imagine that German expressionist cinema or dark eastern European literature are big in China but this was very much what I picked up from Xingxing Gong's *Kiss the Darkness*, part of *Origin*, the new double-bill from Scapino.

I think darkness was the operative word in her impressive and masterful piece of theatre and black was the operative colour. This was all strange threatening shapes and ominous angular shadows which put me in mind of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* or the 1922 film of *Nosferatu*. Perhaps these subconscious and universal images grew from the fact that Miss Gong grew up as a fourth child in an era when only one was permitted per family. Despite that she became a choreographer for Beijing Opera and Dance Theatre in a country where, we are told, contemporary dance is beginning to find its feet. Nevertheless, there is still a dark side to China which, one would think, has influenced her work. While this piece was free-flowing and full of brilliant

original ideas one had in the back of one's mind that there was a certain underlying control and strictness and one was not sure if this piece was subject to it or exposing it.

The opening sequence in what was, in effect, a series of tableaux, really set the piece up, indicating what was to come. Two dancers emerged from the darkness, gradually becoming one, their limbs intertwined so they almost became an eight-legged single entity like the beetle in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

The small company of six dancers all had their moments, either alone or in various combinations all to the amazing soundscape seamlessly knitted together by Rimmert van Lummel and the mesmerizing lighting by Jasper Nijholt.

Despite the darkness and the omnipresent hint of danger, perhaps what was the most successful sequence was one of comedy. A lone male dancer slowly emerged from the wings pulling an old boot on

An almost classical pas de deux to the tender and beautiful Look at Me by Damien Rice provided a powerful contrast and satisfactory conclusion to what had gone before







Xingxing Gong's *Kiss the Darkness*



one of those retractable dog-walking leads. He puts on the boot which seems to have a life of its own, his efforts to control it transforming him into a single-string marionette. When he is joined by two other dancers they rapidly become entwined in a cat's cradle. The comedy was soon offset by a later sequence when five of the dancers, covered head to toe in black, their faces obscured, surrounded and menaced the sixth.

The final cameo came as a complete surprise. An almost classical *pas de deux* to the tender and beautiful *Look at Me* by Damien Rice provided a powerful contrast and satisfactory conclusion to what had gone before.

Xingxing Gong's extraordinary *Kiss the Darkness* succeeded on all levels as a piece of magnificent theatre and if she decides to work more in the West it will be China's loss and our gain.

Usually Scapino's performances are defined by single, fairly spectacular piece with a very clear, linear narrative. *Origin* on the other hand, consists of two very different short pieces which provide an exercise in compare and contrast.

Israeli choreographer Lior Tavori is founder and artistic director of his eponymous dance company in Tel-Aviv and although his *Killing the Butterfly* had an equally disturbing title it was, on the surface, a much more upbeat optimistic affair.

The eighteen or so dancers were all dressed in shorts and vests in various pastel shades except for one girl and one boy who were wearing long frocks. The piece opened with a lone male dancer thrashing around in a huge sand pit which covered about a third of the stage. The other dances gradually arrived on stage, moving side to side, backwards and forwards like pieces on a chess board.

For a while the sand pit was forgotten but by about half-way through it came back into focus as two dancers performed a duet in it as the others watched as though around a circus ring. Slowly they all joined in with sand flying everywhere while on stage a lone dancer, now in white, performed an extended solo. Surreptitiously in the dark shadows at the back of the sandpit naked bodies could be seen as they all changed into white shorts and vests before emerging onto the main stage. There then followed a startling episode where a continuous line of dancers marched across the front of stage from right to left like a sequence of photographs by Edward Muybridge.

Jasper Nijholt's lighting also shone through in this production and along with the excellent selection of music (much more melodic in this piece), supervised again by Rimmert van Lummel, made a significant contribution to the whole.

Origin, though perhaps a little different from what we normally see from Scapino, provided two outstanding pieces which, though very different, matched beautifully and complemented each other to provide an exhilarating and thought provoking evening □

Scapino Ballet's *Origin* continues on tour until 9th June

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