SHANG-CHI SUN
COMPANY

Shang-Chi Sun Company

Established by choreographer Shang-Chi Sun in 2007, the dance company aspires to break away from any traditional setting by experimenting with different contemporary artists. The troupe strives to explore the potential of human body, redefine space, and combine theatrical attributes with other art forms. The endeavor results in works that not only stimulate the audiences' senses, but also reflect on the diverse nature of society and human interactions. Through interdisciplinary and international collaborations, the dancers explore the power inherent in the human body. With his Eastern cultivation and years of European experience, Sun's work often combines Oriental sensibilities with Western elements, resulting in a beautiful harmony between the two.

Press Reviews

"Shang-Chi Sun has created an uncommon, form-fitting, clockwork-like choreography with repetition, which adds a sharpness to the music, whips it outright forward and drives out the warm embrace from Glass partition."

— rbb info radio, Harald Asel, June 7th 2014

"In 60 minutes of 'Uphill', Shang-Chi Sun demonstrates his hold over body and dance with pure physical movements and a firmly controlled tempo."

– Performing Arts Reviews, Pin-Hsiu Chen, 2013

"Shang-Chi Sun's way of showing the beauty of Asian bodies, which was something rare to be seen after Sankai Juku. His body is slender and refined. He can fully express the aesthetic perceptions of Asian bodies in his own way. I believe that from now on he will be able to represent Asian dancers and become well-known."

- Shizuoka Arts Festival, Satoshi Miyagi, June 2010

Workshop with Shang-Chi Sun

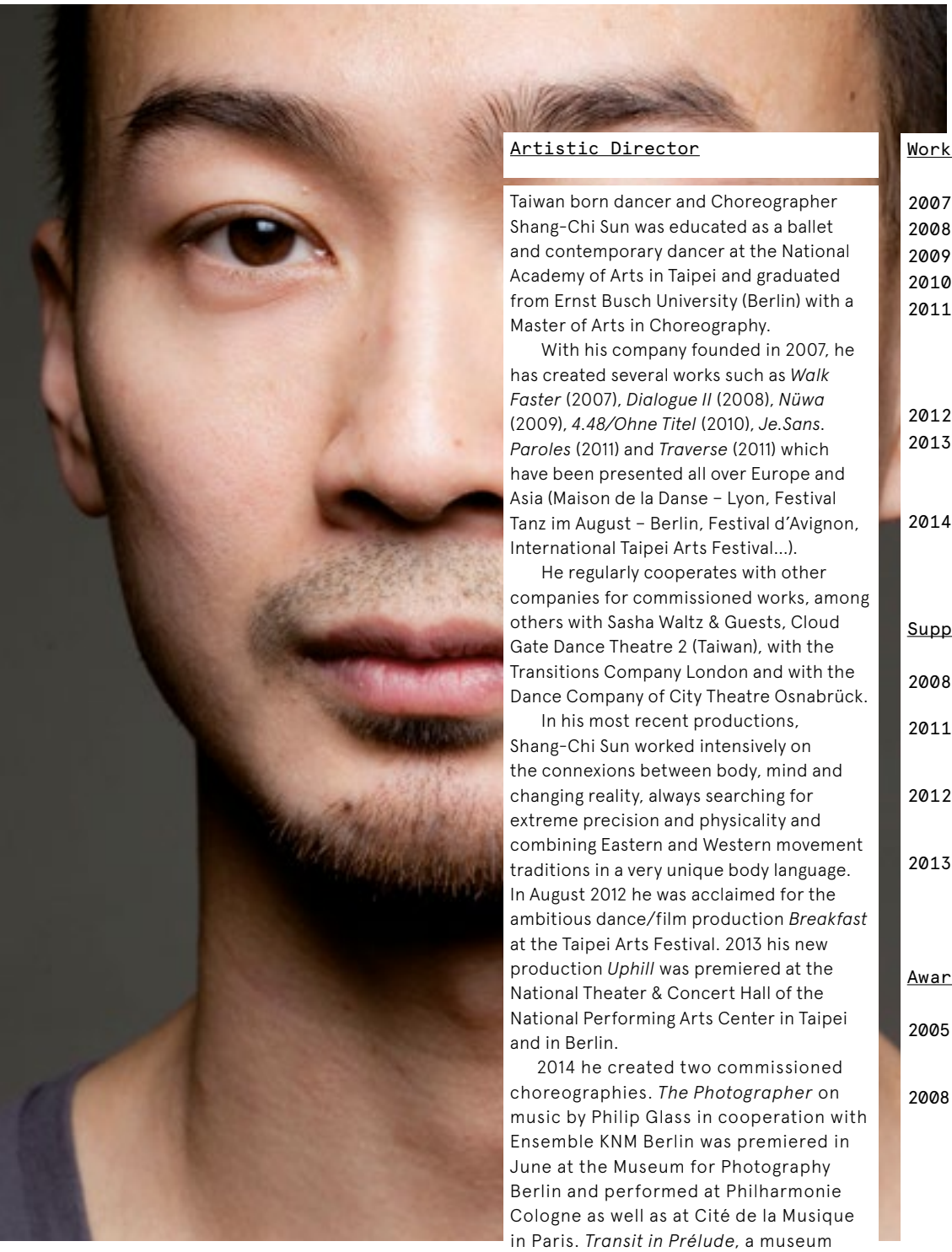
Surface and space of movements / Improvisation

