

Dance over cultures

interview with Mr. Do Min Hwang's manager of team ISUM Dance Company

Andrzej Hajdasz: On Dancing Poznań 2012 we had the opportunity to watch the show South Korean group ISUM Dance Company titled „Gourd”. You came with a group of ISUM DC as their manager, but also as an "ambassador" of Korean art of dance in Poland? Is your arrival was a one-off event, whether it is part of some major action to promote a culture of your country in Europe?

Do Min Hwang: Dominant Agency focuses on finding new artists and making a cultural relationship between Korea and foreign country. In this global society, trading arts and cultural experience is truly important.

In the case of ISUM, they are a good example of showing the progression of Korean traditional dancing. As a planner and manager of ISUM, I'm preparing a world tour of ISUM in 2013.

But I'm also interests in 'import the artists at Korea'. For this interests, my company planned a festival named "International Percussion Festival in Seoul" in 2010 (at this time, I don't have company but I worked alone.) and 2012 with Seoul Percussion Ensemble (host of these events). Through this event, about 30 artists from 6 different countries (France, Israel, Taiwan, Japan, German, New Zealand, Korea) were visiting Korea for the performing.



Do you only organize a dance shows or also different culture evets ?

- Matter of fact, most of my co-workers studied music-such as composing or percussion. For this reason, we naturally started our business on music field, but we never limited our boundary. Now we deal with not only the Dance but also Korean traditional music, Tango Duo, Rock Band Music. My university major was percussion and I was in a band. This is why I like to organize concerts for band. I think "Do what I want and what I like makes perfect resort".



Going back to your staying in Dancing Poznan 2012, tell me how was your or your group reflection after performance in Poland? Polish audience usually don't react spontaneous during performances, which doesn't mean that show wasn't good, quite contrary, is making a big impression for the audience. It is easy for dacers to get a contact with such a "closed audience"?

- Yes. I found a character which you told me about the Polish audiences from ISUM and other dance companies performances. However, in my opinion, performance is a conversation. At conversation, some people show big reactions or have a big mouth. On the other hand, some people are „good listeners”. I think this is not a big deal. I told about this

thing with ISUM Dancers. They felt the audiences were immersed in their performance. This feeling made ISUM Dancers were able to focus on their movement more.

One of the good thing of the „performing in other country“ is feeling a new experience. This new experience also includes meeting a new type of audience.

During the show we could notice that ISUM DC consistently connecting korean tradition with contemporary dance, without living one of these values. Do shows often refer to native tradition or it was a performace which was special choosen for Europe audience?

Does ISUM Dance Company repertoire contain many that kind of shows? Are each of them different?

- The choreographer of ISUM, Ms.Lee Hae Kyung' works have many different kind of synopsis or musical style, movement and so on. However, their one same point is identity of Korean spirit (or culture). "Spirit" means some kind of...character in Korean's traditional lives. Every people or country has same thing in their lives. Each one of them are not same. Ms. Lee always concerns about this element and tries to melt it into her works. She handles not only the choreographing but also costumes and music, directing, etc of her works. This working process gives a equality to her works.

To be honest, at very first time of this project, ISUM chose another work. However, we changed our work to "Gourd" because this project was not for Europe but just only for city, Poznan. I've never been to Poznan before, but when I looked up Poznan's photos, I felt "Gourd" is perfect piece for this beautiful and not that crowd city. And after discussion with Dancing Poznan, we made up our mind.

The "Gourd" was selected by Dancing Poznan and ISUM.



Ms. Lee)

At ISUM's work, his music style usually is derived from Pansori (Korean one man opera) and traditional folk songs. And he re-interpret with contemporary musical methods.

Does often choreographer and director Mrs. Hae Kyung Lee useig traditional korean music in her performances?

- As I said before, Ms. Lee's works contain elements of Korean Traditional Style. These elements also include music. Usually, a contemporary music composer, Mr. Choi Myung Whun undertakes music in Ms. Lee's works. Mr. Choi awarded Best Prizes at German Music University Competition (Composition part), Japan TaKaeHoo International Composition Concours, etc. (And he is a husband of

Average Polish man knows Korea because of martial arts not because of dancing. Both dance and martial arts give you huge ability to control your body. How important this feature (attribute) is nowadays in korean culture?

- Is it? That might because, TekKwonDo (Korean Martial Arts) is well known to abroad through Olympic and many other way. Recently in Korea, it is kind of a fashion that making performing arts with TekKwonDo. About this „stream“, the theater for TekKwonDo Arts was opened in Seoul on 21.Nov.2012.

Usually cultural dissidence causing much bigger interest in performance

It can be conducive to deeper reflection not only visual level. Did you have the same feeling listening and watching other dancing group which were performing in Dancing Poznan?

- Dancing Poznan was a great experience not only for ISUM but also me. This is because, in my opinion, this festival is able to show us the recent stream of dancing fashion at Western. This is good chance to feel differences among the dance groups character and further more, differences among the countries' cultural character. Yes. It was more than interesting but exciting. Just imagine that if you find out a treasure.



It seems that dancing language is supra cultural. But i have a feeling that differences in: tradition, cultural code, forms of expression can prevent to understand transfer. Don't you afraid of that? What do you think, it is better to build tie with a spektator in different cultural circle, preparing him for show and telling him about show or better is to leave him without introduction?, just to let him to interpret show by himself and let him find his own association.

- At ISUM's performances at Dancing Poznan, we use two ways. One was "don't give any information before performance" and another one was "read synopsis and information in Polish before performance" (At this part, Ms.Yoon Ena who works at Korean Cultural Center in Warsaw halped us). It was interesting that observing both performances' audiences reaction. However, I hope audiences get closer to a work and understand what performers want to tell. And also in ISUM's case, their works have a lot of theatrical element. Because of this, for understanding these works, you need a little information, if you are not familiar with Korean culture. In this point of view, I prefer to let them know about basic information about a work. But not too much! This is because I also don't want to disrupt their imagination. **This is a fun part of ART!**



I think, that is not so important in which country are we living, but much more important is can we say something about us to another person or other people using dance language. I think that is very good comunication between differnet cultures. Don't you think?

- Everytime I go to abroad, I feel "The place people living are all same". I think this feeling is just like you told me in this question. The "country" is not important. But important thing is, everyone has their own story. Oral language or written words are able to detail but these type of

communications are extremely limited. I don't know your language and you either don't know my language. Because of this, art is really convenience way to share something. Especially, non-verbal art form, such as dance and music.

I heard that in the future you want to share your knowledge in next workshop of Dancing Poznań. Some of you want to share your dance technik knowledge with others and same of you want to take a part in workshops. Is that true?

- I'm sorry but I think that wouldn't be me. Ms. Lee is going to take apart at workshop as a Korean traditional dance method teacher.

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...and I thank you for your time

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*Prepared and edited by:
Andrzej Hajdasz*

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