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...~...~...~...~...~ In those days Belo Horizonte was still so true to its old self that the art of dancing could not create much of a stir there. In those parts, as the saying goes, people have always preferred to work in silence. In the case of something like dancing, it would of course have to be a different sort of silence - the kind that is pregnant with thunder: all you see is a few shreads of lightening.

And then a certain form of light, behaving as light usually does, began to spread in all directions. First to one country, then to many others. Leaving a luminous trail for those who felt like it to look down. Some, gripped by something they were not even quite capable of putting into words, travelled with their hearts along the trail. At first, they were only a few, but then became so many that this light source became a vision common to all. And then became a source of national pride, something one hadn't been in the habit of feeling for quite some time around here.

What is at first a murmur rises in pitch to become a chorus, as in a Greek tragedy, within which there is a place for each intonation and every accent. In this country handed down to us by Pedro Alvares Cabral, the first twenty years of Grupo Corpo produces the image that of a lenght of delicate lace where each one waves the thread it holds, knowing that the thread may be loose, but the fabric has nevertheless been woven. Loose, because this dance company is still able to stir up in all sorts of new emotions; but woven tight nevertheless, because from wherever you care to examine the fabric its structure offers sense.

Grupo Corpo brings into relief all the various Brazilian dance forms. It cuts out a clearing around and thereby sets itself apart from the thicket of local production.

Its way of dancing has a syntax of its own, its own way of flowing that brings new life to a tradicional form of expression. In this country of ours Corpo, as it were, glides over expanses of despondency and sows on them not simply a dream, but a dream come true.

Corpo edits out those words that disparage and lines up things of beauty in their place. Thanks to their evident perfection, they wake up those who doubt that even the best can be "made in Brazil".

Grupo Corpo wraps up to go our pride in ourselves, and gives us the means to face the world.

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It all happened little by little. Discontinuous choreographic fragments blending together first into science then into revelation. And finally into a brand of their own. Paulo and Rodrigo Pederneiras, Fernando Velloso, Freusa Zechmeister plus a cast of superb dancers, ended up assembling a prototype.

Not just a matter of bringing recognition to a few works, or of assuming that all must rest on their polished visual reference. When Grupo Corpo dances, Nature itself is host to something unique.

This way of dancing has ransomed our feeling of citizenship. A sense of fondness welled up throughout the country, to the point where it became a source of collective pride. Some may think that this unifying trait emerged solely from the "soigné" aspect of each performance, and from the level of all-round technical excellence achieved by the group. A closer inspection, however, reveals the subtle miscigenation between plastic quality and a very particular form of phagocytation. The fusion of these two traits form the key to an understanding of what the Grupo Corpo phenomenon is all about.

Ballet, as we all know, arrived in Brazil as an import from the courts of Europe. On crossing the ocean, it arrived with an aesthetics of its own that took root as a benchmark of colonial power, and hence became an object of collective emulation. In order to be noticed in Brazil, dancing well by itself was not enough: One had to "dance as", that is, as one of "them".

What Grupo Corpo has been shaping, in a way both rigorous and unique, is a way of dancing "as one of them", but using bodies found over here. In first place, by digesting those received aesthetics in revolutionary fashion and rendering them in an acclimatized version. Next,

by breaking the old codes and casting them back into the seas that had first washed them ashore. The mechanics of classical ballet ended up being brewed into an entirely new medium. They were magnetized into daring angles from which sprouted all kinds of bumps and grinds. Even more, the typical narrative nature of the imported language broke out into a fitful outburst. New grammars erupted out of these stammers.

In Grupo Corpo, the country celebrates a crossing over and not just an exercise in quality control to international standards. The choreography of Rodrigo Pederneiras seems to zero in on his ultimate goal guided only to the structure in which it grew rampant. He placed his stamp on a few families of gestures, and from there emerged to tread his endless trail.

Each new creation brings forth elements already contained, in embryo form, within the one preceding it. As if each point of inflection tailors the entire future of the group. Each performance adds another component to the overall jigsaw puzzle, which ends up becoming both more comprehensible and more complex. Most seriously, however, each new piece brings into focus a different form of relationship between the "speech" and the "language" of Rodrigo Pederneiras.

