

2/21/09

You are all what I need! Because there are no others.



**Matija Ferlin: Sad sam / Almost 6**

Dance

solo

Old power station / Elektrarna, Ljubljana  
Premiere: January, 30, 2009

I confront **Matija Ferlin** with a difficulty. My handicap is my expectations, which I grow from the first performance of Matija I saw in 2007. On the festival Young lions in Ljubljana I attended his performance entitled *Sad sam*. Matija was rediscovering his recent past, years of adolescence and the openness, which occupied him at that time: he was questioning himself, in which way develop a professional career and how to adjust it with a personal life, needs and desires. His body was a platform for pain and the stage place for raving. Matija send his audience into ecstasies with the physical power and acting capability. Later I followed his work in the performance *Serata Artistica Giovanile* (**Maja Delak** as a director and choreographer). Matija was impersonating, among others, **Srečko Kosovel**, famous Slovene impressionist, expressionist and constructivist poet. He succeeded to personificate Srečko's exclusion from contemporary literary scene. Srečko was too avant-garde for his time (1902-1926) and during the performance Matija took the same staring-point. His dance and acting solo looked like an addition to the performance and was concluded in it.

I entered the latest performance with knowledge, that I will confront a "self-sufficient" artist. Matija took us on a journey to his/ours childhood, with a help of **Katja Praznik**, who took care for dramaturgy. The synchrony between Matija and Katja was promising. The empty stage, designed in white, and with a lighting star above a circle, made of child toys, small figurines of animals. Matija was in the middle of the circle. He started to communicate with the figurines, naming them and checking out the presence of his imaginative friends. The play was convincing and Matija as a home-tutor played the role consistently. He even graduated the scene from being ally to provocateur towards his imaginative friends. He selected some of the figurines presenting wild animals, lions, tigers, and arranged them in a group. Than he took a small lamb and faced it to the group. "What would you do, if you were in a position of the lamb?" he asked. No answer. He repeated the question, this time putting the lamb closer to the beasts. No answer. Than he put the lamb in the middle of wildly crowd. The lamb disappeared, but the question was still floating in the air. Can we confront our fears from the childhood? Are they still accompanying our present? Can we ever erase them? Matija was acting without exaggeration. And the tension was bearable. At this point the performance could slide into pathos, but he managed to remain concentrated and persistent. The emotions were present in a way, as we are aware of the breathing. It is a part of us, but we just can not recognize a single breath. The performance ended with a clap and the lights went off. The only moment I can reproach. The ending was too significant, too narrative. Nevertheless the openness remained as a self-reflection of the performer and of individual spectator.

My handicap disappeared. Matija is a performer with multiple talents, from a dancer to actor. And his performances can be threaded as drama with straight narratives and as dance with its physicality. Play it again, Sam! There are not many artists who can face the past so directly. Matija is one of them.