unquestioned the distinction between disabled and nondisabled, and Bel's words veer troublingly close to romanticizing the Theater HORA performers and the less impeded access to dancerly eloquence he claims they possess by virtue of their cognitive differences. But perhaps it is asking too much of a single performance to expect it to resolve all of the questions it raises. "Disabled" is a multivalent word. As the literary critic Michael Bérubé has remarked, one of its meanings can be found in "the relatively 'neutral' way that a smoke detector or a function on one's computer can be disabled" (2005:573). *Disabled Theater* might best be thought of as an attempt to momentarily "disable" the conventions of theatrical and choreographic representation that rely upon the unspoken and unseen authority of a (presumably rational, cognitively normative, and nondisabled) author, director, or choreographer. *Disabled Theater* encourages us, instead, to think more expansively about how various and multiply calibrated levels of cognitive capacity come together in performance, and (by extension) in the world.

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Cédric Andrieux

With Bel, Benjamin, and Brecht in Vancouver

Peter Dickinson

In January 2013, Vancouver's PuSh International Performing Arts Festival partnered with the city's Dance Centre in presenting Jérôme Bel's *Cédric Andrieux* (2009). That the audience mostly knew what to expect from the choreographer whom André Lepecki has called the chief interrogator of "dance's political ontology" (2006:45) can be traced to two previous Bel works that elicited much excitement and commentary when they premiered in Vancouver: *Pichet Klunchun and myself* (2005), programmed as part of the Vancouver International Dance Festival in 2009; and *The Show Must Go On* (2001), which opened the PuSh Festival in 2010.

At the start of the performance, Cédric Andrieux walks onstage in sweats; a gym bag is slung over one shoulder and he carries a water bottle. He strikes a dancer's pose downstage: spine erect and elongated, feet firmly planted in first position. But before Andrieux moves, he speaks, and suddenly, for those of us in the audience, he is no longer solely a dancer whose primary technical instrument is his (mostly

silent) body. Neither is he simply an actor, per se, at least not any more than he would be when *playing his part* in a story ballet, or *doing his thing* in a more rigorously conceptual piece by Merce Cunningham, for whom Andrieux danced for eight demanding years. To a certain extent Andrieux becomes a character, indeed the titular character in the dramatization of his own life story, which, in Andrieux's case, begins with a mediated twist on the standard narrative of dance apprenticeship.

After introducing himself and establishing his dance-world bona fides by citing his membership in Cunningham's company, Andrieux cycles back in time, telling us how, as a boy growing up in the maritime outpost of Brest, France, he fell in love with dance not after attending a performance of a ballet—*The Nutcracker*, for example—but while watching the American television series *Fame*. The line gets a laugh and helps to establish our identification with Andrieux as a performer. But even here, those key aspects we associate with depth of theatrical character—psychology, plot function, formal function, symbolic function—are less important than the gestic quality of his speech. In this context, it is this quality that temporarily marks Andrieux as, after Bertolt Brecht, "socially critical": his physical poses have less to do with an explanation or technical description of movement training than with an historicization of the material conditions, including pop culture, that underpin that training (Brecht 1964:139).

To this end, we can perhaps most productively think of Andrieux, like virtually all of his fellow subjects in Bel's series of talking dance portraits,[1] as a Brechtian epic narrator. That is, Bel is using "the frame of the theatre" to "produce a discourse" on dance (Bel in Bauer 2008:43); in narrating their lives, Bel's subject-performers are dialectically showing the event (dance history) by showing themselves (as working dancers), and showing themselves by showing the event (see Brecht 1964:136, 193–94; see also Benjamin 2003b:306).

Autobiographical memory, theatricalized by Bel as the medium rather than the means of such showing in *Cédric Andrieux*, thus becomes less about individual psychology than about the archaeology of dance as a discipline. As Brecht's friend and critical interpreter Walter Benjamin words it in his *Berlin Chronicle*, in a passage he would later adapt and title "Excavation and Memory": "Language has unmistakably made plain that memory is not an instrument for surveying the past but its theater. It is the medium of past experience, just as the earth is the medium in which dead cities lie buried. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging" (1999b:611).[2] Andrieux himself hinted in the talkback following the second of his Vancouver shows that the success of his performance depends in large measure on the degree to which he cedes the embodied memories of his years dancing for iconic modernist choreographer Merce Cunningham and of absorbing Cunningham's singular movement vocabulary and distinctive performance aesthetic (the unitards, the non-synchronous music) to the discursive framing that Bel uses to demystify the perceived naturalness of any such dance-world fit. Bel's various collaborators may be speaking

1. In addition to the duet with Klunchun, a Thai classical dancer (the only time Bel himself appears onstage, and the only one of the portraits to focus on a non-Western dance tradition), the other subjects in the series are: Véronique Doisneau (2004), a retiring *corps* dancer from the Paris Opéra Ballet; Isabel Torres (2005), prima ballerina of the Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro; and Lutz Förster (2009), longtime member of Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal and now, following her death, the company's new Artistic Director.

