

KAAI THEATER

PICHET KLUNCHUN & CHEN WU-KANG BEHALF

3 & 4/05/2019 20:30 | KAAITHEATER

DANCE | +/- 90 MIN. | IN ENGLISH

EXTRA Zin om informeel na te praten over deze dansvoorstelling?
Welkom bij LET'S TALK (ABOUT DANCE). Op zaterdag 4/05, na de
voorstelling, in het Kaaicafé.



PICHET KLUNCHUN & CHEN WU-KANG BEHALF

*From a distance, both look alike.
He from Thailand. He from Taiwan.
Their bodies move eloquently, splintered between past and present.
Their stories speak of being between worlds,
before memory, inside politics, beyond expectations.
One is lonely, two is better.
Half full, half empty. Finding oneself in the other.*

NL Tijdens deze gedanste dialoog onthullen de Thaise danser Pichet Klunchun en de Taiwanese danser Chen Wu-kang zich aan elkaar en aan het publiek. Met gebalde portretten uit pure beweging raken ze beurtelings aan thema's als vaderschap, cultureel erfgoed en zelfredzaamheid. Ondertussen zorgt percussioniste Lazara Rosell Albear voor een derde stem.

- De Thaise danser en choreograaf Pichet Klunchun beoefent sinds zijn zestiende de khon, een klassieke Thaise maskerdans. Met deze traditie als backdrop bouwt hij bruggen naar de hedendaagse dans. In Kaaithheater was hij te gast in *Pichet Klunchun and myself*, met de Franse choreograaf Jérôme Bel. In 2004 richtte hij zijn eigen gezelschap op: Pichet Klunchun Dance Company.
- In datzelfde jaar richtte de Taiwanese danser en choreograaf Chen Wu-kang Horse Dance Theatre op, het eerste hedendaagse dansgezelschap in Taiwan met enkel mannelijke dansers. Voordien was hij balletdanser, o.a. bij Eliot Feld in New York.

FR Au cours de ce dialogue dansé, le danseur thaï Pichet Klunchun et le danseur taïwanais Chen Wu-kang se dévoilent l'un à l'autre et au public. Avec des portraits condensés, composés de purs mouvements, ils abordent tour à tour des thèmes comme la paternité, le patrimoine culturel et l'autonomie. La percussionniste Lazara Rosell Albear assure une troisième voix.

- Le danseur et chorégraphe thaïlandais Pichet Klunchun pratique depuis l'âge de seize ans le Khon, une danse de masque thaïlandaise classique. Avec cette tradition en toile de fond, il jette des ponts vers la danse contemporaine. On a déjà pu le voir au Kaaithheater dans *Pichet Klunchun and myself* avec le chorégraphe français Jérôme Bel. En 2004, il a fondé sa propre compagnie : Pichet Klunchun Dance Company.

- Cette même année, le danseur et chorégraphe taïwanais a créé le Chen Wu-kang Horse Dance Theatre, la première compagnie de danse contemporaine à Taïwan, composée exclusivement de danseurs masculins.

EN In this danced dialogue, Thai dancer Pichet Klunchun and Taiwanese dancer Chen Wu-kang reveal themselves to one another and to the audience. With compact portraits of pure movement, they alternately treat themes such as fatherhood, cultural heritage, and self-reliance. In the meantime, percussionist Lazara Rosell Albear adds a third voice.

- Thai dancer and choreographer Pichet Klunchun has been practicing khon – a classical Thai masked dance – since he was sixteen. Against the backdrop of this tradition, he builds bridges to contemporary dance. He has previously presented *Pichet Klunchun and myself* at Kaaitheater with French choreographer Jérôme Bel. In 2004, he founded his own company: Pichet Klunchun Dance Company.
- In the same year, Taiwanese dancer and choreographer Chen Wu-kang founded Horse Dance Theatre, the first contemporary dance company in Taiwan with all-male dancers. He had previously been a ballet dancer with Eliot Feld in New York, among others. questions: “Would you write a hand-written note to ‘dance’ and would you describe or sketch your favourite dance move?”. A selection of these letters has since been published in book form and they are currently working on a complete online archive.