It was long supposed that "language" - our inborn aptitude for syntax, for the coining of new words, and then, ultimately, for grammar - represented thoughts, whereas "speech" - the capacity to express these thoughts orally - was the transmission of these symbols. "Speech", in this case, would be no more than a mechanical process whereby that which inhabits our minds is externalized. Within such a framework, not only the choreographic writing that underlines an author's development can be fitted into the role of language, but it also provides a one-to-one correspondence between speech and each choreography he creates.

Recent experiments, however, show that speech is suited to a good deal more than just communicating thoughts. It appears that separate mechanisms exist within the human brain for the respective control of language and speech. In other words, speech can be regarded as an autonomous channel, albeit almost always had been presented itself as the servant of language. A further consequence of these new developments is that language can no longer be accepted as the driving force behind speech.

Where ballet is concerned, each choreography (speech) thus severs the links of bondage with its writing (language) that constrained it to function as the transform of a given pre-existing structure (in this case, the language of choreography).

This novel concept promotes a better understanding of the repertory created by Rodrigo Pederneiras. This is so because each of his works not only represents the structure, but in fact interacts with it. The result of this interactive process is modification, and the structure thereby ceases to be pre-existent.

There is no hidden, secret project that unfolds with each performance, simply because Rodrigo Pederneiras doesn't create his works in accordance with any pre-elected line. The comfortable notion of "progress" - according to which he would be "perfecting" himself with each successive composition - thus, loses its usefulness. This notion can, therefore, finally be replaced by one more attuned to the mysteries peculiar to the art of dancing: The notion that each new work formulates its own

choreographic language from which, at the same, it has sprung forth. This explains why that which is found within *MISSA DO ORFANATO* is, as it were, endogenous, and the same goes for *21* or *SETE OU OITO PEÇAS PARA UM BALÉ*.

The realization that each of the various choreographies constitutes a breath of the state of permanent interaction with its own choreographic language also helps us realize that Grupo Corpo has followed a wave-shaped path. Generated by different tidal patterns, the waves begin for all to see, to form on the visible horizon and then approach us at a pace that has the steadiness typical of natural phenomena.

In a curious way, each performance strenghtens a bond. Ever since its debut, the group has been hailed with a warmth born familiarity. As step followed step, each one established an additional degree of understanding with the spectators. As if the public, in a parallel process of inter-relating with the company, became an integral part of a joint learning process. Corpo designs its own trail and the public is always ready to follow closely.

Since construction of language and speech is a permanent process, tracking its progress without losing sight of the past brings out familiar handmarks. The dynamics of *CANÇÕES*, for example, have their origin in those of *PRELUDIOS*. The brazilianized contours of *SETE OU OITO PEÇAS PARA UM BALLET* are already to be found in *NAZARETH*, which in turn had been contained in *21* and which, finally, could have been identified within *VARIAÇÕES ENIGMA*.

With Grupo Corpo, dance is a self-adjusting process linking that which is to come with what has been done before.

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He was finishing school, already taking dance classes and thinking of trying to get in to the Physiotherapy School, if only to stay close to the world of dance. He had started ballet lessons influenced by his sister Miriam.

Rodrigo Pederneiras took his first ballet lessons with Marilena Martins, in Belo Horizonte. At the Ouro Preto Winter Festival he studied under Norma Binaghi (classical ballet) and Clyde Morgan (modern dance). He also sought out other teachers, among them Isabel Santa Rosa, Hugo Travers, Aldo Lotufo, Freddy Romero, Tatiana Leskowa, Gustavo Mollajolli and Jane Blauth. In 1973, for the first time, he went to Buenos Aires as a dance student. Two years later he was invited by Oscar Araiz to return to that city as a dancer, to take part in a choreography named AGITOR LUCENS V.

Ever since he had seen the performances of the Israeli company Bar Dor, something more serious had begun to germinate inside him. Still in doubt at the time of the university entrance examinations, he returned to Buenos Aires for additional dance classes. From there, a telegram was sent to his family: "Please, do not enter me. Letter follows". The letter never arrived, but his name was not entered anyway, and Rodrigo stayed with dancing. Soon after his return to Belo Horizonte, Grupo Corpo was born.

He first performed only on stage. The year 1978 saw his debut as a choreographer with CANTARES, to music by Marco Antônio Araújo and with sets and costumes designed by Humberto Borém, both of them local artists. The choreography was destined to undergo mutations into Rodrigo many times choreographically reborn. But the care behind the visual quality of the performance which became a hallmark of the group, was already there: The collaboration of Humberto Borém was hailed as being of fundamental importance.