2. The translation of this passage in "Excavation and Memory" is slightly different: "Language has unmistakably made plain that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but rather a medium. It is the medium of that which is experienced, just as the earth is the medium in which ancient cities lie buried. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging" (Benjamin 1999c:576).

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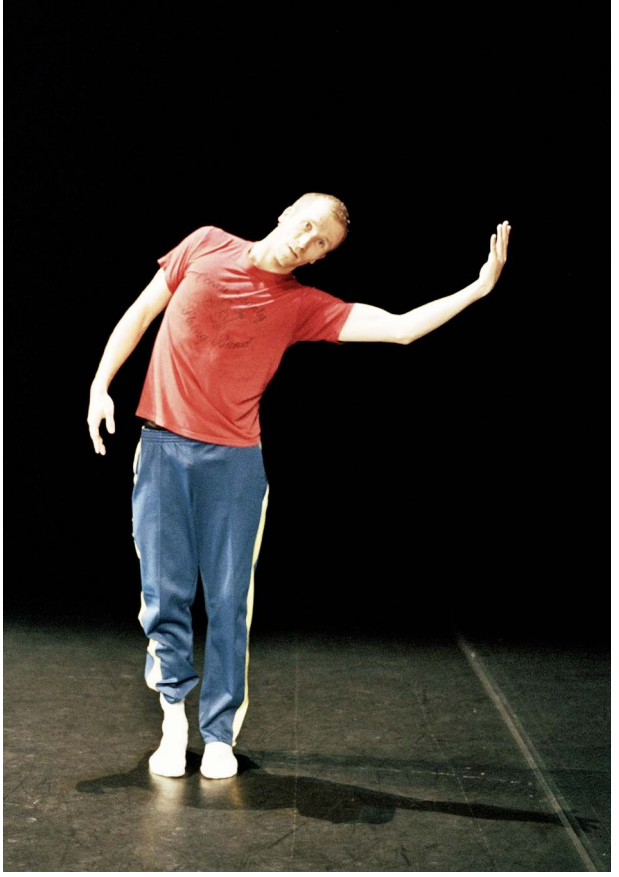

Figure 1. Cédric Andrieux demonstrates Cunningham's warm-up exercises in Jérôme Bel's Cédric Andrieux. *PuSh International Performing Arts Festival/The Dance Centre, Vancouver, January 2013. (Photo by Herman Sorgeloos)*

in the first person, and their names may figure in the titles, but in terms of the specific performance genealogies being traced in these portraits the signature on each piece belongs to Bel, who as dance *philosophe* and theatrical *metteur-en-scène* lays claim to a certain "onto-historical" omniscience regarding the political, cultural, and historical significance of his subjects' words (see Lepecki 2006:46).[3] In *Cédric Andrieux*, Bel even figures as a kind of *deus ex machina*.

To watch *Cédric Andrieux* is to experience the talking of dance's institutionalized walk: throughout the piece, speech "ex-poses" (in the double sense of presenting through exposition and decentering through arrested, suspended, and fragmented movement) the institutional and ideological apparatuses circumscribing not just the body *who* is dancing, but also *how* that body is dancing.[4] In terms of Bel's larger dialectical investigation of the place where the life of the dancer intersects the history of dance—his Benjaminian contextualizing of the "now-time" of performance in terms of the "particular recognizability" of "the images that are synchronic with it" (1999a:462)—we register Andrieux's narration as the "now/then" (as in: now, then, how did this come to pass?) equivalent to Brecht's "Not...But" (1964:137, 144), stripping away dance's conceit of technical virtuosity by, among other things, contextualizing the time and labor that go into choreographed movement's "timeless" execution.[5]

In this respect, it bears noting that—the *Fame* anecdote notwithstanding—Andrieux's formal dance training began relatively inauspiciously, as he tells us in his narrative. Encouraged by his mother, a fan of contemporary dance, Andrieux enrolls in the local dance studio, where he is immediately told that, given

3. Questions of authorship have preoccupied Bel from the beginning of his career (see Lepecki 2006:51–52), an interest he has just as frequently announced in the titles of his works: *Nom donné par l'auteur* (1994), inspired in part by the work of Roland Barthes; *Jérôme Bel* (1995), in which the eponymous choreographer pointedly does not appear; and *Xavier Le Roy* (2000), conceived by Bel's choreographic colleague, but claimed—and danced—by Bel himself.

