

## MINISTRY OF SILLY WALKS

A leading Prague dance company DOT504 showcased their premiere piece with the participation of an international group of excellent dancers, mostly influenced by current Belgian dance schools. It consisted of a Korean dancer Hyaejin Lee, Greek Ioulia Zacharaki, Englishman Robert Anderson and Pavel Mašek from Prague. The choreographer is the Slovakian Anton Lachky that had the same experience.

*Photo: It seems, that family relationships are an endless source of inspiration for Lachky...*

The new production - and we can say right at the beginning, that it is stunning - is the result of thorough work of dramaturgy by the art director of DOT 504 Lenka Ottová, who has - for a long time - successfully managed to interest choreographers from the Belgian school to work for her label. Especially the people around Wim Vandekeybus (Jozef Fruček, Linda Kapetanea, Thomas Steyaert) and now Anton Lachky.

Family Journey is the successor of Lachky's Side Effects - last year's production that debuted in Prague. They were both dancing and lingual expressions from a mind of a crazy, manipulative mother and the images from her hysterical-magical world. A world full of paranoid rules capable of making everyone lose their minds. The dance displayed a series of bodily metaphors expressing the devastating consequences of a paranoid pressure on the human soul.

The new production also isn't for the old-fashioned. They might very well have a heart attack when the Korean dancer Hyaejin Lee, dressed in a deep red cocktail dress, jumps on the stage in medias res and starts to perform crazy - however expertly executed - jolt movements, her body shakes, all curled up. Even her face dances in uncontrollable grimaces - sister Jini. And the rest of the dancers also perform dances full of fits. The whole performance is a shaking dance - and be aware, not in any way cheap or trivial - grotesque during which the audience enjoys heaps of fun.

It seems, that Family relationships are an endless source of inspiration for Lachky. In this case a caricatured image of a family on a trip, during which the mutual relationship unfold. They are in fact relationships between clowns, because they all are dancing clowns. Not just their sister Jin. We see the image of a family or any other informal group. The image of its intimacy, all the way down to the lingerie. An image of people, that are close to each other and that know their weaknesses, charms and tricks that they all try on each other. Maybe its an image of real mutual tolerance and love in any group of human beings.

The roles are distributed with simplicity, but with the old, proven efficiency of wandering professionals - comedians. The older brother (Robert Anderson) "is playing the terribly clever one" he preaches to the rest of the family (he regularly does a spoken monologue) - like a Harlequin. The younger brother (Pavel Mašek) - a submissive chump like Pulcinella. The sister (Hyaejin Lee) and the other sister (Ioulia Zacharaki) are the types of Colombina and Arlecchino.

The bodies of Lachky's dancers are overwhelmed, or almost burst with tension and this tension is discharged into absurd grotesque movements. This kind of dance humour (and it is one of the most difficult disciplines) makes the audience laugh as loud as when hearing pub jokes. The dancers compete in "crazy dance jokes". Lachky is - one could say the director of the Ministry of silly walks from the Monty Python.

The stage is blank clean, pure space. The artistic element is represented by the elegant costumes (created by the choreographer). But in a blink of an eye, the chump turns from being in a velvet

jacket to being almost naked. A dancer changes to a clown in underwear. During the end of the last century, Men's underwear has become - for reasons that would deserve a separate analysis - a part of the wardrobe of a contemporary dancer. After all, even Edgar from Shakespeare's King Lear was a clown in underwear!

*Nina Vangeli, Divadelní noviny (Theatre newspaper) November 27, 2017*  
*<http://www.divadelni-noviny.cz/dot-504-praha-family-journey-recenze>*