Starting from the inner space of the body, Shang-Chi Sun extends the frame of movement in three dimensionality. Simple Tai Chi practices help to find the inner balance and to improve the consciousness for the body. Further exercises enable to explore the environment, the surfaces, and the forces and to use them for different kind and qualities of movements: levels, balance, intensity and extension. Shang-Chi Sun combines ballet and contemporary dance technics as well as Tai Chi to vary and to use consciously the "resonance" of movements. Finally improvisation based on everyday life experience gives the opportunity to play with these qualities and to use them in dance phrases.

Energy, mind and body in movement

Energy and presence in movements are both a mirror of the mind. Dancing is an expression of the inner attitude that finds a translation through body and nerves. Shang-Chi Sun uses this experience and proposes a dance technic combining body and mind as well as occidental and oriental body practices. First the consciousness and the inner balance are improved through simple Tai Chi exercises. Then the action field of the body is widened to the surrounding space. Point after point lines and directions are being built and used to work on variable extension and energy of movement. The body is used as a whole to experience a better movement dynamic.

Shang-Chi Sun



Artistic Director

Taiwan born dancer and Choreographer Shang-Chi Sun was educated as a ballet and contemporary dancer at the National Academy of Arts in Taipei and graduated from Ernst Busch University (Berlin) with a Master of Arts in Choreography.

With his company founded in 2007, he has created several works such as *Walk Faster* (2007), *Dialogue II* (2008), *Nüwa* (2009), *4.48/Ohne Titel* (2010), *Je.Sans. Paroles* (2011) and *Traverse* (2011) which have been presented all over Europe and Asia (Maison de la Danse – Lyon, Festival Tanz im August – Berlin, Festival d'Avignon, International Taipei Arts Festival...).

He regularly cooperates with other companies for commissioned works, among others with Sasha Waltz & Guests, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre 2 (Taiwan), with the Transitions Company London and with the Dance Company of City Theatre Osnabrück.

In his most recent productions, Shang-Chi Sun worked intensively on the connexions between body, mind and changing reality, always searching for extreme precision and physicality and combining Eastern and Western movement traditions in a very unique body language. In August 2012 he was acclaimed for the ambitious dance/film production *Breakfast* at the Taipei Arts Festival. 2013 his new production *Uphill* was premiered at the National Theater & Concert Hall of the National Performing Arts Center in Taipei and in Berlin.

2014 he created two commissioned choreographies. *The Photographer* on music by Philip Glass in cooperation with Ensemble KNM Berlin was premiered in June at the Museum for Photography Berlin and performed at Philharmonie Cologne as well as at Cité de la Musique in Paris. *Transit in Prélude*, a museum performance, was presented in August at Bröhan Museum in Berlin.

Works

2007	Walk Faster
2008	Dialogue II
2009	Nüwa
2010	4.48/Ohne Titel
2011	Je.Sans.Paroles
	Traverse
	Deutsches Requiem
	Genus
2012	Breakfast
2013	Threads
	Incomplete Harmony
	Uphill
2014	Transit in Préludes
	The Photographer

Supports

2008-12	Received "LMF Dance Found" from Taiwan.
2011-12	*Je.Sans.Paroles* and *Breakfast* are supported by the district of Berlin-Pankow.
2012	*Traverse* is selected for the priority list of the European network Aerowaves.
2013	*Uphill* is supported by Berlin Senat.