4. In her consideration of *Véronique Doisneau* as a species of contemporary "lecture-performance," Patricia Milder likewise notes that Bel's institutional critique stems from an autoethnographic impulse: "In Bel's work in particular, we see that criticism of an institution, such as ballet, is not an aggressive push against a social structure from without, but is rather sympathetic to the players of roles in this world, and hence the larger world. Bel's tonal approach is delicate; he has a precise ability not to laugh at what is immensely important to participants in the field" (2011:18–19). For additional discussion of Bel's work as lecture-performance, see Frank (2013).

5. An earlier version of these reflections was first presented, in late June 2013, at PSi 19, a conference that took as its conceptual focus the meta-critical, and suitably Benjaminian, caesura of "Now, Then," and toward which, à la Brecht, I rather instrumentally oriented much of my analysis.

his body and meager talents, his prospects are not great, but that the experience will be good for his personal "development." This is the first instance of Andrieux defying his critics, and soon he auditions for and is accepted into the Consérvatoire in Paris, eventually graduating at the top of his class, and demonstrating for us the solo by Philippe Tréhet, *Nuit Fragile* (1990), that he performed for his exam. He tells us all of this matter-of-factly, at once brutally honest and genially resigned, communicating with equal affectlessness his love of dance and his own technical shortcomings. Not to mention the additional offstage exigencies of the dancer's life, which include moving to New York on a whim in pursuit of a love interest and, once accepted into Cunningham's company, dealing with the unvarying routine of maestro Merce's class.

The sequence in which Andrieux repeats the series of exercises that begin each day for all Cunningham dancers—first the spine, now the arms, then the legs (and to the front, back, sides, and each diagonal)—is notable for the narrated thought bubbles that accompany the movements: Andrieux's musings on what's going on outside the studio and what's in his fridge, reminding us that, durationally speaking, boredom is perhaps the most material consequence of the dancer's daily art routine. Likewise, in commenting on what it meant to take direction from an octogenarian who composed his works on a computer and barked instructions from a chair, Andrieux goes on to demonstrate how challenging it is, in real time and space, to execute algorithmically generated chance choreography, where the curve or tilt of a torso, the overlaying of arms on feet, and the explosive vertical leap while balanced on one bent leg is easier to achieve animatronically on the screen than mechanically in the studio. In other words, the "now that and then that and now that again" of virtual movement simulation becomes the *not* that *but* maybe this of actual physical accomplishment; we witness Andrieux, in attempting to reproduce Cunningham's instructions, literally deciding what it is possible for his body to do.

In an equally dialectical fashion, Andrieux reflects briefly on the music that was always an afterthought for Cunningham and his performers, but which caused Andrieux's grandmother, watching and listening in the audience, such physical and emotional distress. Throughout his career, Cunningham collaborated with several important modern composers, including his partner John Cage. However, Bel's inclusion of the anecdote about Andrieux's grandmother reminds us that in terms of dance historical convention, one of Cunningham's most important (or infamous) achievements was dismantling the idea that musicality—steps in time to an, ideally, harmonic score—was the true measure of a choreographer's compositional brilliance and a dancer's technical prowess. Thus, Cunningham rehearsed with his company in silence, and the music (along with the set) was only added at the first performance—no doubt compounding the experience of acoustic and kinesthetic dissonance for audience members like Andrieux's grandmother.

Even more compellingly, Andrieux talks about the humiliation of wearing Cunningham's trademark unitards. The moment in the performance when Andrieux removes from his gym bag a brightly patterned example of this costume elicited the most laughs from PuSh audiences on both of the nights I attended the show. When Andrieux subsequently strides offstage for what feels like five full minutes in order to change into it, Bel is reminding us once again of the time and labor concealed within a dancer's preparation; but he is also preparing to reveal to us—quite literally—the paradoxical dialectics of the body at the heart of formalist approaches to dance. On the one hand, the unitard is ideally suited to Cunningham's aesthetic. Functionally, it allows for freedom of movement and an immediate registering of a dancer's line. And, representationally, its androgyny discourages any overtly gendered reading of the movement. At the same time, as Andrieux shows us after returning to the stage, adjusting his dance belt and the battery pack attached to his headset, tugging and rearranging the unitard's material as if trying to find more room within it, the idea of the body as a blank canvas for art (including, in the case of Cunningham, the visual art of collaborators like Robert Rauschenberg) is premised on the willful erasure of the very fleshly corporeality of that body. As Arlene Croce has famously stated, onstage it is the ballerina's arabesque that is real, not her leg (2000:67). With

