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王匡

不同人有不同方式去寫周年作紀念。早兩年，翻娜·包殊就廣發英雄帖，邀請來自五湖四海的舞蹈愛好者集烏珀塔爾，把她的25周年變成一次演藝馬拉松。

以色列編舞家奧哈特·勒赫林 (Ohad Naharin) 的方式，則是把過去十多年的作品選段混製後出新作，並取名《十級地震》(Deca Dance)，作為他擔任了巴舒化舞蹈團 (Batsheva Dance Company) 藝術總監10年的註腳。

而過去10年，又的確是勒赫林的黃金年代。在他的帶領下，巴舒化舞蹈團不僅在以色列本土越戰越勇，就是歐美的各大舞蹈節中，亦經常可以找到他們的蹤影，而勒赫林本人更獲無數芭蕾舞團委約創作。當中包括維蘇的里昂歌劇院芭蕾舞團 (Lyon Opera Ballet)，加爾堡芭蕾舞團 (Cullberg Ballet)，荷蘭舞蹈劇場 (Nederlands Dance Theatre) 及法蘭克福芭蕾舞團 (Frankfurt Ballet) 等等。

不過，有著如此的前設，《十級地震》在完整性方面自然要有所犧牲，只是對於追隨多年的擁躉，那是一次重溫精采片段的聚會，而對於從未遇上的觀眾，折子戲式的大全提供了一個機會，去粗略認識勒赫林的藝術風格。

基本上，《十級地震》由九個作品的選段組成，年代最久遠的一齣是《Black Milk》，於1985年面世，最新的則是《Moshe》，首演於99年。今年五月，法國里昂芭蕾舞團就曾把《Black Milk》帶到香港，看過的觀眾大概記憶猶新。五個赤膊上陣的男舞者，輪流從臉到胸髀上一抹黑油彩，繼而在行雲流水的音符中，展開此起彼落起伏有致的動作，風格純淨而樸實，有若一幅流動身體風景圖。

不過，踏入九十年代兼登上巴舒化舞蹈團的掌舵後，勒赫林的風格看來起了很大變化，既可搖滾亦可歌廳，既有歐陸式流麗舞步亦有近乎是末日戰士的芭蕾舞戲，興之所至還會帶領觀眾上台共舞，又把脫衣變成一次狂熱份子的集體解脫，只是在多樣化的變奏之中，勒赫林似乎對於黑這個顏色，有接近迷信的執著。

假若說《十級地震》有如樂隊或歌手的精選大碟，那麼長約70分鐘的新作《勒赫林病毒》(Virus of Ohad Naharin)，就是勒赫林的全新唱片，完整而且文以載道，一反過去偏向形式先行的呈現方式。

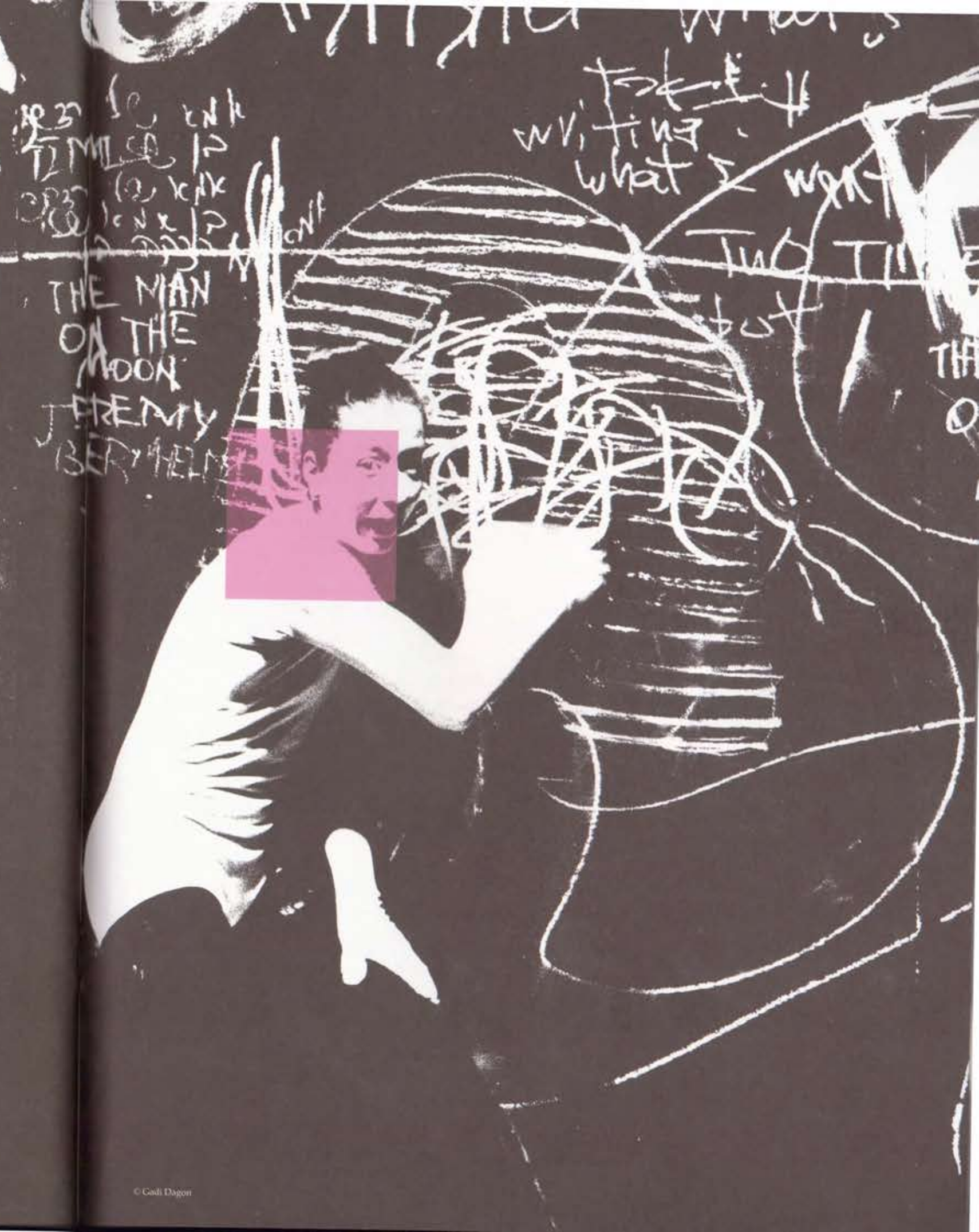
# Naharin spurs quantum leap of Batsheva Dance Company 慶典與病毒