CANTARES came between two works that punctuated the early stages of the company: MARIA, MARIA and O ULTIMO TREM, both composed by Oscar Araiz, Milton Nascimento and Fernando Brandt. Only after O ULTIMO TREM did Rodrigo become the resident choreographer of the company.

The first phase of his new career as a choreographer groups together CANTARES, INTERANEA, TRIPTICO, REFLEXOS, NOTURNO and SONATA. This ensemble, based almost entirely on the music of classical Brazilian composers, was washed away by PRELUDIOS in 1985. MISSA DO ORFANATO meant a further change of direction in 1989, and 21, later strengthened by NAZARETH in 1994, and by SETE OU OITO PEÇAS PARA UM BALLET in 1995, yet another.

The stylistic elements which brought to this work the traits by which he can today be identified were first introduced into PRELUDIOS,

which marks the beginning of a new phase in his choreographic output. This phase includes BACHIANA, CARLOS GOMES SONATA, CANÇÕES, DUO, PAS-DU-PONT, SCHUMANN BALLET, RAPSODIA and UAKTI. Along this path, CANÇÕES appears as an island of maturity. The same path continued to be trodden until MISSA DO ORFANATO, 21 and NAZARETH meant leaping over new ditches. Along the way, A CRIAÇÃO stands out by its longwindedness (the work lasts almost two hours), by its working in of irony and humour among its phrases and because it was the first and only (till the moment) work of company to have adapted a pre-existing script - in this case, Milton's homonym poem.

Never satisfied, Rodrigo Pederneiras begun peeling off the outer layers of classical ballet in order to look at what it was made of underneath. The skin came in one piece without a tear. Thus exposed to direct contact with the outside world, the inner layer acquired new contours. Still moist with ballet, its choreographies blossomed forth into a new balance of measures and proportions.

This action was concentrated in cells, on which foreign movements began to form rough edges upon the language of ballet. The contaminants produced steps and gestures that tasted Brazilian, and were purely metonymic: suggestions, limits, hesitant outlines of voluptuosness. Sensuality begun to penetrate the bodies of the dances in the form of the fractures, folds and falls of a sinuous equilibrium. New winds had begun to blow on the existing body of knowledge of ballet.

The Brazilian poet Manoel de Barros suggested, with written language in mind, he allows a most noble word to come to rest beside a mere vulgar spasm, until both become impregnated and produce a change in semantics. Or produce a deconstruction of usual dynamics, which become stitched together with intervals, hyphens and colons. Rodrigo does the same with the steps from classical ballet. This is why there is never anything stillborn about his art.

Nowadays one can identify a powerful mechanism of hybridation that dominates his output. A mechanism which, ever since PRELUDIOS, pulsates continually, immersed in the diversity of combinations it generates.

A whole new way of doing dance consolidates progressively with each successive landmark-choreography. Looking back from today to yesterday, and again from yesterday to before, until a running into PRELUDIOS, the overall picture seems to present a few stepwise discontinuities, but of differing degrees.

Something lies in wait in PRELUDIOS. Written from the 24 Preludes of Chopin's op.28, this choreography makes it possible to join the present of Grupo Corpo. PRELUDIOS, in one way, has digged all the other starting ponts. Rodrigo Pederneiras revealed an astonishing manner of giving visual dimensions to a musical score, as well as a particular skill in his way of linking up the 24 musical pieces. One flowed into the other, the next to the one that just ended, in a flux of succesive addaptations. Phrases run into other phrases. A free-flowing jet of acoustic architecture became visual.

Every act of choreographic composition seems to dwell in the murky region somewhere between indeterminacy and uncertainty. Early on, Rodrigo Pederneiras relied mostly on musicality. On a certain form of listening, which takes over a score as it would be a house which one has inhabited for

ages, and in which one is able to move around blindfolded. Each piece of music chosen became so deeply known – from being so after heard – that the process of its transfer to choreography had in it something of the naturalistic.

Slowly, the contours of his choreography begin to announce other, less evident convictions. New volumes are built onto the basic framework of classical ballet.

Events multiply, coincidences are evaluated, and the gesture acquires published facets. All of a sudden, everything appears to have become so much simpler. But appearances are misleading: This is precisely when Rodrigo Pederneiras is in the process in turning dance into a science of the complex.