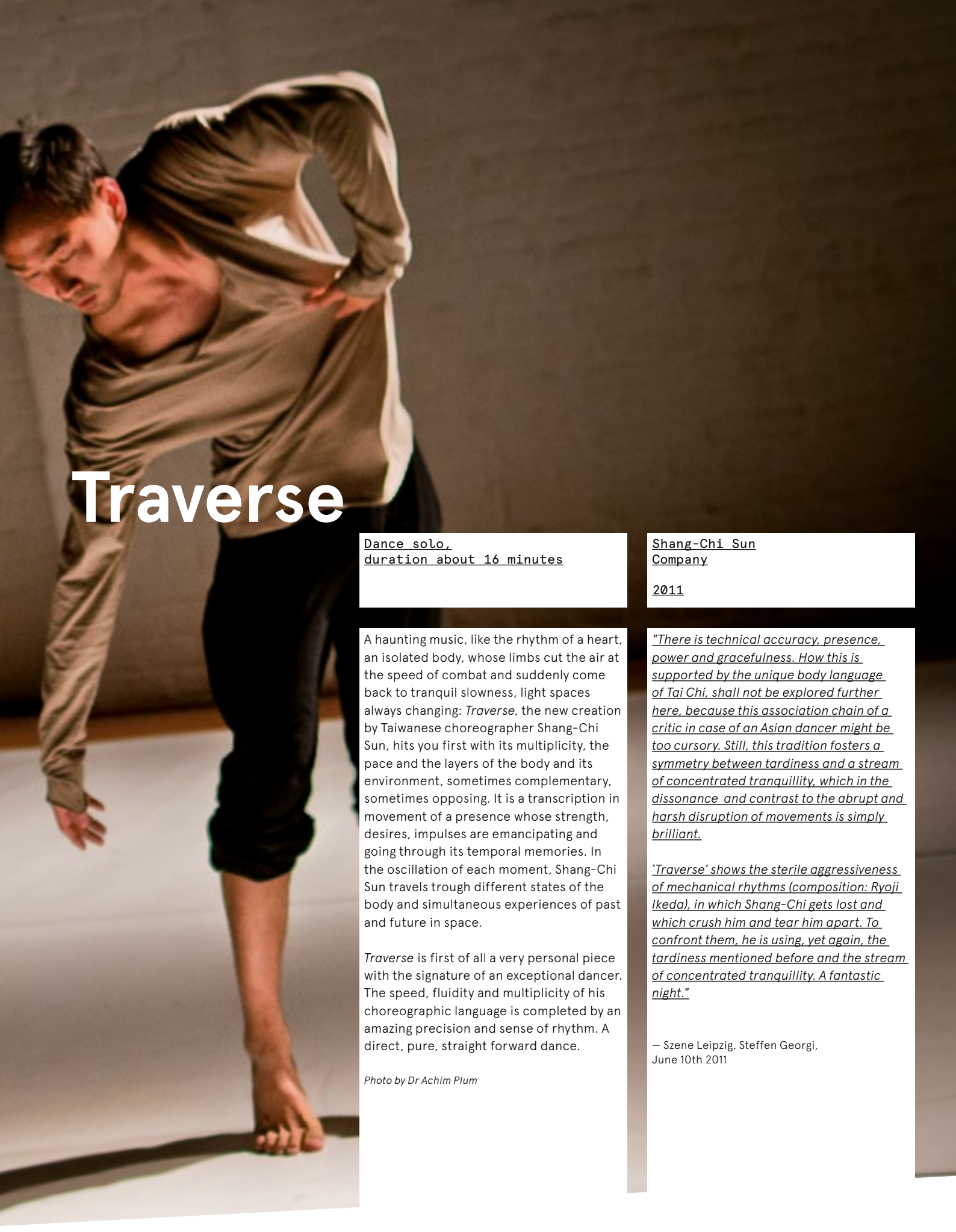
Awards

2005	Received "Bavarian Theatre and Literature Prize" from the IHK-Kulturstifung.
2008	Won "First Choreography Prize" at the 12th International Solo Tanz Festival Stuttgart.

Photo by Sven Hagolani

Works

Traverse
Breakfast
Threads
Uphill
Transit in Préludes
The Photographer



Traverse

Dance solo,
duration about 16 minutes

Shang-Chi Sun
Company

2011

A haunting music, like the rhythm of a heart, an isolated body, whose limbs cut the air at the speed of combat and suddenly come back to tranquil slowness, light spaces always changing: *Traverse*, the new creation by Taiwanese choreographer Shang-Chi Sun, hits you first with its multiplicity, the pace and the layers of the body and its environment, sometimes complementary, sometimes opposing. It is a transcription in movement of a presence whose strength, desires, impulses are emancipating and going through its temporal memories. In the oscillation of each moment, Shang-Chi Sun travels trough different states of the body and simultaneous experiences of past and future in space.

Traverse is first of all a very personal piece with the signature of an exceptional dancer. The speed, fluidity and multiplicity of his choreographic language is completed by an amazing precision and sense of rhythm. A direct, pure, straight forward dance.

