

Sarafanov: La Scala used to be my second home, but now I don't dance there so much. And yes, I can still guest easily since joining the Mikhailovsky.

BR: In the classics, is it better to dance the traditional choreography?

Sarafanov: Well, Nacho's choreography is very classical. It's freer in terms of the arms, but it's still classical. The steps are more off-balance, but it's still classical.

BR: You danced many versions of the classics; I saw you dance Nureyev's production of *Beauty* with La Scala.

Sarafanov: Yes, and I've danced his version of *Swan Lake*, too. For me, the most challenging is Nureyev's choreography, and his production of *Don Quixote* is the best, in my opinion.

BR: After Duato, which choreographer would you most like to work with?

Sarafanov: Maybe Alexander Ekman. He may be a completely crazy guy, but I love his choreography. He's a resident in New York. He's so popular nowadays and creates works worldwide.

BR: Do you have any urge to dance any particular ballet?

Sarafanov: Of course there are many ballets that I long to dance. Particularly *Mayerling* and *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*. And I still love to dance Balanchine, but there are none of his ballets at the Mikhailovsky. I really miss dancing Balanchine.

BR: Have you worked with Pierre Lacotte since his *Ondine* for the Mariinsky?

Sarafanov: Yes, I also danced his version of *La Sylphide* for the Tokyo Ballet.

BR: Apart from *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, have you danced any other ballet by Ratmansky?

Sarafanov: I've only danced a small piece when I was working in Kiev.

BR: And Christopher Wheeldon?

Sarafanov: Yes, I've danced his piece *For Four* for the "Kings of the Dance."

BR: Will you dance again in the "Kings of the Dance"? And Denis Matvienko's galas?

Sarafanov: I'm not sure yet.

BR: What are your interests aside from ballet?

Sarafanov: Football [soccer]. And I like PC gaming. So far I have not done any movies, although I've appeared several times on television. I don't think I have any real talent as an actor.

BR: Are your three children interested in ballet?

Sarafanov: My oldest boy is six years old. He loves to watch ballet, especially my performances. And several times he copied my dancing from watching *The Flames of Paris*. He said, "I want to dance like Papa!"

BR: Which male dancers in the world do you most admire?

Sarafanov: I like Kimin Kim and Ivan Vasiliev, who recently created a triple bill at the Mikhailovsky; Mathias Heymann in Paris. And Mathieu Ganio is amazing. And even older dancers like Igor Zelensky and Farukh Ruzimatov. Farukh may be fifty-two, but he is still doing class every day. He is an inspiration to me. You saw his *Carabosse* this week.

BR: Do you have any interest in creating new works?

Sarafanov: No, not at all, because I don't think I can be a choreographer.

BR: Do you have any ambition to direct a ballet company?

Sarafanov: Perhaps, but it's difficult dancing and being a director at the same time. Maybe after I've stopped dancing, it would be interesting. I like teaching the most. Now I teach class from time to time in the Mikhailovsky. In the future I could teach class and rehearse the soloists.

## New York

Karen Greenspan

Who hasn't had a seemingly endless night during which the restless mind meanders to all the haunted corners of our consciousness? Japanese choreographer Saburo Teshigawara, of international renown, treated the Lincoln Center Festival audience to such an experience in his seventy-minute work, *Sleeping Wa-*

ter. Teshigawara along with guest artist Aurélie Dupont (director of dance for the Paris Opera Ballet) and five dancers from his Tokyo-based company, KARAS, formed in 1985, filled the stage at the Rose Theater with dreamlike vignettes of a sleepless journey. The production boldly incorporated his distinctive movement style with surreal sets, riveting lighting effects, and a variety of sound and music.

Early in the piece, six dancers lie on the floor on their sides. Their heads or torsos lift upright with a start, pause, and then settle back down. This happens repeatedly, pushing the limits of one's interest. But that is exactly how a wakeful night proceeds.

Teshigawara uses a palate of mostly black to costume the dancers as they dance through scenes filled with choreographed light or floating, transparent furniture and panels that descend from the rafters and are suspended midair. There is a dazzling scene in which the stage is filled with a series of thin horizontal bands of golden light, stretching across the floor, through which the ensemble moves. All of these elements are designed by Teshigawara, who comes from a background in the plastic arts and classical ballet.

Aside from the ongoing display of Lucite designs descending from the ceiling, the most memorable aspect of the work is Teshigawara's sensory and qualitative approach to moving and generating movement. He counter-

balances qualitative exploration within precise, isolation-type movements and high-energy, full-bodied movement through space. Now in his mid-sixties, Teshigawara is a magnetic performer who draws the observer into his focused, exacting physical experience. Whether it is his sinuous, supple arms rippling like seaweed to the sound of flowing water or his disjointed, butoh-like, body part isolations to the crashes of a rainstorm, one is keenly alive to his felt experience.