His choreographies lean on our capacity to perceive and grip us in our entirety. Creativity is a dangerous game. A monolith constituted of that disperse matter, which, through mechanisms that remain forever mysterious, becomes differentiated and acquires a character of its own. Within Corpo, this character bears the marks of those responsible for its creating. Rodrigo Pederneiras writes the choreography; Freusa Zechmeister dresses it; Fernando Velloso sculpts out the volume where it is to take place; and Paulo Pederneiras illuminates and directs the new entity in the making.

Like one of those childhood legends that enchant us throughout our lives, Paulo Pederneiras guides the company along. Or, who knows, ties up the loose ends of its outer surface. The performances flesh out through his ability to make each work resemble its own destiny. Each time the curtain rises, we are transported to a field of serenity from which emanates the silent force that brings the company to maturity.

With Fernando, Rodrigo and Freusa, Paulo forms a very special foursome capable of producing seductive blends of fantasy and thoughtness. These blends seem always to have existed, as a pre-condition of the Group itself.

Each new work creates a new linkage between speech and language. Strangely, there is no such thing as a matrix in the sense of that which generates its developments in linear fashion. The contours appear as they acquire, and give shape to, their possessions.

Thus, the same things cannot be said of 21 as can be said, later, of SETE OU PEÇAS PARA UM BALLET. It is as if the matrix "grew fat" on its own effects – because it is on the ever-renewed present of each new work by Rodrigo Pederneiras that can be gathered the designs that give the best fit, that best define the outline. The steps that by some secret covenant, are chosen to go on to the next work. Later, the choreography itself is passed forward. Each work explains the one before, and is flood lit by the one that comes next. Over there (the future) nurtures over here (the present).

There is a very special density in the linkages. Kaleidoscopic structures, where subtle degrees of displacement engender a new skeleton. Patterns of movement become references for use as mutations. One invention is chained to the next.

The question of the "brazilianity" of his art bears out the stamp of non-intentionality. Rodrigo Pederneiras starts out from ballet,

exploring its rules, recombining its elements with others, possibly extraneous, and, deliberately, brings off what he has begun: the piping aboard of a new form of ballet. The boundaries between ballet and non-ballet become lazy until they blend into a new cordial relationship. A confrontation that peters out.

The art of Rodrigo Pederneiras edits out all the tropical exaggerations, and one is left with elegance. His novel compromise lends freedom of action to brazilianity \_ a brazilianity wich in this reincarnation of Machado de Assis tempered down, instead of having been dug up from the depths simply rises to the surface.

Just as arbitrary as any other, this dance form also places under suspicion the moment of its appearance, of its unveiling. It requires dancing bodies and aims of becoming the water under which they are drowned. Choreography, if it is to be transparent and completely visible, requires unestricted hospitality. The body must exhale an ancient affection for the gestures created.

The dancers who have been with the company longest are as if penetrated by the choreography without resistance. Since one of the hallmarks of the group is the stability of the cast, a feeling of homogeneity is given off. The dancers seem to be dancing the choreography into the proper nouns of their own names. Excellent performers all, they become flesh and bone of a mutant that prefers one form to all others: that of camaleon.

#### Intimacies with the future

Already at birth, the company was an object of amazement. Early on, it previously displayed the kind of professionalism the passage of time did nothing but consolidate. Their first production, MARIA, MARIA, turned into a landmark: spectators were uniformly captivated, in Brazil and abroad (the piece traveled to 14 different countries). It wa performed from 1976 to 1982 and broke previous records for a local production.

In Paris, between November and December 1978, it played 24 times to a full house of over one thousand at the Théâtre de la Ville. It became a TV Special in Lugano, Switzerland in 1978. And it allowed Grupo Corpo to become the first south american company to dance at the Spoleto Festival, on June 28, 1979, opening the Festival dei Due Mondi which was being directed by Gian Carlo Menotti.

During the 1970's, it was taken for granted that Brazilian dance was born each time that social ou regional themes were brought to to the stage, whith a certain measure of realism, to the sound of Brazilian music, whether erudite or popular, just so long as embodied on Brazilian dancers. MARIA, MARIA and O ULTIMO TREM responded to these expectations with such a high degree of pertinance that they turned themselves in models for this concept. Thus, they became both givers and recipients of legitimacy as representative of what was then understood to be Brazilian dancing.



Curiously, the choreographies to come out of these initial "Brazilian" aesthetics were in fact constructed by Oscar Araiz, an Argentine choreographer to whom the founders of Grupo Corpo became close during the 1973 Winter Festival at Ouro Preto. Already the object of praise for his work in Buenos Aires, the empathy between Araiz and Brazilians made a star of him here in Brazil as well.