Photo by Dr Achim Plum

"There is technical accuracy, presence, power and gracefulness. How this is supported by the unique body language of Tai Chi, shall not be explored further here, because this association chain of a critic in case of an Asian dancer might be too cursory. Still, this tradition fosters a symmetry between tardiness and a stream of concentrated tranquillity, which in the dissonance and contrast to the abrupt and harsh disruption of movements is simply brilliant.

'Traverse' shows the sterile aggressiveness of mechanical rhythms (composition: Ryoji Ikeda), in which Shang-Chi gets lost and which crush him and tear him apart. To confront them, he is using, yet again, the tardiness mentioned before and the stream of concentrated tranquillity. A fantastic night."

— Szene Leipzig, Steffen Georgi,
June 10th 2011

Breakfast

Dance trio with live film,
duration about 1h

Shang-Chi Sun
Company

2012

The world of breakfast is a kitchen, early in the morning. This is a special moment: between night and day, between wakefulness and abandoned dreams. One is busy with rebuilding himself for the day, arranging his thoughts, and adjusting the reality. Images, smells, news, taste, touch, sounds... These impressions are mixed. The breakfast is also a sensory explosion that can often not be processed immediately. At that moment, the fragmentation of individual impressions is strong. And this can still be seen and viewed with serenity, distance, irony or anger for a couple of minutes - before jumping into the bustle of the day.

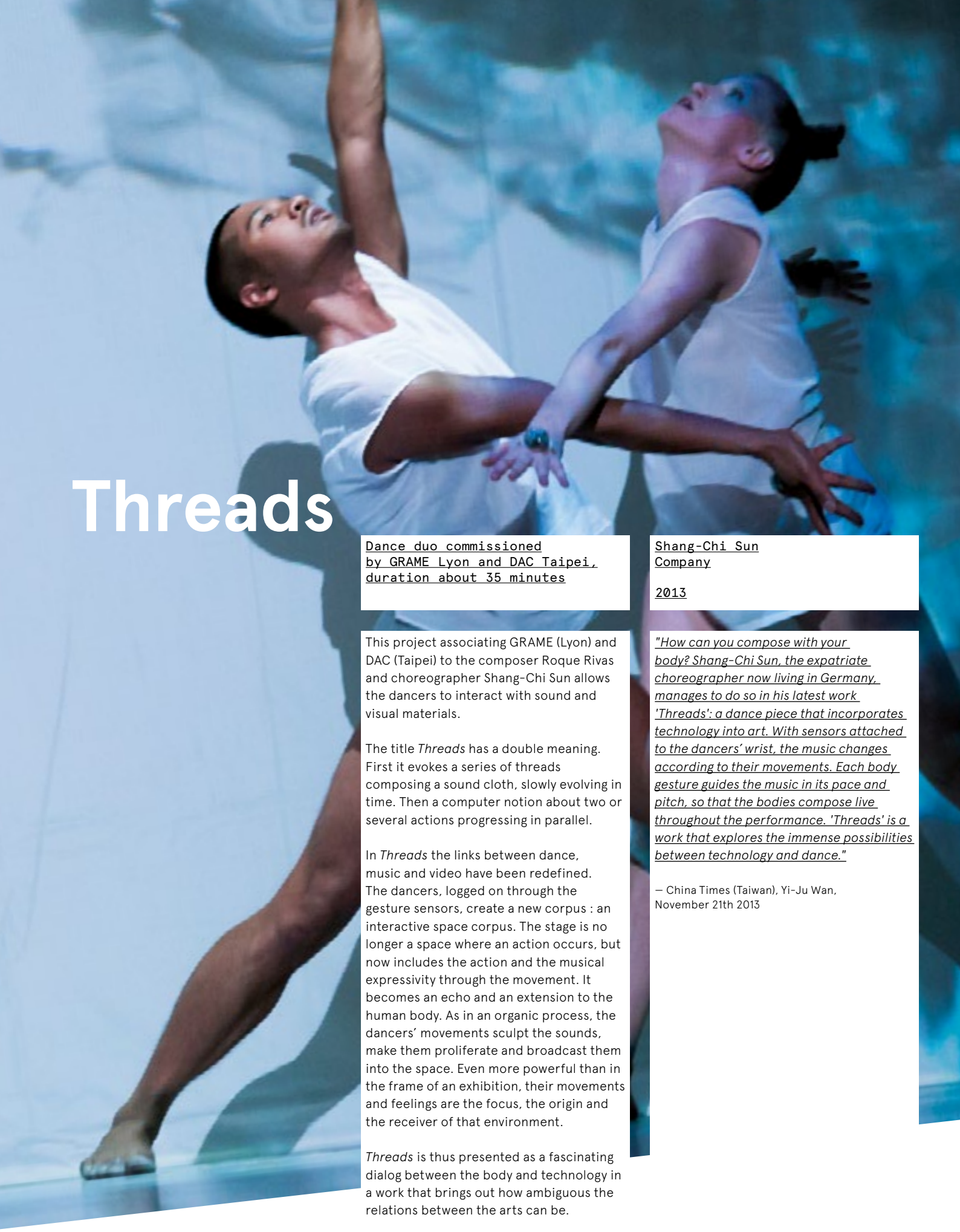
Together with the author Gordon Florenkowsky and the filmmaker Krzysztof Honowski, Shang-Chi Sun creates a live dance film. He leads the attention of the audience on undefined paths at the hedge between reality and fiction, truth and lies, emotions and comedy. With three cameras on stage recording and showing live on a big screen the relationship, the fights, the dreams of three performers, the audience is brought close to them and is completely part of their emotions and their thoughts.