《勒赫林病毒》源自2000年12月在以色列發生的一場宗教衝突，但勒赫林並不火上加油或悲天憫人，而是採取比較抽離的論述，並把阿拉伯人與猶太人之間的對立，平衡對照在演出/創作人與觀眾的關係之上。

台上末端的黑木板是界線也是城牆，牆上塗鴉由人形漸變成字母，再變成巴勒斯坦字樣，最後更添上了一抹紅。牆頭站有黑西裝男子，不時高聲朗讀奧地利劇作家Peter Handke的作品《Offending the Audience》，內容處處針對觀眾的期望與既成觀念，時而像指摘時而像評論，單向而且控訴性十足。在男子與觀眾之間的舞員，則穿上矚眼看去有若石膏雕塑的半身肉色裝束，在阿拉伯與古典音樂之間游移，整體動作風格少了過往的爆炸力，但仍是勒赫林的簽名式。

開始與結束時的阿拉伯歌曲，也為《勒赫林病毒》帶來了多一個註腳。歌詞中經常出現的Jana一字，在阿拉伯文中解作天堂，象徵愛與和平的夢想。現實中，阿拉伯人與猶太人之間的衝突與紛爭，大概會是糾纏到千秋萬世的，只是在藝術的領土上，在這樣的一個晚上，大家還是可以兼容並存。

王匡為文字工作者



## Kwong Wai-lap

Israel, as a modern nation, is never a comfortable place to be in. Born out of turmoil, peace seems forever within reach and yet still remains elusive and far away.

But, despite the daily threat of destruction, the Israelis hang on to the urgency of staying alive to reinforce their faith in a brighter future. Beneath the apparent sterile surface of the desert landscape lies the land of "milk and honey". Apart from the abundant natural resources and the breath-taking natural beauty, it is a land of rich cultural heritage. It is intriguing to observe how this young nation revitalises and regenerates the contemporary relevance of its centuries-old civilisation.

**Ohad Naharin is definitely one of the icons of this Judaic renaissance.**

Born in an artistic family in Israel in a kibbutz (his mother was a dance and music teacher and his father an actor now involved with psychodrama), Naharin was trained musically before he began his training as a dancer with Batsheva. He continued his studies at the Juilliard School in New York, where he worked with renowned choreographers, including Martha Graham, Maurice Bejart and Jiri Kylian. Kylian was deeply impressed with his choreographic talent.

Naharin's collaboration with the Nederlands Dance Theater triggered off a series of commissions from leading dance companies in the world, including Cullberg Ballet, Lyon Opera Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet and Ballet du Grand Theatre de Geneve.

The appointment of Ohad Naharin as Artistic Director of Batsheva Dance Company in 1990 launched Israeli modern dance into a new era. Naharin has assembled a brilliant and stimulating group of dancers and led the company to international acclaim. Instead of copying the western modern dance styles, Naharin has developed the company, drawing on inspiration from the cultural heritage of Israel. He formed the Batsheva Ensemble immediately after he assumed his artistic directorship to groom the next generation of Israeli dance performers and to cultivate original talents – from choreographers to other creative partners in design and music.