CREDITS

CHOREOGRAPHERS AND PERFORMERS Pichet Klunchun, Chen Wu-kang | **PERCUSSION** Lazara Rosell Albear | **DRAMATURGE** Tang Fu-Kuen | **LIGHTING DESIGNER** Takayuki Fujimoto/ Kinsei | **STAGE DESIGNER** Liao Yin-Chiao | **PRODUCTION HORSE** | **CO-PRODUCTION** Cloud Gate Theatre | **SUPPORTED BY** the Ministry of Culture – Republic of China (Taiwan)



ON OUR 'BEHALF'

ARTICLE BY PAWIT MAHASARINAND (THE NATION, 25/03/2019).

Finding a collaborator when making art is like going on a date, and not necessarily a blind one. You know something of each other's background, think that it looks like a good match. As time goes by, your relationship develops, you know more about and learn from each other, adjusting yourself to make it work without losing your identity or standpoint. Of course, along the way you need some supporters who, to a certain extent, take risks with you, but at the same time you also know there are those who might be opposed. You do your best, hoping that it will last, no matter how long.

Contemporary Thai dancer and choreographer Pichet Klunchun has been meeting with his Taiwanese counterpart Chen Wu-Kang, founder and artistic director of Taiwan's first all-male dance company Horse, for more than three years now. And unlike many artistic relationships that put forward a work or a product, from the start, their first collaboration *Behalf* was only seen by the dance-going public last May.

The Silpathorn Award artist recalls how it all began.

'About four years ago, Taiwan's Ministry of Culture (MoC) invited me to give a talk at Taipei National University of the Arts [TNUA] and at our meeting they proposed a long list of Taiwanese artists, from many disciplines, and suggested I collaborate with some, for which they, of course, pledged their full support. I remember performing in the same festival [*Men Dancing* at Novel Hall] as Chen more than 10 years ago [Pichet was performing his solo *I Am a Demon* while Chen was in a duet *TeteBech*].'

'Our first meeting was at his studio, which is between a temple and a recycling shop. My first impression was that he's a very happy person, despite the fights and struggles he's had in his artistic career. In the first year, we took turns travelling to each other's studios and presenting small showcases of the progress of our work, without any deadline for an actual production. And then when we decided to have one, we asked Tang Fu-Kuen [dramaturg for *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* and artistic director of the Taipei Arts Festival] to come on board.'

Pichet explains how they developed the collaboration, saying: 'It started from his interest in tradition [hence the working title *Body Tradition*], while at the same time questioning his identity. He's also fascinated by my strong traditional arts background. I already have it but the question is how can I find a way for its further development?'

'What's interesting, though, is that in the first year we talked more about fatherhood – I

had a daughter and he was about to have his first child –, artists as fathers and also how we would, or could, pass on traditions to our children,’ Pichet continues. The recipient of John D Rockefeller III award has taken part in many intercultural collaborations throughout his illustrious career. This one, though, he says is different. ‘We’re more like friends than collaborators and so it’s much less stressful,’ he grins.

Chen concurs. ‘Maybe it’s because we share more than a stage collaboration: we also include family in the process. It’s hard for me to tell the differences between living, working and experiencing; they are all mixed altogether, and so what happens in this working process seems natural.

‘Collaborating with Pichet has opened a door for me into Southeast Asian dance and culture [the pair is now also working on another project ‘*Ramayana*’, which also includes Javanese dance master Sardono]. Realising that nothing stands and grows on its own and that we’re all related and affected by one another brought me to care about and also question how we become who we are, and why we dance the way we do. And because we collaborate beyond a performance project, the learning continues to expand,’ he says.

‘Our work is not about a specific aesthetic that we want to create: it’s more about our discovery during the process.’

Making its Southeast Asia debut at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Arts Festival last Friday and coming to Pichet’s home studio this weekend, thanks also to the Taiwanese culture ministry, *Behalf* is the title that Tang has given to the work. The Singaporean dramaturg and producer explains: ‘The title comes from the portraits that each dancer has created in the work. Their sense of identity comes from ‘inherited’, ‘borrowed’ or ‘cultivated’ sources. In short, it’s an ‘identity formed by and from proxy’. This multiplicity of identities is therefore about always speaking and behaving on ‘behalf’ of something or someone else.’

