

P. A. R. T. S.

- Opening PARTS 20 - Speech by Thomas Plischke - Student 1st generation 1995-1998 -

Even if my artistic life
happens mostly elsewhere
with my partner in art, life and family Katrin Deufert,
I am honored to speak here tonight
in the place that is my artistic home.

I am glad that this celebration,
20 years of PARTS,
is dedicated to my friend George Khumalo,
and sad of course that he can't celebrate with us today.

With him I shared an apartment,
close to the flea market at Rue Blaes
and many evenings, many stories.
I still remember his laughter,
a laughter of one of the many great artists
that this school has helped
to put on their artistic path.

20 Years ago PARTS started this
by doing it different
doing it in another way.
Close to the everyday practice of dance, choreography and music.
Close to ROSAS and Ictus,
and with a dedication to the great artists of the field
and to strong examples of their work.

For some this focus on repertory work seemed odd,
maybe like building a canon.
A shortlist for styles, and processes,
but it needs just a small step aside
to understand that making these works
accessible to the students,

not just to repeat them

but to let them take them apart, investigate the material,
work with the dancers that danced these works
or are currently dancing them
and to find their own limitations with the material.

In short: to deal with these works

as if they were an experimental set up
all the way until performing them.

This to me was and still is
the greatest way of teaching dance and choreography.
one could say
learning by doing.

But I prefer

'reflecting in action' (ref. Donald Schön)

Because to understand the personal language of an artist
is also always a practice of the mind.

These selected works provided an opening for work-experience
and this to me is even more important
than the daily routine of dance training.
there the experience is prescribed
with little investigation possible.

But to be face-to-face with a voice of choreography,
in an articulated relation to music
is how dance in my opinion should happen,
for students and audiences alike.

So the current work of Katrin and myself,
dealing with choreography as a social situation,
not as an execution of material
has its origin,
for my part,
in this practice.

To me personally
this was an overwhelming experience
as learning was not the result of teaching knowledge
or representing beauty,
but a process of understanding artistic work.

So before celebrating the anniversary of this great school
I want to personally thank
Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker
for being the bold artistic mind
that made this all possible.

and also Theo van Rompay as her partner in this project,
and both again as representatives
of all the people that helped
building the structures, frames and processes
to maintain and nourish this school.

If we take the presence of this school for granted.

If we even develop a grain of vanity for this project,
it is easy to forget all the hard work, day by day,
that is necessary to keep it alive.

And I invite you to imagine that PARTS would have never happened,
And what this would mean for the Dance in Brussels,
Europe and elsewhere.

I am here because Katrin and I teach at the moment
in a pilot project
of the research cycle
and we were also invited to help think
about how this school can reform,
adapt, invent ... in the future.

So after 20 years
PARTS is about to reinvent itself
And this is all the more exciting
as the current european politics
in the field of culture
seems to operate without any visions
but with doubt instead.
Institutions and artists tend to adapt
and stick to
what works already.
What they know works,
Thus, the conventional and mainstream.

To start this new pilot phase today
therefore, is a wonderful reason to celebrate!

And once more PARTS can become the place
that contributes to the artistic field
not only by educating dancers and choreographers,
not by being an inner circle of the gifted and beautiful,
but by creating dance education and opening a space for exploration,
thus challenging the educational and the artistic field.

Art and research are pointing towards what we don't know yet.
They are exploratory, investigative, curious practices.

So personally, artistically, and in the name of dance,
Thank you for this exciting 20 years and
all the best for an exploratory and curious future ahead.

Thomas Plischke, Brussels, 8.9.2015.