In the spirit of working as a co-operative group of committed individuals, ex-dancers and people who grew within the company have been encouraged to move on as choreographers, designers, and to take up technical and administrative development within the company. In the quest to expand the boundaries and relevance of dance, Naharin has turned Batsheva into a prolific meeting point for artists of all disciplines. This dynamic dance collective has revolutionised the general awareness of modern dance in Israel over the past 10 years and successfully turned it into a popular national performing art.

**The Batsheva Dance Company has captured a large following among the young generation, and at the same time embraced the traditional dance public.**

In their first visit to Hong Kong, the company will present two works by Ohad Naharin, *Deca Dance* and *Virus of Ohad Naharin*.

*Deca Dance* is a retrospective of Naharin's creations for the company in the past 10 years (Deca means 10 in Greek). Those who have seen these works before could not help being amazed at how easily Naharin has reshuffled his previous works with such freshness and magical twists.

For any newcomer to Naharin's world, *Deca Dance* can serve as the perfect introduction. His signature is everywhere in the piece – the breathtaking ensemble of all the elements on stage, the communal involvement and the total devotion of the dancers.

As in most of his other works, Naharin was involved in the musical composition of *Deca Dance*, which has given rise to the unique musicality of his choreography. Naharin's choreography has gone beyond the creation of movement to the total act of creating, from music to words, costumes, lighting and stage design. Yet, while he firmly assumes the role of the mastermind behind the scenes, he keeps himself detached enough from the physical execution of the ideas.

Naharin's style of production is similar to a good jazz jam session, where everyone knows exactly when and how to fit into the overall design. *Deca Dance* is a fine example of Naharin's mastery of the elements of stagecraft. There are seamless shifts from live music to recorded music, from pure dance to cabaret entertainment and from lyrical interludes to outbursts of rapturous punk rock. The prevailing spirit of ensemble weaves the excerpts of his past 10 years' works into a total theatrical experience.



*Deca Dance* begins when the audience enters the auditorium. It is obvious that Naharin is aware of the origin of dance as a communal celebration. The audience is drawn into the performance emotionally and gradually participates physically in the happenings on stage. There is one thing, real and clear, that adds to the excellence of Batsheva's performances – the dancers. Naharin's main source of inspiration is the human body and its individual abilities. His love and adoration prevails on his exquisite dancers to go beyond the limits to a realm that is surprising, overwhelming and empowering.

If *Deca Dance* is a retrospective of the past, *Virus* is definitely a brave proposition for the future. In December 2000, unprecedented riots erupted in the Israeli Arab territories. The rage and intensity of these riots shook Israeli society. Given Naharin's vision of dance as a communal act of healing and strengthening, he sent the Batsheva Company to Nazareth to perform for an all-Arab audience in the local hall, where the Arabs reciprocated by performing folk songs and dance telling of love. On the same occasion, Naharin was inspired to work on *Virus* (an adaptation of Peter Handke's play *Offending the Audience*) with Palestinian musician Habib Alla Jamal.

As in *Deca Dance*, the performance starts when the audience enters the auditorium. Accompanied by the rhythmic Arab music, an inflated balloon hovers on an empty stage like a scarecrow. This ironic opening sets the tone of the performance of *Virus of Ohad Naharin*.

Naharin is attracted to Handke's play because it is about the negation of the theatre. "The play empties the stage of all expectations, of all theatrical conventions. A space, a void is created; it is there where my creation takes place", says Naharin. The Arabic song opens the show with the word *Jana* – paradise in Arabic – symbolising love and the dream of peace.

This opening is followed by dancers writing graffiti on the wall at the back. A narrator standing on the far right end of the wall starts reciting the text of Handke. Void of emotion, the narration is as stiff as his cardboard cut-out costume. I would recommend members of the Hong Kong audience to read the play before going to the show. Otherwise,

you might miss the long string of insults topped by sharp curses and jibes.

In the foreground, the dancers, one by one, struggle to get their disturbed minds and agitated bodies synchronised. Naharin has created an animated painting of humanity out of the weakness, abandonment and the desire to let go which lie at the heart of modern Israel. It reminds me of Goya's etchings.

The scenography is a collective effort of Naharin and his long-term collaborators: Raketfet Levy on costume design and Bambi on lighting design. Levy's stunning choice of opaque skin-tone tights accentuates the upper body against the black back-panels. Bambi floods the white floor with inconspicuous light washes and at times transforms the dancers into marble busts coming to life.

"My creative process and my encounter with the public involve finding keys and passing them on. Imagine there is a locked room, full of treasures: wisdom, a cure for cancer, world peace, etc... Sometimes, all you need in order to open that room is one little key. The difference between being inside or outside the room – is that little key". (Ohad Naharin)

Kwong Wai-lap is a dance and theatre critic in Hong Kong. He is also the General Manager of City Contemporary Dance Company.