The dancers spin while forming windswept curves, spiral to the floor, roll, and pirouette at all levels in a dynamic, aggressive use of space and with ever-increasing speeds. No matter what manic energy informs the dancing, the performers always manage to push it up a notch. But, alas, the movement vocabulary and dynamic grow repetitious with the continuous use of whipping arms to lash through space.

The sound score includes assorted electronic sounds as well as a variety of music – a Bach solo violin partita, a Viennese waltz, The Rolling Stones's "Paint It Black," a Bach fugue for piano – to name a few. At times the dancing seems the perfect embodiment of the sound; at other times Teshigawara creates a humorous cognitive dissonance between the two. A case in point is when Josef Hellmesberger's *Ball Scene*, a fanciful waltz, which would normally be danced by two people connected physically in elegant coordination, is instead danced by two semi-crazed, detached individuals in their separate, maniacal universes.

Eventually, I lost patience with the repetitive movement vocabulary and seemingly endless parade of disparate, disconnected scenes without a perceivable compositional shape. But as the exceptional Rihoko Sato (Teshigawara's artistic assistant) began the final solo, I was again mesmerized as I had been at the beginning, and the trajectory of the piece revealed itself. Every molecule of Sato's body appeared to be sensing and reacting to the surrounding atmosphere through movement. The solo



Photo: Stephanie Berger, Lincoln Center

Rihoko Sato in *Sleeping Water*.

combines eloquent lyricality, dynamic movement through space, and exploration of isolated parts of the body – all Teshigawara hallmarks. The spare piano chords of Arvo Pärt's *Für Alina* provided a meditative accompaniment as Sato modulated the speed of each motion with the utmost control. As if contained by a bubble filled with an invisible viscous medium, she suspended the long reach of an arm, a leg, and her gaze with aching slowness. A burst of energy carried her for a bit until she volleyed between movement and stillness. She resigned herself to another force as she retreated to the floor and sank into the original side-lying position – very, very slowly – finally finding that longed for repose.

## Havana

Susanna Sloat

Cuba is a dancing country. In two weeks in Havana, we saw social dancing in the street and at the club, El Patio de Areito, rumba and orisha dances at the outdoor Callejón de Hamel, and more rumba, orisha dances, and a hooded Abakuá Íreme dancing among the dancing audience at the Palacio de Rumba. I enjoyed the Ballet Nacional's version (Alicia Alonso after Ivanov) of *The Nutcracker*, and a class and rehearsal by Danza Contemporánea's choreographer, Julio César Iglesias Ungo. I met with Ramiro Guerra, this national modern dance company's founder and Cuba's fountainhead of experimental dance choreography and writing, and with Graciela Chao Carbonero, an expert and writer on Cuba's social and folkloric dance, who was about to be part of a panel auditioning students for the country's national school of dance. This school trains dancers for Danza Contemporánea and other dance companies such as Rosario Cárdenas' Danza Combinatoria.

The three successive days we spent viewing Cárdenas' company were a highlight of our first week in Havana. One morning we met with Cárdenas and the company's manager, Ismael Albelo, before watching the dancers work with two French choreographers, Chris -

tophe Béranger and Jonathan Pranas-Desours, whose company, Sine Qua Non Art, is based in La Rochelle, France.

The following day we returned to the Cárdenas company studio at the Centro de la Danza on the Prado for one of the company's regular offerings to U.S. tour groups. Company members peered out from the balcony of the building, anticipating the arrival of the bus full of Road Scholars. When they finally arrived, climbed up the stairs to the studio, and arrayed themselves around two sides of it, Cárdenas and Albelo introduced them to the company and a few of the company's dancers treated them to a brief, but expansive and very stylish, cha-cha piece. Albelo described the much longer excerpts from the company's 2013 full-length tribute to Lydia Cabrera's book *El Monte*, emphasizing the jungle it describes, rather than the Afro-Cuban religions discussed in it.

Despite being a series of well-integrated excerpts in a studio setting, rather than a full theatrical presentation, this was a substantial dance experience, beautifully developed and very enjoyable. The dancers, like so many Cuban contemporary dancers, seemed to be capable of moving in every possible way, covering ground boldly, integrating all sorts of bodily isolations – some unusual, others Afro-Cuban shifts of shoulders, hips, and chest – into an intricate, modern dance style. They made jungle animal noises and faces as they moved, clawed hands, and swung from ropes, and were sometimes scary as they evoked a poetic jungle full of animals and spirits. There was much group work, but the various scenes included changing forces and some solos. Perhaps the excerpts emphasized the exciting parts of the piece, for certainly we saw exciting moves and exciting movers.

Rosario then got all the tour members up on the floor, leading them into a few isolations and movements before members of the company each corralled a few people into a group, showing some moves and then encouraging every person in each group to move freely on their own. Clearly, no matter how they moved,