This seed already contains the identifiable genes of cosmopolitanism. After all, there are not many still incipient dance companies who would dare to invite a young choreographer of international repute (at the time, Araiz was 36 and beginning to achieve recognition) to put on a full-length ballet for their debut. And also to commission the soundtrack from superstars on their local pop music firmament. This focus on what is grand, general, international is a sequence from Grupo Corpo's DNA.

The track for MARIA, MARIA, composed by Milton Nascimento and Fernando Brandt, survived the staging (Milton always said that it had been a "drama set to dance, where each Maria whirls around and becomes part of the drama in each of us"). The title-song took over the entire country. And the image of Maria, the nameless woman incarnating hopeless poverty ("who doesn't live, but merely survives"), a solitary figure on stage scrubbing the floor as Milton Nascimento's metallic voice sang her saga, also became a symbol.

The production ran for three months. That of O ULTIMO TREM, four weeks. O ULTIMO TREM was born out of a 1972 "O Cruzeiro" (a Brazilian magazine) news story by Fernando Brandt and photographer Luiz Alfredo. entitled "A Vida por um Trilho" ("Hanging by a Rail"), it recounted the effects of the 1966 closing down of the railroad, dating back to Imperial times, that connected Araçuaí, in Minas Gerais, to Ponta de Areia, in Bahia. Abandoned by the Bahia-Minas railroad, the townships along the Jequitinhonha and Mucuri valleys had sunk into dereliction.

Whereas MARIA, MARIA converted to phraseology of ballet such subjects of social issues inherited from the days of slavery, and religious syncretism, O ULTIMO TREM focused on a small provincial community \_ that is, our daily experience of the majority of the country. Aside from their similar ideological messages, the two choreographies stood out especially for a feature that was to underscore the entire future output of the company: The constant broadening of its mastery of the stage \_ both in the handling of equipment and in the performance proper of the individual dancers.

Composed in quick succession, these two pieces form a closed nucleus that is clearly marked off from all that follows. The fact that, with its first two productions, the company had mapped out the outstanding landmarks of Brazilian culture, may well have exhausted the group's curiosity for further experiments along the same lines. A bit as if the mirror image of one on the other housed the completeness of its development \_ rendering redundant any other new work in the same vein, the success of both notwithstanding.

These two works heralded in a state of complicity between the company and its public \_ a treaty that turned out to be irrevocable. In fact it was a case of evolutionary partnership, generated by a broad learning process. As its works became more refined, those on the receiving

end also acquired additional polish. One mirrored the other, but without losing its identity.

Grupo Corpo was born in the windstorm that blew in a Portuguese-speaking art of dancing. It was so certain of its success that it commandeered the spacious parental home on 66, Barão de Lucena Street, in Belo Horizonte, capital of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Isabel Pederneiras and Manoel de Carvalho Barbosa, in a wager on their son's dream, move house and in their place at first a dance school makes its appearance. Grupo Corpo is the later offshoot of this school. Paulo is joined by his siblings Rodrigo, Miriam and Pedro, and by Isabel Costa, Hugo Travers, Fernando de Castro, Déa de Souza, Denise Stutz and Carmen Purri.

It might have remained a family enterprise. Instead, ever since these early days, it was an absolute, boundless sense of professionalism that reigned supreme, barring the advance of any sort of provincial froziness.

In 1978, thanks to the joint assistance of architects Éolo Maia and Márcio Lima and of contractors Martins and Klein, Corpo were able to move into premises of their own. Built on three storeys, this building houses a school, an art gallery and a space reserved for the Group. Rehearsals take

place in a theatre seating 200 people. Creation on a stage, as opposed to a schoolroom, makes a difference from the very gestation. When quality is an everyday attribute, it impregnates all the better that which sprouts up from everyday occurrences.

By its very conception, the building was a material transform of the "think big" bias that from then on identifies the Group. Furthermore, a reflection of Group itself, the building is a novelty in Brazilian terms: At a time when no sponsors were yet in sight, they already laid their bets on the solidity of their future.

A mere attitude, but one that was to prove fertile.

Along their path, the Group were fortunate to find a handful of decisive collaborators, of the kind that help keep the ship on course.