A surreal journey experiencing the sound of skin texture, the touch of a voice and the smell of dreams...

Photo by Ping Hsu

"The three performers then took the audience on a somewhat surreal journey. Sun's choreography is intelligent, subtle and beautifully crafted. He shows fragments of thoughts that may give hints of meaning. There is much jagged, accented movement, as though the twitching we all do when we dream was being magnified many times. But importantly, if 'Breakfast' is anything to go by, here is a dance-maker who understands that less is often more. Just as the film would have been a success without the live action, so is the reverse undoubtedly true."

— Ballet Dance magazine, David Mead, December 8th 2012



Threads

Dance duo commissioned by GRAME Lyon and DAC Taipei, duration about 35 minutes

Shang-Chi Sun Company

2013

This project associating GRAME (Lyon) and DAC (Taipei) to the composer Roque Rivas and choreographer Shang-Chi Sun allows the dancers to interact with sound and visual materials.

The title *Threads* has a double meaning. First it evokes a series of threads composing a sound cloth, slowly evolving in time. Then a computer notion about two or several actions progressing in parallel.

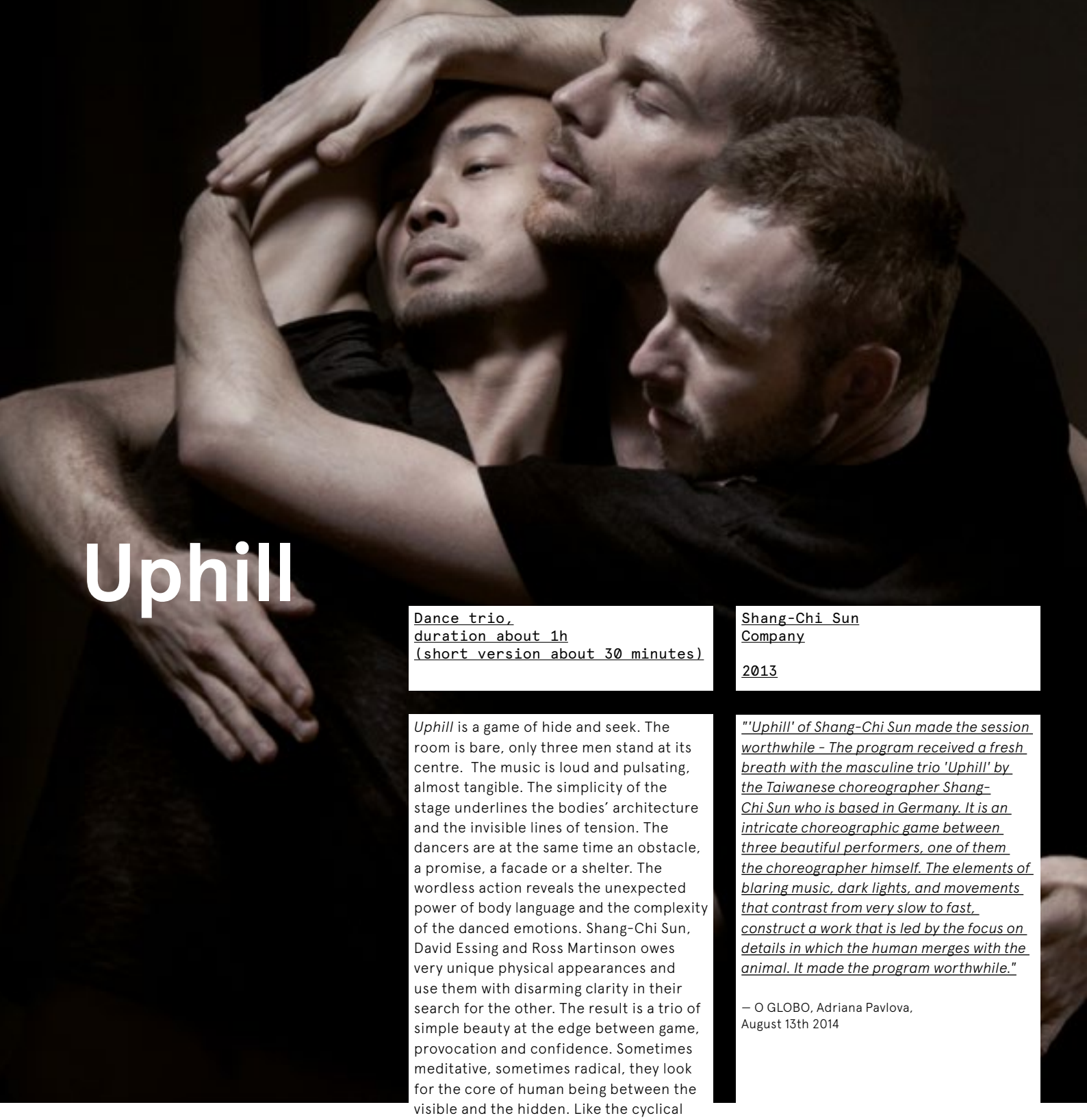
In *Threads* the links between dance, music and video have been redefined. The dancers, logged on through the gesture sensors, create a new corpus : an interactive space corpus. The stage is no longer a space where an action occurs, but now includes the action and the musical expressivity through the movement. It becomes an echo and an extension to the human body. As in an organic process, the dancers' movements sculpt the sounds, make them proliferate and broadcast them into the space. Even more powerful than in the frame of an exhibition, their movements and feelings are the focus, the origin and the receiver of that environment.

