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Age of Maturity

By Blaž Lukan

Secret Sunshine Schedule by Matjaž Pograjc is a highly purified dance composition captured in a transparent plexi-glass aquarium. Although the dancers may escape the aquarium, they keep returning into it, for it is their only »ecosystem«. Unlike Pograjc's previous shows, which were characterised by the desire to escape a certain space or climb the »ill-fated« wall, borders or floor, his latest work seems to be entirely contained in front of us, in the inevitable point where at arm's reach the spectator's and dancer's gaze meet. The end of romantic »escapism« is undoubtedly a sign of Pograjc's maturity. The realisation about the helplessness of the utopian projection is replaced by the awareness of the harsh »reality«. Nevertheless, this new reality of Pograjc's show is not resigned or »pessimistic«. Rather, despite its harshness, it remains playful and poetic. Its greatest quality is that it simply exists here, in front of us.

Nevertheless, everything appears to be the way it used to be: dance individualisation of the two sex groups, their initial mutual differences, aggressive clashes of different principles and, finally, agreement to live in »harmony«. The first scenes consist of both soft brushing and aggressive blows and falls against the plexi walls of the cage. Nevertheless, the violence seems to be directed not towards somebody else but towards one's own body, which splayed out falls and crashes against the bottom of the box. More than in any other show, the atmosphere is erotically charged with breathing, kisses against the walls and »mature-love« scenes of inseparable attachment and reflexive repulsion.

Despite the »age-old« conflict, there is nothing tragic left in the denouement and final outcome. Despite the »crisis of realism«, which is mentioned by Pograjc in the accompanying text, realism is the show's most powerful point of identification.

Some of the most intensive »entries« of the *Secret sunshine schedule* are the group ones (particularly striking is the symmetric harmony and physical intertwining of male dancers - Primož Bezjak, Igor Dragar, Branko Potočan and Matej Recer), although the individual sequences are increasingly dominated by exclusion and loneliness. For this reason, the female part of the group (Alma Blagdanič, Blažka Müller and Katarina Stegnar) is marked with melancholy. Nevertheless, this melancholy is no longer a simple emotion of sadness over being forgotten or abandoned by somebody else (a person or the world in general). Rather, it is a moment of helplessness immediately before the entry into a new cycle, act or dance.

The strongest points of the show are in fact the moments of transition from »looseness« to hardness, leaps from the corner to the centre, somersaults from the vertical to the horizontal position of the body, marked by loud falls and immediate transitions to a new standstill. In this new world order, the possibility of pleasure is conditional.

In other words, despite its clear presence, it is »see-through« and a different writing can be read on its back side. A few »folklore« elements of the show give more an impression of a quotation or an intermezzo rather than a real point of departure of the dance »story«. The music accompanying the scenes seems to be more adequate when it gives the dancers the »possibility to choose« either rhythms or bases than in the emphasised mood of the five parts of the show.

Secret Sunshine Schedule manifests the possibility of co-existence in the absolutely shaken up although still relatively »stable« world. Despite the fall of the »youthful« idea about the universal truth (expressed through distinctly polarised relations), the connecting link of this world still remains the author's will to be actively present in its partial phenomena. From the generalised »big« story characteristic of the age of maturation, the author moved to mature concreteness of the small form. In this moment, Pograjc's fall from the infinite »sky« to the *hard* ground of the awareness about the edge of his own presence is successful and promising.