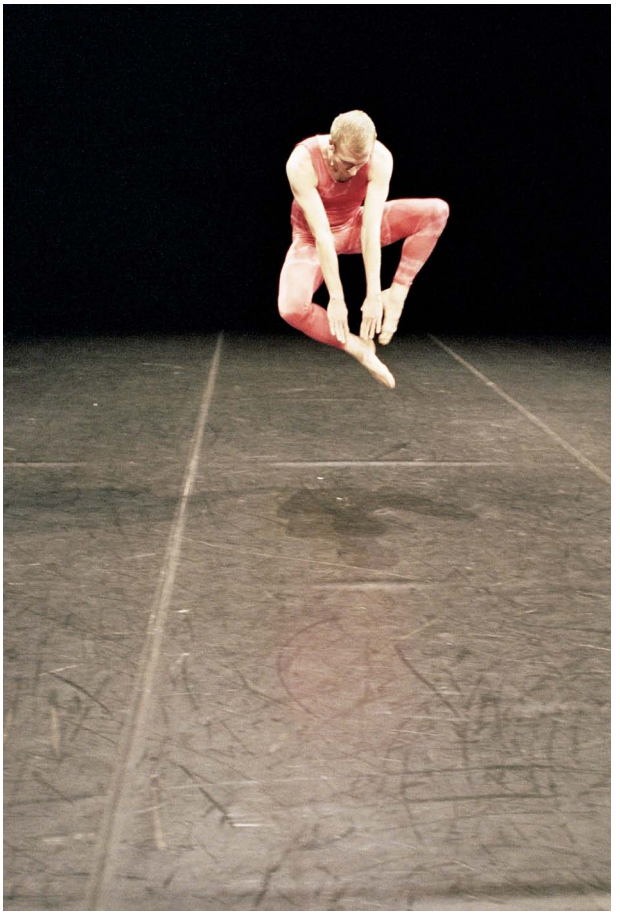

Figure 2. Cédric Andrieux in his Cunningham unitard in Jérôme Bel's Cédric Andrieux. *PuSh International Performing Arts Festival/The Dance Centre, Vancouver, January 2013. (Photo by Herman Sorgeloos)*

Andrieux's costume change—and his commentary on it—such somatic illusions are deconstructed and exposed to dialectical scrutiny. Thus, in his subsequent performance of excerpts from Cunningham's *Biped* (1999) and *Suite for Five* (1956–58) we are attuned not just to Andrieux's technical proficiency in executing the complex choreography, but also, at the visceral level of bulging quadriceps and popping arm veins, to the sheer muscular effort required to do so.

Despite all the quoted dance excerpts, and of course the narrated text, the performance by Andrieux is remarkable for its stillness: long, mostly silent, stretches as he prepares for the next movement sequence or struggles to catch his breath afterwards; frequent exits from the stage; moments when he simply stands, quietly taking the temperature of the room. As might be expected from one of the reigning practitioners of conceptual non-dance, and as Andrieux somewhat tetchily acknowledged during the talkback in connection to the length of his pauses and when he was allowed to take a drink of water, all of these bits are meticulously choreographed by Bel. Lepecki has persuasively argued that, in his early works (up to and including his supposed farewell to choreography, *The Last Performance* [1998]) Bel used stillness to critique "modernity's kinetic project of endless acceleration and agitation," and especially dance's role in mimetically reproducing that project (2006:64).[6] In his more recent dance portraits, Bel uses stillness to probe, on an even more deeply subjective temporal level, how the working dancer—through the institutional structures of training, rehearsal, and performance—is caught up in, accedes to, and/or resists this forward march of dance history. What results is the embodied equivalent of Benjamin's linguistic archaeology of modernity, what in *The Arcades Project* he calls "dialectics at a standstill" (1999a:463). The now and then of dance comes together with the dancer's life in a constellation of historically indexical images—or, more properly in this case, memorial poses—to make visible their genealogical connections.

