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THE MYSTERIOUS NUDE

By Roger Salas. A lire en Anglais.

A+B=X is the latest work from Swiss choreographer Gilles Jobin. Unlike his previous creations, A+B=X does not have the *arte povera* feel, so often associated with experimental choreography and studies on choreography, as aficionados of Le Théâtre de l'Usine can testify. In fact, Jobin himself had been on the board there.

The theatrilised, indeed ritualised radicalism, so evident in Jobin's first solos (from Bloody Mary to Only You) now shows a patina of tension, of bodies obliquely reversed, of finely worked statues.

Danse and Super 8 have a subconscious affinity with the visual arts, such as the works of Schiele and Bacon, allowing our fantasies to run riot, if we wish. Through their subtle cloning, Danse and Super 8 make a third sex imaginable. The point where the human becomes a hybrid. Where the nude, choreographed from the back, this unknown being, this reverse of self, so intimate, so incongruous, adorn themselves and laugh openly at this perfectly balanced posture. Arms and legs serve only to increase the tension weaving its way through a space where the face is hidden. With only the buttocks and back visible, expression becomes movement. Sketching the contours of a choreography of contention. Nudity questions the basis of human physical representation. In all their phantasmagoria and metamorphoses scattered throughout.

Does the naked body stimulate the viewer ? Does knowledge dissipate when the look is blinded ? A sign that the nude is the centrifugal point of choreographic desire ; once three huge eyes begin to focus on all these backs, stretched out in front of them, forming a dorsal ridge, almost like female genitalia. A technique which allows the vision of the spectator-voyeur, indeed the dancers' flesh, to be manipulated. In diametric opposition to the clichéd image of performance athletes, in the aesthetic sense, and the sacrificial lambs of modern ballet, Jobin proudly proclaims the *idée fixe* of disordered mystery on to which nudity reveals itself, by playing games with what one sees and how it is projected and reproduced on film.

The primitivism of visual artist Franko B's tattooed body, scarified, lips sown together, makes a return to early cinema. So, during an ironic and out-of-sync sequence where the filmed equation involving all three dancers, the classical problem is turned on its head. Here nakedness provides cover, clothes expose. Depending on the dance, the bodies become dressed, their actions not that of stripping, a special effect, paradoxical, which only film makes possible. As well as a glance at Socorro ! Gloria !, strip tease where the Spanish dancer and choreographer La Ribot removes 40 separate items of clothing, a sequence through its halting movements as if from an old Praxinoscope, is worthy of the forerunner to the Lumière cinematograph. Early dance/cinema : an effective coupling, which Jobin has successfully woven together right from his solo Middle Swiss. To question movement in its harnessed state.

A mosaic of physical, audio and temporal torsion, distortions, contortions, impositions where the front and back of the torso are indistinguishable, this young choreographer's

work is an experiment on the limits of human agility for a body which is already mutant. The bodies in $A+B=X$ are then split by a T-shirt, where movement constantly shifts the boundaries of the nude.

In terms of the so-called tortured body, the image of Nuria de Ulibari, embedded on "the gallows" of the choreographer's legs in dying release will remain imprinted on the memory. A sort of reversed pietà.

Do these contortions suggest the immanence of abandoning a body which has become a burden, squeezing an already dormant life to death? The original body, discovered through physical introspection, is revealed as a kind of foetus, whose compound face develops slowly and subtly. The hypnotic insistence of introspection tears the skin to piece, makes the bones shake, pummels the flesh. Changes in the dancer's body and its intensity reverberates in the bodies of the spectators. On discovery of a sensation from within of the movements of one's own body taken right back to one's place of gestural birth.

Along side the choreographers La Ribot and Javier de Frutos, who have long been interested in the concept of nudity, Gilles Jobin also admits that his work is influenced by the clichéd images of the body found in pornography. In $A+B=X$, the disciplinary eroticism of the prosaicness of pornography, which subordinates, reduces, guards and takes pleasure, is reintroduced into a corporal space enveloped in disarming tenderness. Slowly executed, the slight pelvic thrusts are frozen in a plan of spectacular plastic emotion, of disturbing subtlety. sad animal post-coitum, Jobin then seizes on another classical figure of

X to transmute it into an inspired dance sequence of the human hind! This will be the centre of this vibrating, radiant energy, a place of a sign language stripped of pornographic totalitarianism.

$A+B=X$ in its most outstanding flashes of genius is indeed the flawless and smooth choreographing of a semi-naked dancer, by a caress, brushing lightly against bodies, which are often revealed to be androgynous, revealing the scars created by the delicate folds of the back, as if it was the most precious skin ever. A calm, quiet, relaxed way of greeting a world. Whose alarming strangeness holds a certain fascination by reversing the body and its codes of functionality and gravity.