

DANCE SALAD ! What a beautiful name we owe to its founder, Nancy Henderek, a Houstonian, whose lengthy and beautiful posture bespeaks long hours spent exercising at the barre, mastering self discipline which helps her now in the organization of DANCE SALAD for 16 years (starting in Brussels for 3 years): Nancy takes care of every step of the way: she visits festivals all along the year, meets the companies, views the droves of videos and DVD's sent to her.

By bringing together dancers who otherwise would never meet, Dance Salad is unique: this year, Nancy gave 11 companies and 50 dancers from all over the world the opportunity to meet for one week, exchange views, watch one another, which they never have a chance to do otherwise.

Dancing is art, which their choreography reflects by expressing their own life and reactions.

What is Nancy's driving force?

It's her feeling, what she is interested in is: do people want to come, to participate? how do they feel about it? It must also fit in their calendar as the dates are fixed: it is the one week in April when the Wortham theater is available.

A lot of energy comes out of the relation between the artists. She has never been disappointed.

For France, Nancy Henderek has chosen this year the Ballet national de Marseille whose director Frederic Flamand partakes Nancy's views on her quest:" Dancing is constantly renewing itself, mixing its sources, evolving towards new technologies".

Pierre Thys, in charge of the communication for the BNM talked with Houston Accueil: "In order to cut down the shipping expenses, I offered Nancy to dance a duo, no sets. But, no, that would not do because Nancy wanted METAMORPHOSES, the piece she saw last July in Montpellier. She wanted the whole thing: the dancers and the set"

Frederic Flamand succeeded to Roland Petit and Marie-Pierre Pietragalla in 2005 at the head of the Ballet national de Marseille. He has worked with the architect Jean Nouvel for the scenography as well as the designer Brazilian brothers Campana: the set is gigantic, mobile and costly to ship but nothing stops Nancy.

Pierre adds that usually the companies choose the piece they are going to dance at the festivals, but no so with Nancy. She is the mastermind.

He was very enthusiastic about their tour in Houston, Texas.

"We are very happy about our stay in Houston! Unlike the other festivals in the world where we arrive the day before our performance, and leave the day after, we never have a chance to meet and watch other dancers in other companies, Dance Salad enables us to stay a few days, meet and exchange with the other dancers through the rehearsals and workshops. it was very beneficial to the dancers of our company! The audience responded splendidly to our performance; because Nancy's choice is eclectic, every

member of the audience can find something he really likes. the audience response to the quite unusual scenography put together by Frederic Flamand and the Campana brothers was very encouraging."

Katharina Christi, the BNM ballerina explained the different ways to move the body: either linear or vertical, the way to "undulate" the arms varies from one school to the other, that is why a festival like Dance Salad is very interesting because they can observe the other dancers and the different influences typical to each country.

Her favorite choreographers are Saburo Tesitigawara and the French Philippe Decouflé. but classical dance is still the basis to modern moves. We also spoke of Bejart who revolutionized contemporary dancing in reevaluating the role of the male dancer.

The presence of Maggie Foyer, the dance critique for the magazine Dance Europe is the warrant of the ever continuing success of Dance Salad in its 16th year as well as the invitation by the MFAH to a fascinating conference held this year in honor of the Far Eastern choreographers in the Brown auditorium and hosted by Maggie Foyer and Nancy Henderek. The audience was also able to ask questions to the choreographers who explained how they linked their modern choreography to their ancestral culture.

The basis being the Dan-tian, the core of the body as stated more than 2000 ago and that the Western world rediscovered and the different cultures intermingle, exert a mutual influence.... fascinating is the word that comes to me when I think of Nancy's achievement with Dance Salad:"It is the giving, the sharing of your art and what brings the best in you", says she, "the key is the curation of piece by piece to achieve, like a recipe or an art exhibit, the whole picture and the performance curates itself."