6. Here Lepecki is drawing on Gaston Bachelard's notion of a "slower ontology," and on anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis's concept of the "still-act"—the moment "when a subject interrupts historical flow and *practices* historical interrogation" (Lepecki 2006:15).

Not so coincidentally, Bel positions himself as the logical end-point of Andrieux's excavatory process. The piece closes with Andrieux, having returned to France to take up a position with the Lyon Opéra Ballet, recounting the chance meeting with the choreographer on a train. This would eventually lead to their collaboration, as well as the sense of liberation Andrieux felt performing in Bel's *The Show Must Go On* (2001), part of the Lyon Opéra's company repertoire. As anyone who has seen that work knows, its titular imperative is directed squarely at the audience. A DJ sits at a makeshift console downstage center, a stack of CDs on the table beside him. One by one, he inserts a disc, cues a song, and...nothing happens. It is only halfway through the third song, The Beatles' "Come Together," that the cast actually assembles onstage. And only during the fourth song, David Bowie's "Let's Dance," do they start to move, busting into a mix of goofy club grooves during each chorus. To the extent that dance takes place at all in *The Show*, it is mostly in the form of quotation: the parody of ballet steps the women in the cast launch into during Lionel Ritchie's "Ballerina Girl"; the exhaustive—and exhausting—display of moves from the "Macarena" wedding song; the mimicking of the Winslet/DiCaprio *Titanic* pose to Céline Dion's "My Heart Will Go On." In this respect, while its soundtrack might constitute a shared affective lingua franca of pop music schmaltz, it is, as Tim Etchells has argued, *The Show*'s choreographic "voids" and the "sculptural" quality of the dancers' (non) movement that arguably incite the release of that emotion—be it rage or joy or boredom (2004:10, 12). Paradigmatic in this regard is the sequence in which the cast of *The Show*, reassembled onstage after having vacated it for the duration of "Imagine" and "The Sounds of Silence," stares out at the audience while the Police's "Every Breath You Take" plays over the loudspeakers.

It is this sequence that Andrieux re-enacts at the end of his solo show. Having exited the stage to change out of his Cunningham unitard, he returns in jeans, hoodie, and sneakers to re-establish the terms of his relationship with us, standing stock-still and picking out successive audience members to lock eyes with. At the 2010 PuSh performance of *The Show Must Go On*, the transmission of affect during this sequence was, as I recall, very different, not least because there was an entire posse of performers staring at the audience, many of whom I knew personally, and none of whom were talking. Andrieux's narration of what he sees while he is surveying us—embarrassment, shyness, amusement, anxiety, anger—adds an important additional frisson. For if, as Andrieux tells us, his career has been a search to find a way to move without judgment, then this is the "now-time" of dialectical truth-telling (see Benjamin 1999a:463). Temporarily reversing the roles of performer and spectator, his gaze asks *not* "how do *I* look," *but* "how do *you* look." Show me.

The dialectical relationship between standing still and moving onstage is historicized in an even more starkly material way in Bel's *Véronique Doisneau*. That performance concludes with a partial—that is, solo—recreation of the scene from Act 2 of *Swan Lake* in which, conventionally, the full 32-member complement of the *corps de ballet* dance together. As Doisneau tells us, the scene is at once beautiful to behold and "horrible" to perform, since for long stretches the *corps* dancers remain immobile, serving in Doisneau's words as mere "human décor" to highlight the star turns of the soloists. And then, calling to the tech booth for a recording of Tchaikovsky's score, she proceeds to show us these poses, holding them for the prescribed musical counts; her isolation onstage magnifies how the counts are qualitatively "homogeneous [and] empty"—to use Benjamin's terms (2003a:395, 397).

By contrast, the beats Andrieux holds at the end of his performance seem much more affectively varied and full, most likely because of the force of the personality to which he subjects us. Which is also to say that as bookends to Bel's series on dancers' lives—a reading Andrieux himself encouraged in his talkback—these two pieces make time stand still both as a means of asserting each company member's place, as an "emancipated" solo artist, within the received history of dance interpretation and representation and as a way of foregrounding the extent to which, as hitherto anonymous working dancers, each also remained "alienated" from his or

