

100 Wounded Tears

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From the subtitle of the performance: "*14 images of lost despair*" no-one would expect a lighthearted comedy. Yet the last premiere of DOT 504, entitled *100 Wounded Tears*, which took place on the 22nd and 23rd of February 2009 at Ponec Theatre, projects the genuine bleakness of the audience's shrouded thinking into the dark clutches of hopeless desperation.

The creators of the project, Jozef Fruček and Linda Kapetanea (Rootless Root Company) had already presented one piece, which achieved great popularity with audiences, in collaboration with this company: *Holdin' Fast*. This performance, despite its subtitle "*a ballad on sexual addiction*," was full of hyperbole and black humour, in which the sexual theme played a role in the venting of human needs. *100 Wounded Tears* seems almost like a sequel, which is however painful in its desperation; in its presentation of images of the darkest imaginings of the diseased soul.

Feelings of unfulfilled dreams accompanied by indomitable desire and fear, are transformed into an affair which we rarely meet in the light of day. In true life, darkness mercifully covers all that is so harshly uncovered onstage during the piece. The cowardice of a Beggar, the humiliation of a Queen, the mutilation of a Kitty, and one who must be marking time as though waiting for her own liberation. She does not survive to see it.

Whatever you may think of the theme it is impossible to deny the artistic perfection of the of the entire dance production, winning DOT 504 a sure place among ensembles of physical dance theatre. The rawness and authenticity of the performance is accentuated in the way the director leads the performers to absolute perfection in their roles. Among the real wounds and tears invoked by sliced-up onion, artificial blood looked and felt rather awkward in the end, though staged with maximum authenticity (and it is only the certainty that if a performer really bled in this way he would be of very little further use, that leads us to conclude that this was not real blood). Also, the choreography of the piece is worked to perfection. The feelings of chaos, confusion, unexpected falls and clashes are under total control of the dancers; the absolute synchronisation is apparent to those among the audience who concentrate on the movements. It cannot be called anything other than a perfect illusion, a genuine art of dance, which even in this highly stylized work appears natural.

Michal Kaščák's music is a crucial part of the production. The Slovak punkrock music crudely underlines the staged situations, and the performers' singing provides a fitting comment on the scenes. This is especially true of the Slovak-speaking performer (Csangor Kassai), who is an orchestrator and master of sad situations, so to speak, situations in which the others (Helena Arenbergerová, Michaela Ottová, Lenka Vágnerová, Pavel Mašek, Jaroslav Ondruš and Tomáš Nepšinský) simply excel in dance and expression.

100 Wounded Tears can be seen to fit within the category of choreographies such as *Propotion* (DOT 504) and *Time of Pain* (PKB): displays of pain, displays of evil. *100 Wounded Tears* perhaps experiences these even more profoundly. It is a crude performance in which dancers really hurt each other in situations which no-one ever wants to experience in real life. And the worst of it is that it is not fiction. Rather, it reveals the real world just around the corner where we are too scared to as much as even look.

Author: Zuzana Smugalová