Threads is thus presented as a fascinating dialog between the body and technology in a work that brings out how ambiguous the relations between the arts can be.

Photo by Shang-Chih Chen

"How can you compose with your body? Shang-Chi Sun, the expatriate choreographer now living in Germany, manages to do so in his latest work 'Threads': a dance piece that incorporates technology into art. With sensors attached to the dancers' wrist, the music changes according to their movements. Each body gesture guides the music in its pace and pitch, so that the bodies compose live throughout the performance. 'Threads' is a work that explores the immense possibilities between technology and dance."

— China Times (Taiwan), Yi-Ju Wan, November 21th 2013



Uphill

Dance trio,
duration about 1h
(short version about 30 minutes)

Shang-Chi Sun
Company

2013

Uphill is a game of hide and seek. The room is bare, only three men stand at its centre. The music is loud and pulsating, almost tangible. The simplicity of the stage underlines the bodies' architecture and the invisible lines of tension. The dancers are at the same time an obstacle, a promise, a facade or a shelter. The wordless action reveals the unexpected power of body language and the complexity of the danced emotions. Shang-Chi Sun, David Essing and Ross Martinson owes very unique physical appearances and use them with disarming clarity in their search for the other. The result is a trio of simple beauty at the edge between game, provocation and confidence. Sometimes meditative, sometimes radical, they look for the core of human being between the visible and the hidden. Like the cyclical nature of time, the situations and the relationships are repeated, but never the same. Always there is the desire of the Other - the friend, the brother, the stranger and perhaps even the enemy.

"I see this creation as the final part of a trilogy that began with 'Je.Sans.Paroles' and 'Traverse'. The trilogy refers to three different notions of time. In the first part is the time of mythology. The linear, structured and abstract time in the second part. The third part the cyclical time of nature."

