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Jan Fabre, Choreographer

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FABRE, JAN (born 14 December 1958 in Antwerp), Belgian choreographer, performance artist, visual artist, and theater director. Fabre studied at Antwerp's Royal Academy for Fine Arts and the Institute for Decorative Arts and Crafts. From 1976 to 1982, he created a series of twenty-nine solo performance artworks including *Money Performance* (1979, Ankerrui Theater, Antwerp); *After Art* (1980, Helfaer Theatre, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin); and *It's Kill or Cure* (1982, Franklin Furnace, New York). Since 1980, Fabre has created more than seventeen ensemble and solo theater works, including three full-length ballets and two operas.

FABRE. Knights in shining armor and bikini-clad ballerinas in *Das Glas im Kopf wird vom Glas: The Dance Sections* (1987), Fabre's first full-length ballet. (Photograph by Flip Gils © 1987 by vzw Troubeleyn; used by permission.)

Das Glas im Kopf wird vom Glas: The Dance Sections, Fabre's first full-length ballet, set to Henryk Górecki's Symphony no. 3, *Symphonie der Klagelieder*, premiered at the Staatstheater Kassel in 1987 and was incorporated into the opera bearing the same name. In it, Fabre defies convention by presenting rudimentary movements of classical ballet in radically slow time. Dancers are costumed first in suits of armor, later in black bikinis. They define the performance space by their processions and positions in relation to large blue ballpoint pen drawings on silk.

The Sound of One Hand Clapping, created for the Frankfurt Ballet at the invitation of artistic director William Forsythe, is set to the music of Eugeniusz Knapik, Bernd Alois Zimmermann, and the Doors. First performed in 1990 at the Frankfurt Schauspielhaus by the Frankfurt Bal-



let with additional performers from Fabre's Antwerp-based Troubleyn group, this work was later incorporated into Fabre's 1992 opera, *Silent Screams, Difficult Dreams*. A third ballet, *Da un'altra faccia del tempo*, set to music by Eugeniusz Knapik and Sofia Gubaidulina, premiered at the Lunatheater, Brussels, in 1993.

Movement is central to Fabre's theater works. His interest in dance begins with movement rituals created for theater pieces such as *Het is theater zoals te verwachten en te voorzien was* (This Is Theater Like It Was to Be Expected and Foreseen, 1982), a "workday"-length episodic performance exploring nontheatrical human action and communication. The language of classical ballet first appears in 1984 in *De macht der theaterlijke dwaasheden* (The Power of Theatrical Madness), where a dancer repeats an adagio movement for thirteen minutes with her back to the audience, as an ode to ballet.

Fabre approaches dance in an experimental mode, neither classical, modern, nor postmodern. He pays homage to Marcel Duchamp and the Dadaists, but only as a reference point from which to forge his own way. Like the surrealists, he finds imagery in dreams. Fabre credits George Balanchine as a source of knowledge concerning space. Fabre's work is tightly constructed and physically and emotionally rigorous, often pushing performers to their limits.

Other examples of Fabre's choreography are found in the theater and opera works: *De macht der theaterlijke dwaasheden* (1984, Teatro Carlo Goldoni, Biennale di Venezia); *Het interview dat sterft . . .*; *Het paleis om vier uur's morgens . . .*, A. G., and *De reïncarnatie van God* (1989, Theater Am Turm, Frankfurt); *Das Glas im Kopf wird vom Glas* (1990, De Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp); *Sweet Temptations* (1991, Vienna Festwochen); and *Silent Screams, Difficult Dreams* (1992, Staatstheater Kassel).

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FADEYECHEV, NIKOLAI (Nikolai Borisovich Fadeyechev; born 27 January 1933 in Moscow), Russian ballet dancer. After graduating in 1952 from the Moscow Ballet School, where he studied under Aleksandr Rudenko, Fadeyechev joined the Bolshoi Ballet as a soloist. His principal roles during his twenty-five-year career included Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, the Prince in *The Sleeping Beauty*, the Prince in *The Nutcracker*, Jean de Brienne in *Raymonda*; Albrecht in *Giselle*, the Poet in *Chopiniana*, Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Vatslav in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, Danila in *The Stone Flower*, Frondoso in *Laurencia*, Ilyas in *Asel*, Don José in *Carmen Suite*, and Karenin in *Anna Karenina*.

Fadeyechev was an excellent partner as well as a master of solo variations. He was the preferred cavalier of leading ballerinas such as Galina Ulanova and Maya Plisetskaya. In classical duets, apart from being a reliable and confident partner, Fadeyechev was able to convey poetically the beauty of love and the caring tenderness of a man in love. His dance had none of the pomposity, affectation, or strain of some other male dancers of his day, and it seemed that the dance was his element. The full-bodied quality of his movements, coupled with his soft gestures, was a natural prelude and barely noticeable transition to his soaring leaps, which were his forte. Fadeyechev was among those rare dancers whose technique is noted for light, seemingly slow-motion jumps, noiseless landings, and a smooth fluidity of movement. This and his noble but graceful *port de bras* created the impression that he could soar in the air.

Despite the exquisite elegance of his dance and his graphic if delicate acting style, Fadeyechev was essentially simple, straightforward, and manly. He seemed to radiate manly composure, calm friendliness, and restrained if casual warmth. He felt the musical continuity within the dance and was careful to maintain the smooth flow of every element of the dance and pantomime. Fadeyechev's romanticism was radiant and full of *joie de vivre*, with no suggestion of false exaltation or highstrung impetuosity. The dreamy quality of his heroes was a perfectly natural expression of lofty but simple aspirations.

Three roles stand out in Fadeyechev's long career. Appearing as Ilyas in Oleg Vinogradov's *Asel* (1967) Fadeyechev, for the first time in a career devoted to the romantic princes of the classical repertory, portrayed a contemporary man, a truck driver. He kept none of the romantic elegance, rounded arm positions, and graceful bearing of his princely roles, but seized the chance to display his range and flexibility by developing a special gait with a slight waddle, a sweeping breadth of movement, and good-humored, slightly angular mannerisms. He mastered with ease the complexity of this new kind of choreography, with its especially difficult lifts and supports. Equally challenging was the role of Don José in Al-