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Han!

Detroit

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After experiencing last week's performance by Hyun Ju Baek, I feel a strong compulsion to share some thoughts of what was indeed 'a very special Good Friday phenomena.'

Hyun Ju Baek is an absolute tour de force. At the Underground stage of the Hilberry Theatre, the small group of Grad students and myself were on our feet at the end of the performance. I was ready to give her three curtains for an ovation. Bare foot, no incidental music, a simple set design of three hanging scrim upstage, for 65 minutes Hyun guided us through a transcendence that touched our common ancestral past of humanity. The solo performance that utilized movement, dialogue, and song, wove the story of three generations of Korean women based on personal experience. As we saw in the Chicago workshops at the Chopin theater, it was the use of song that unlocked the primal, living soul in the theatre for both audience and performer. Thereby the experience becomes a communal shared phenomena. HAN's philosophical approach to song, which taps our ability to transcend time, became the structural foundation of the performance and it worked.

Years ago I saw a one-man show by an Ugandan actor at the Irish Theatre Fringe Festival. It was based on personal experience, and he revels at the end of the performance the six gun shot wounds he received in the killing fields as he was left for dead during Ugandan's civil war. The way he was able to live the experience and transfer the living theater to the audience, who then become part of the phenomena, is what reminded me of HAN.

There is another artist named Gregory Markopoulos that I feel connected to this realm of theatrical experience. Now in Markopoulos' case the medium is cinema. As an avant garde filmmaker who hit the scene in the late 50's, he very much became a fore-runner in the American screen arts. Every four years there is a showing of his work in rural Greece at a very obscure event named Temenos. I feel his work is also in line with the theoretical approach a living theatre experience.

I am imbued with inspiration due to HAN! I just wish more people were there. And although we did have an hour of post-show discussion, the Grad students were a little bit stiff. A more relaxed post-show reception perhaps would have nurtured better dialogue. Anyways, thank you to the both of you for tuning me in, and Easter

continues! Greek Orthodox Easter is this weekend. Be sure to place a coin in your loaf of bread when baking.