‘*Behalf* also points to the structure of the work, which is strictly built on the principle of ‘half’. The space, time and action of this collaborative work is democratically split equally into halves. This procedure questions the model of old intercultural collaborations in which two or more parties tend to exchange and hybridise, as expected of a typical ‘collaboration’. *Behalf* challenges that assumption and operation,’ Tang explains.

Another partner-in-crime who came in during the last stage of development is veteran Japanese lighting designer Takayuki “Kinsei” Fujimoto. And if his name sounds familiar to Thai performing arts fans’ ears, that’s because his wizardry was seen here four years ago in another contemporary dance work *Alpha* at the Sodsai Pantoomkomol Centre for Dramatic Arts where he also conducted an LED lighting design workshop.

Tang explains: ‘His adaptive lighting practice and tools allow him to be extremely responsive and flexible to instigating new ways of making propositions to the work, and not merely lighting the stage. In short, he has an excellent reputation for conceptual lighting, and this adds immense value and potential to our process.’

Another risk they’re taking is with the music, as the collaborating musician(s) will always be local anywhere they’re performing – in Taipei, it’s a percussionist; in Bangkok, a classical guitarist.

For the world premiere of *Behalf* last May at the Cloud Gate Theatre, Taipei Times’ critic Diane Baker wrote that the work ‘shows what happens when artists want to shake things up and get their audiences thinking. Not everyone was happy with that, judging by the questions asked during the Q&A section. However, anyone who has followed either Chen or Pichet’s work, or that of Horse, should know that these are men who are interested in challenging conventions.’

Without revealing too many secrets, Baker wrote that the work comprises, ‘a prologue, a duet, a series of solos and the Q&A, just not in that order’, noting that *Behalf* is about ‘examining Chen and Pichet’s identities as dancers, their respective cultures and the sharing and transference of power.’ She concluded that the work ‘is not for everyone, but for those who are willing to take a risk, it is worth it.’

Pichet notes that they chose not to reveal any images from the second half of the performance, which was so controversial in Taipei that the theatre needed to issue a statement afterwards.

Chen laughs, predicting: ‘In Bangkok, I think the controversy will start from the first half when Pichet starts his solo. I can’t wait to see how we click with the audience.’

Will we take a risk with them?

LET'S TALK (ABOUT DANCE)

Zin om informeel na te praten over deze dansvoorstelling? Ben je nieuwsgierig naar de ervaringen van anderen, of wil je jouw observaties delen? Welkom bij LET'S TALK (ABOUT DANCE)! Een moderator reikt jou en een kleine groep toeschouwers kapstokken aan om je kijk op dans te delen. Wat heb je gezien en wat betekende dat voor jou?

> za 4/05, na de voorstelling, in het Kaicafé

more dance at Kaaitheater

Mette Edvardsen & Matteo Fargion PENELOPE SLEEPS

In her new creation, Mette Edvardsen explores interfaces with opera, flanked by composer and performer Matteo Fargion. Together, they deconstruct the mythological figure of Penelope. Be whisked away to this intimate, minimalist dream world, where new relationships are forged between women, the world, and the other.

Kaaitheater | 10 > 14/05

Eleanor Bauer & Chris Peck NEW JOY

Eleanor Bauer loves playing with the codes and concepts of contemporary dance. In *New Joy*, she confronts the post-truth age: this dataistic cyber-musical knocks straight through the boundaries of various registers. From body language and spoken language to computer language and back again. Along with composer Chris Peck, Bauer engages all of your senses in her search for meaning and hidden implications.

Kaaitheater | 30/05 > 1/06

P.A.R.T.S. / Anne Teresa & Jolente De Keersmaeker SOMNIA

Anne Teresa and Jolente De Keersmaeker and 44 young dancers take you into the woods. Put on your walking boots for this durational performance that navigates around fragments of *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Johannes Kepler's astronomical novella *Somnium* (1608). Turn your back on the black box and let the wood and the night sky define the stage.

Kasteelpark Gaasbeek | 29/05 >
1/06

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker/Rosas BARTÓK/BEETHOVEN/ SCHÖNBERG

This special repertory evening will present three early works by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, each of which is based on a piece of classical music: Bartók's *Quartet n°4*, Beethoven's *Die Grosse Fuge*, and Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht*. Ictus and the Brussels Philharmonic will accompany the pieces live especially for the Brussels series.

Kaaitheater | 19 > 27/06