Emilio Kalil, from Bagé in Rio Grande do Sul, first saw the group perform in Porto Alegre. He was as if kidnapped – a passion that altered the itinerary of his own life: In 1978 he gave up his career as a journalist and moved to Belo Horizonte. His involvement became such that he ended up as joint codirector of the Group, with Paulo Pederneiras, until 1989.

His presence introduced a new tempo. Smashing all constraints, he patiently built the bridges towards the outside world that Corpo would eventually cross. He presented Corpo as a product, in perfect tune with the most daring concepts of cultural marketing then known. Like a latter-day Don João VI, only in the opposite sense, he opened up all harbours to the company from Minas. His brilliant performance allowed dreams to become reality.

During his stay, the group embarked on the conquest of a notoriety that was to grow with time and which led to a number of sponsorship deals. The 1987 season was made possible by Du Pont, by means of US\$ 200,000. Fiat produced the group's first commercial video in 1988, which contained three works: PRELUDIOS, DUO and MARIA, MARIA. Divina Decadência, a local garment manufacturer, made possible the production of BACHIANA, a 1986 choreography by Rodrigo Pederneiras. But it was the three-year sponsorship agreement with Shell, beginning in 1989, that heralded a new epoch for Grupo Corpo – as well as for the Brazilian history of partnership arrangements involving the performing arts.

Robert Broughton, then President of the firm in Brazil, who had been living in Rio de Janeiro for three years and took regular part in the Carnival pageant as a member of Escola de Samba Mangueira, had already heard of Grupo Corpo. Won over by the professional spirit of its performers and the competence of its management, he decided to put his weight behind the company.

In an epoch-making decision, Bob Broughton signed a US\$ 700,000

annual sponsorship agreement for an initial three-year period. The contract stipulated that it could be renewed at the end of each year, thus assuring the group the sense of security needed if medium-term plans were to be drawn up. Thus, a partnership was born. So much so that Bob Broughton has since retired from Shell (he now lives in London where, with his wife Moo, he acts as a sort of informal ambassador for Brazilian art in general), but the sponsorship agreement remains in existence.

The Shell funds brought with them a most precious sense of stability. Firm ground from which to take off. It made it possible, for instance, to commission and record original scores written for dance. As well as to acquire equipment – to the point where nowadays the group own the hardware needed to put on any kind of ballet staging, in any type of space. and it allowed the productions to become more sophisticated: MISSA DO ORFANATO impressed the public also because of its plastic finish... Shell became the breath that could impel forward any kind of dream.

The company, nevertheless, had always had its place in the sun. Even before being sponsored by Shell, it had already won its wings. So much so that in 1988 it had Susanne Langer putting together MULHERES for its repertoire (the first contacts had taken place two years earlier). From this experience, Grupo Corpo harvested a choreography pattern that was to surround it like a breeze. Through a process of brilliant crossfertilization that led to furious rearrangement of the material available, MISSA DO ORFANATO remained no stranger to MULHERES, the work that had preceded it in time.

A sort of tendency to uproot and transplant develops. As a result, the style of Susanne Langer ended up getting caught in the type of movement that had become a characteristic of the group at that time. Its stems were pliant enough to reach over until they receded the movements created by Rodrigo Pederneiras, and, once settled in, to produce fertile hybrids. Removed from their habitat, they become entwined with something different and some of the difference ends up rubbing off. The march, from there on, is of necessity no longer in the same step.

Grupo Corpo shows a face that rebels against any compromise.

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What makes the difference is the form of relationship among the elements. Stage design that does not show off on stage, costumes that do not dress the dancers, lightning that does not flatter, music that neither illustrates nor comments. Paulo Pederneiras, with his half-finished architecture course and some theatrical experience. Freusa Zechmeister, architect, designer and landscape-painter. Fernando Velloso, architect, painter, sculptor. A trio capable of producing from scratch, of breaking the secret code Rodrigo Pederneiras thinks of as choreography. Capable of inventing a new type of screen, a special form of nail, a particular style of headdress, if necessary an entire stage.

The process involved could never have been conventional. Just a few instances:

\* When Freusa began to think of PRELUDIOS, she came across a fragment of bluish quartzite which she had been using at one of her construction sites. Soon, instead of just designing the costumes, she had





shapes that the set renders vertical. In crinolines in motion, as it were, strip the petals off the metallic roses, removing them from the set and spreading them all over.

