

How Deep is Your Love?
Mette Edvardsen

How Deep is Your Love? is a commissioned text exploring the work of Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion, invited at Black Box teater to present three different performances for the first time in spring 2017.

The work of Mette Edvardsen is situated within the performing arts while it also explores other media and formats such as video, books and writing, with an emphasis on their relationship to the performing arts as practice and situation. With a base in Brussels since 1996, she has worked for several years as a dancer and performer for companies and projects. She has been developing her own work since 2002, which she presents internationally and is currently a research fellow at Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Edvardsen is an associated artist at Black Box teater (2018–2019).

Last October I was invited to Dramatikkens Hus in Oslo to talk about a writer. This was part of a lecture series they organise every second Tuesday, where a writer speaks about another writer of his/her choice. Looking through the names of writers, or playwrights, that had previously been presented in these lectures, I was not surprised that no choreographers featured on the list. After all, this being the 'house for new playwriting', naturally a list of writers, both living and dead, from Norway and abroad, male and female, did appear, along with a few other choices of focus. I am not a writer (in the traditional sense), but I think of choreography as writing.

There was only one hesitation in making my choice. I am also interested in the dancer as a writer. Not for issues of authorship or claiming (co-) authorship, but to consider the agency of the dancer as another form of writing and as something in itself. How can we acknowledge and therefore value the position of the dancer and performer in his/her own right? But also more, how can we articulate this 'place of writing' without being trapped in the authorship battle where one is always diminishing the other? Perhaps this calls for a Tuesday of its own, but in the meantime I will think two thoughts at the same time.

I am not sure what came first, Jonathan Burrows or a choreographer. Either way, my choice of a writer was made. I had my criteria for choosing, it had to be someone who is alive, who is still making work, and that I have seen the work myself. But it is not possible to speak about Jonathan Burrows

without also speaking about composer Matteo Fargion. And the two of them should need no introduction. Together they have been performing and making pieces continuously since 2002, and their performances (all of them!) are still touring extensively the four corners of the world.

When I choose then to speak about the work of Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion, it is of course their performances I am referring to. The fact that they are both always also performing their pieces only adds to this entanglement. In terms of 'writing', there is no separation between the dance and the dancing. I don't just mean the fact that they are co-authoring their work, but that the 'place of writing' resides in the doing, in performing it. It would be a difficult, if not an impossible task, to separate between the two.

But the work is so much more than the performances they make (and I put an emphasis on the 'so much'). Not as a measure of effort or of difficulty, of how 'much more' the work demands in order to do it. Obviously there is more work to a performance than the work of performing it. In professional terms, their contribution to the dance field through their active engagement in years of teaching, mentoring, speaking, writing, collaborating and participating, even curating, is outstanding. But still, I mean 'more' more as a dimension, like life. The universe. That 'much'.

I had this thought, that with their pieces one would need to write only one program note, one text that would fit all of the pieces. Or better

still, what would be written about one piece could easily apply to another and be equally fitting. Because what matters is not so much what their pieces are about, but *the way they are* about or not about something. Like, it is not only about that we love someone, but the way we love. It is not only about caring about the world, but the way we care. Content is not separate from form.

I have a sense that the pieces of Jonathan and Matteo are getting deeper and deeper. As the years go by, there are more and more. I think I have seen most of them, and some of them more than once. I have lost count. There is a progression, yet it is the same. Not more of the same, but the same more. Like when going out to sea, where deep is not opposite to wide, to surface, to horizon, but is in itself. Itself more. And I, we, can be there, sitting in the dark, and be ourselves. More.