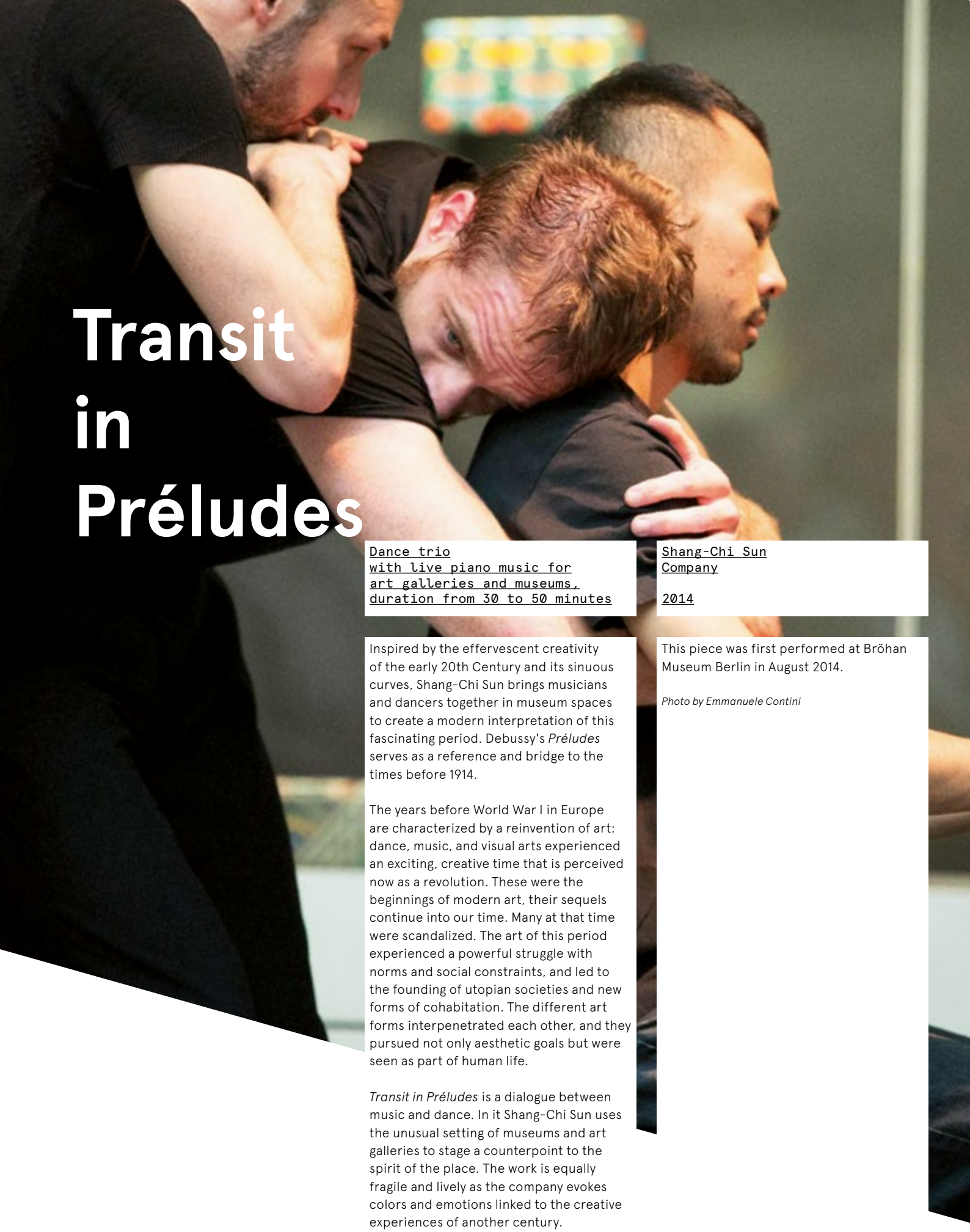
— Shang-Chi Sun

Photo by Philipp Duemcke

"'Uphill' of Shang-Chi Sun made the session worthwhile - The program received a fresh breath with the masculine trio 'Uphill' by the Taiwanese choreographer Shang-Chi Sun who is based in Germany. It is an intricate choreographic game between three beautiful performers, one of them the choreographer himself. The elements of blaring music, dark lights, and movements that contrast from very slow to fast, construct a work that is led by the focus on details in which the human merges with the animal. It made the program worthwhile."

— O GLOBO, Adriana Pavlova,
August 13th 2014

Transit in Préludes



Dance trio
with live piano music for
art galleries and museums,
duration from 30 to 50 minutes

Shang-Chi Sun
Company

2014

Inspired by the effervescent creativity of the early 20th Century and its sinuous curves, Shang-Chi Sun brings musicians and dancers together in museum spaces to create a modern interpretation of this fascinating period. Debussy's *Préludes* serves as a reference and bridge to the times before 1914.

The years before World War I in Europe are characterized by a reinvention of art: dance, music, and visual arts experienced an exciting, creative time that is perceived now as a revolution. These were the beginnings of modern art, their sequels continue into our time. Many at that time were scandalized. The art of this period experienced a powerful struggle with norms and social constraints, and led to the founding of utopian societies and new forms of cohabitation. The different art forms interpenetrated each other, and they pursued not only aesthetic goals but were seen as part of human life.

Transit in Préludes is a dialogue between music and dance. In it Shang-Chi Sun uses the unusual setting of museums and art galleries to stage a counterpoint to the spirit of the place. The work is equally fragile and lively as the company evokes colors and emotions linked to the creative experiences of another century.