\* The same roses echo shades of black, gray, a diversity of colours, and with each chromatic shift acquire a new identity. This is the art of Paulo Pederneiras, he who knows that light may be a single dot or a unique direction, and that the choice of which it is to be decides what it meant to bring to life. The stage, however, remains for him a context, never *amere locus*.

A stage subject to hidden forces. Well-known features begin to combine into a single face. Grupo Corpo is starting to dance. Gradually, gesture becomes visible in movements, movement in fleeting gesture, and each single step in that which engenders motion. Not including a few apparently impertinent details, that soon acquire the aspect of physical characteristics – to the point where they no longer give any impression of strange....

Since dance is necessarily a matter of appearance, it allows no more than a peek at what lies inside. It allows no more than a peek. Only a few artists know how to make each of their works wear a new face. The threesome formed by Paulo Pederneiras, Freusa Zechmeister and Fernando Velloso know how to handle this inaccessible art.

For 8 years, starting as an actor, Paulo Pederneiras worked in theatre. In 1971 he entered the UFMG School of Architecture. But it was when he joined Transforma, a pioneering modern dance school in the context of Minas Gerais, that he discovered the range there was to be found in the art of dancing.

His arts with stage lighting, boundary between subjectivity and the world outside, become a precision instrument. Whenever he creates a lighting scheme, he captures a hitherto invisible landscape. Clumps of shadow lit, side by side with apogees. Whenever he directs, the piece becomes a fountain. His stagecraft hums with artfulness.

Like a subterranean rumbling, his lighting avoids falling into the trap of facile effect. Each unveils its own horizon – allows our eye reach all the way there, to where the boundaries dry up into a single line. Each choreography has its foundations, alone to a latent form of life. Paulo Pederneiras seems to be constantly aware of the need to preserve this living entity, which may explain why his lighting schemes are more than just that, in fact truly unified constructions. Always as with the white light of which he is so fond: A synthesis of shades that only a prism is able to break down.

Freusa Zechmeister, designer, landscape architect who in 1981 jumped into this Corpo with both feet. After watching a rehearsal Freusa Zechmeister. Builder of landscape architect who in 1981 joined INTERANEA, a spiraling sparkly landscape. Clumps of shadowography has its foundations, all lit up inside her. She joined up, in what was to be an irrevocable, lifelong pact.

For her, the world is no more than a storehouse of images. The costumes she designs are ignitions that spark off the art of nondressing. Freusa does not design clothes to be worn by the dancers on stage. The world is no more than a store to be worn by the dancers on stage: Her rigor is s





there is a boundless feeling for plasticity, which yield complex combinations.

Each stage protects its own secrets, exposing only its fringes. But when Paulo Pederneiras takes over, nothing remains impossible backstage. An engineering graduate, he began taking dance lessons with his various siblings at Transforma, and with them ended up at Grupo Corpo.

Gradually, he becomes adept at assembling ideas. adept at assembling i The technical assurance of each performance by the company bears his signature. Onto the void of any empty stage, he grafts the brainstorm of Paulo and Rodrigo, of Freusa and Fernando. After all, if there were no sky whither would the stars proceed?

These artists, added together through stable conviviality, generate a collective talent for creating that which bewilders. They are joined by Zenilca de Navarro, a sort of limb thrown out by the company to the outside world as an affirmation of its sense of elegance.

In Rodrigo Pederneira's choreography In Rodrigo Pederneira' choreographies, the costumes do not ignore the stage sets, nor does the latter take for granted the lighting. Everything interacts. His proposition, however, differs from that of Diaghilev, he who, at the beginning of the century invested in the idea of partnership with leading figures from the art world of his time. By joining forces with Stravinsky, Cocteau or Picasso, his productions extended the reach of ballet across the world.

Diaghilev brought together the most spectacular artists around his daring projects. Here, it is the other way around. Grupo Corpo itself is a spectacular project, resulting from an amalgamation of daring artist in a whirlwind of talent. The ripening process stems from the core and not from a mere striving for excellence in each performance. The group's repertory constitutes a list of seminal choreographies. As each new one exuberantly blossoms, it is as if within it all seasons have been stacked upon one another. SETE OU OITO PEÇAS PARA UM BALÉ illustrates these irreversible forces of nature. Time helps fine-tune the team. For Paulo and Rodrigo Pederneiras, Freusa Zechmeister and Fernando Velloso, quality is no mere than an idea imprisoned. Their multilateral intimacy fabricates the unexpected. as if within it all seasons have team. For Paulo and Rodrigo Pe





