

K: Hi! My name is Katrin and this is Ophelia (our amazing cameraman) from the class How Movement Makes Meaning. We would like to ask you some questions about you as a person and also as a dancer.

So, to start off, would you like to introduce yourself?

M: Sure. My name is Maria Fährasilva, I come from Portugal and I live in Belgium, Brussels.

K: Great! So, what inspired you to be a dancer?

M: What inspired me to be a dancer? Wow! [laughs]. Um, well actually, you know... I was young, I was five and my parents were trying to find me a hobby. And I ended up in a gymnastics class and I really didn't like it. So, [laughs], then I tried ballet with this teacher who was opening a new studio and then, yeah, I started when I was 5. And it when on, and on, and on.

K: Great! So, many people start off with ballet as you and then they progress from there. What was this progression for you like? Did you try different dance styles before you found contemporary dance?

M: Umm, so I started from when I was 10 until my 18-year old when I was in Lisbon in the Conservatory practicing classical dance, modern dance, and folk dance. I did a bit of a tap dance. So, after that I moved to Belgium and then that's when I started up doing contemporary dance. But it was a little bit an accident because I did the audition to the school. Say, I didn't know much about the school, and.... But during the audition process, I got to experience contemporary dance. Different kinds, different styles. And, yeah, I guess, I was already looking for that kind of dance but I haven't been exposed to it.

K: So, what do you do to get into your creative zone?

M: You mean as a dancer?

K: Yes. As a dancer.

M: I guess I usually work with a practice, so I have different practices that I change or adapt according to different works I do for different choreographers.

But I try to wake up my body at its fullest to be able to have access to what I need for what I am working, to tools or to the openness of curiosity and creativeness.

K: What do you do to keep yourself motivated and interested?

M: I keep searching for new inputs. From many different sources. It can be music, it can be text, it can be films, it can be concerts. Yeah. Also, different artists in the dance field and lately I have been working, searching out of the dance field, but yeah.

K: What was the biggest opposing force that you encountered on your creative journey?

M: Creatively you mean, as an interpreter, as a dancer?

K: [nods] Mhm.

M: Can you repeat again the question, sorry?

K: What was the biggest opposing force that you encountered on your creative journey?

O: Something that just didn't work out for you. And how you overcame that.

M: It's a hard question because I guess it is related with different specific moments. I guess there is not just one formula to solve those ones. It depends on so many factors and you have to see things through different angles and be able to act upon the situation itself.

K: Have you ever thought of giving up? And what made you continue?

M: Haven't thought of giving up but sometimes I am curious to do other things. But, I guess, once I am at work with people, this keeps me going. So I guess it's more the gaps in between each work that may give me more doubts. Of course that sometimes some work may question me if I want to keep on with this but again, like the works, as a freelancer, the works that I do are so diverse there that at least what I am interested at or what I am searching as a dancer, they are so diverse, and this diversity is so important to me that I keep searching for this to give me perspectives and information from different sources, different perspectives. Yeah.

K: If you had to start over, what would you do differently?

M: [laughs] Oh my God! I don't know. I guess, if you go back, you'll always make different choices, you'll never do the same choices. But there isn't anything that I will necessarily change.

K: What was the best advice you have ever been given?

M: I am sure I have been given really good advices, so I should find the ones.

O: Is there something that someone said to you that was like 'Wow'?

M: Yeah. well, there's this tool that Jonathan Burrows, a choreographer, who once told us that has to do with the rate of change. Like, how often something changes. That really rung a bell to me. On how you compose, yeah... Because I also believe we compose a lot.

K: What are you proud of in your life?

M: Proud?

K: Proud of.

M: I think the fact that I have been able to be part of very different kind of works. So, bringing me to research on very different topics, and also, of course, different people.

K: How do you want to be remembered?

M: How I want to be remembered? As me, as... yeah. Nothing particular, yeah.

K: Have you ever felt enlightened by something that has given you a new perspective of life?

M: Again, could you repeat?

K: Yeah. Have you ever felt enlightened by something that has given you a new perspective of life?

M: Yes, but I guess this happens in sometimes in a very subtle ways. It may not be a big event but it is something that makes me see clearer how do I proceed next.

K: How does movement make meaning to you?

M: Well, I think movement makes meaning to me, but I also give meaning to the movement. So I think it is a constant exchange. It also depends where it comes from or where you might go and get it. Depending on different processes and it can come out in different ways.

K: If you could change one aspect of our-

M: Maybe, can I just say something related to the previous question?

O: Yeah.

K: Of course.

M: I think that there is this process of where you search for material. Sometimes the part from a given phrase or you build your own phrase and then there is this old part where you structure and work a craft with it. And, afterwards, or through the time, frame, rehearsals, you will, the material will always change. It will always become something else. So then, sometimes, at the process of certain works you have at the end, you go back and you start giving or trying to find the meaning of this material which is different from the source you started from.

K: If you could change one aspect of our society through your work, what would it be?

M: Oh my God, yes! Let's change the world! [Laughing] I guess we could... yeah. I think equality is important. And listening. I think with these two things we will change the world. Yeah.

K: What is the ultimate message in your creative expressions?

M: I think it has to do with this listening aspect. Or, taking the other as the same as we are all made of the same material. Yeah. In a way, trying to demystify this place of the stage, and the performance, and the audience, but there is connection even though we are in different places or goals, how can I bring to you an experience or you can reach some places through what you are saying or experiencing.

K: Do you have anything else to add?

M: No, I think I am good. Unless you want, need something else. [laughs]

K: Thank you for your time! It was a pleasure interviewing you!

O: Absolutely!

M: Thank you.