This piece was first performed at Bröhan Museum Berlin in August 2014.

Photo by Emmanuele Contini

The Photographer

Dance trio with live music, duration about 1h

Shang-Chi Sun & Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin

2014

In the center of this mixed media project is the work of English photographer Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904). He left very young England to go to America where he coped with the new field of photography. On the occasion of a bet he started in 1872 his movement studies of humans and animals that interested him throughout his life. He wanted to visually demonstrate that a galloping horse has at one moment all four legs in the air. Muybridge is famous with hiss series of photographs and continuous shootings as one of the most important representatives of early chronophotography. He invented the photography series using a complex technical design for the 19th Century and created the conditions for the development of the film.

Almost forgotten, however, are the other events of his life. 1874 Muybridge murdered his wife's lover, Colonel Larkyns, after the discovery of their letter exchange. In the following trial he was acquitted because of "excusable crime".

The Photographer was commissioned in 1982 by the Holland Festival and was premiered in the same year at the Royal Palace Amsterdam. In Germany it has not been staged until now. This may be due to the unique structure of this work: the theater, the visualization, the concert and dance are not simultaneously but successively inserted into the 3 acts.

Act I shows as a drama the events surrounding the crime of Muybridge and his subsequent acquittal.
Act II combines images with music and is taken the form of a concert for Violin and Ensemble.
Act III brings in a furious dance finale, that belongs to the best works heard of Philip Glass, the characters of the first act - but this time as a dancer - back into the action.

Photo by Piero Chiussi

"Nevertheless, this about 70 minutes long piece developed a considerable attraction - especially in the direction and choreography of the Taiwanese Shang-Chi Sun, which was performed as a guest production at the Kölner Philharmonie. Three excellent dancers (Annapaola Leso, Ross Martinson and David Essing), who were also performing as actors, were supported by six singers of the Vocal Consort Berlin and twelve musicians of the chamber ensemble Neue Musik Berlin under the direction of Manuel Nawri. (...) This was a very remarkable evening combining a fusion of cool precision and wild virtuosity, and was enthusiastically received by the audience."

— Kölner Stadt Anzeiger,
September 16th 2014

New Projects

Spur

Dance piece with the Chamber Orchestra for New Music KNM Berlin
Premiere in February 2016 at Festival Les Hivernales in Avignon (F)

Shang-Chi Sun will create a new dance piece together with KNM Berlin, set to music by the famous Austrian composer for contemporary music Beat Furrer. Shang-Chi Sun previously collaborated with the Berlin Chamber Orchestra on the piece *The Photographer* with music by Philip Glass, combining live music and dance. This premiered in June 2014 at the Museum for Photography in Berlin and was also presented at Cité de la Musique in Paris and at the Philharmonie in Cologne. The new project is aimed to be a continuation of the immense success of this performance and is commissioned by the festival in Avignon.

Daze / Messe pour le temps présent

Premiere in 2017

In 1967 Maurice Béjart premiered a new dance piece set to music by Pierre Henry and Michel Colombier: "Messe pour le temps présent". It was an esthetical and musical revelation for the audience. In the historical "Cour d'honneur" of the Papal Palace in Avignon, the dancers were wearing blue jeans and t-shirts, moving fast and furious in pure physicality, to electronic music and abstract sounds. Though this kind of electro-acoustical music was very new, Béjart's piece, combining ballet and contemporary dance, was a huge success, expanding his popularity to a wider audience – and the "Psyché Rock" of the soundtrack even became a musical hip. Béjart touched and responded to a longing of the 60's for liberation. This "mass" for the body was also for Béjart the symbol for a religion of the future, based on dance and the body.
Almost 50 years later, Shang-Chi Sun aims to create a new version of this historical piece and to imagine, living now in the far future of 1967, what this religion of the future might be. Fascinated by Béjart's conception of beauty and his aesthetic of the body, a body symbolizing a high spiritual belief, Shang-Chi Sun aims to enhance this vision of a glorious physicality: sweat on the skin, the golden proportion of the body, each step praising God. Purely human, the body is at the same time a mysterious counterpart from above, the divine. The collaboration of Pierre Henry's composition developed this idea even further and brought it far into the future.

Does Béjart's conception of spirituality reflect western thinking about art and beauty? What is beauty? Can dance steps deliver a sublime message, echoing deep feelings and a basic physicality that everybody shares? Is the body still "sacred" today, when it is so commercialized? Shang-Chi Sun searches for the core of physicality, for a common language beyond words, that touches us when we see a dance step. What happens when we deconstruct the beauty and are conceptual? What color would that be? Thinking into the future...

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