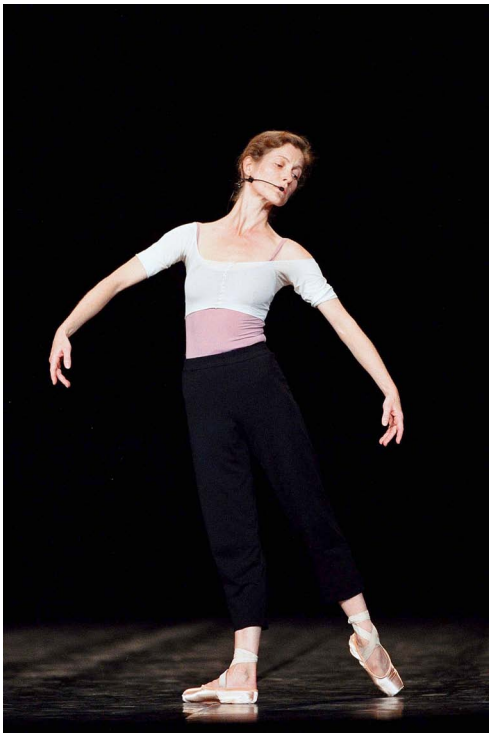

Figure 3. Véronique Doisneau holding one of the corps poses from act 2 of Swan Lake *in Jérôme Bel's* Véronique Doisneau. *Springdance Festival, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 17 April 2005. (Photo by Anna Van Kooij)*

her labor for most of their careers.[7] For me, the note of Benjaminian Messianism on which *Cédric Andrieux* ends is fully congruent with the rest of the piece's trafficking in Brechtian historicization, with the doubled "now-time" of the performative present—Andrieux's twice-performed performance of Bel—nevertheless set aslant the *longue durée* of Western choreography's institutional past: those feet that, as at the beginning, are inching despite themselves toward first position.

Cumulatively what Bel shows us in these portraits is that iconic dance works can never be separated from the work time that goes into creating them. For most dancers, including Andrieux and Doisneau, the latter temporality has a terminus, movement *in time* always dialectically intertwined with the movement *of time*. And yet, *at the same time*, their collaborations with Bel have allowed both dancers to extend the life of their dancing careers beyond their normal limits. Andrieux, who noted in his PuSh Festival talkback that he began performing this piece the year Cunningham died, continues to tour it extensively. And though the live performance of *Véronique Doisneau* has been retired along with its performer's Paris Opéra career, the work lives on as a film, which, like the film document of *Pichet Klunchun and myself*, is regularly screened internationally. Giorgio Agamben has argued that the constitutive element of cinema "is gesture and not image," further stating that dance-as-gesture is nothing more than "the endurance and the exhibition" of movement's mediality, which is to say the ethical dimension of "the being-in-language of human beings" (2000:55, 58–59). If this is so, then the dance film would seem to be a logical extension of Bel's theatrical frame: a place where we can repeatedly arrest, review, and take stock of what, after Agamben, we might call the biopolitics of choreographed movement, in which the forms that dance has taken during its institutional lifetime are examined in dialectical relation to the naked lives of the dancers who are at once included within and exceptional to that history.

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7. I borrow the terms "emancipation" and "alienation" from Bel's own published commentary on his series of dance portraits (see Bel 2009). Further, I am suggesting the choreographer is himself channeling a Marxian theory of alienation, in which the fetish for dance as commodity turns the dancer's labor into a power (be it company hierarchy or required technique) that controls absolutely (see Marx 1990:163–77; and 1992:322–33).

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TDR: The Drama Review 58:3 (T223) Fall 2014.

The Illumination of LEIMAY's Becoming – Corpus

Carol Martin and Richard Schechner

We enter BAM's new, elegant Fishman Space with its well-raked, comfortable seats for about 150 persons and face a broad uncurtained shallow stage, about 40′ x 25′. It is austere and well-suited for dance, for intimate theatre: for butoh. And for, as it turns out, the September 2013 premiere of *Becoming – Corpus* by Ximena Garnica and Shige Moriya, the creators of the company LEIMAY.

Choreographer Garnica and visual artist Moriya, are from Columbia and Japan respectively. They offer a splendid merging/clashing of movement and light in patterns that approach and recede. Garnica and Moriya have been artistic and personal partners for 13 years. Their intimacy shows in the way that Garnica's choreography is structured, framed, and permeated by Moriya's lighting and Moriya's light is populated and articulated by Garnica's extraordinary choreography. The integration of movement and light makes Moriya's changing visual design the eighth performer onstage.

Pre-performance audience chitchat fades as the performers take their places onstage and the house darkens. Bodies materialize as horizontal bands of light, slowly and subtly at first, reveal people standing perfectly still. Gradually they are each illuminated in a box of white light as if they are being born from the grave. The boxes of light change to colored circles that reveal the dancers' heads and profiles floating in darkness.