

Hello!

Hello, nice to meet you here.

Okay... So... my name is Tena.

I'm a white, red headed woman in my mid-fifties.

I came from Olot,

that it's a little village in the north of Catalonia,

under the Pyrenees, one hour and a half north of Barcelona.

And...

I'm the artistic director of Sismògraf Festival.

Sismògraf Festival...

we say that it's the festival, which detects the movement  
of the body and of the planet.

We are focused on movement

and also on issues like globalisation, sustainability, ecology and so on.

And...

We have the festival, but we also run a venue,

the main theatre in the village.

And we organise both, the season and the festival.

My name is Jazmin.

I am in my mid-forties, but I don't look mid-forties.

I'm a little bit short...

long hair, brown eyes, brown hair.

Big eyebrows.

I am the artistic director of Dublin Dance Festival.

I started directing the festival in 2021.

And this year was my first edition of the festival.

Dublin Dance Festival has already 20 years of existence.

And we have an international programmes that is presenting in venues  
of different sizes, outdoors.

We work with all types of audiences,

children, adults, general audience, more specific...

We also have an intensive programme, which are master classes,

we co-produce pieces and we commission works.

So, more or less, the festival is 12 to 15 days  
in the month of May.

My name is Markéta Perroud.

I am tall, white, in early fifties woman.

Mother of two kids...

and wife of my French husband.

I am Czech.

I am artistic co-director of Tanec Praha organisation  
and artistic director of Ponec's venue.

And... I am based in Prague, Czech Republic,  
in the centre of Europe,

Our organisation, Tanec Praha, which means "Dance Prague",  
because it was initially in Prague.

The organisation runs the venue, which has a year-round programme.

We co-produce and we are the Platform or partner for local artists,  
contemporary dance artists.

And we have also a big international festival,  
which runs every June.

For the whole month in Prague, but also in other villages and cities  
of the Czech Republic.

We have privilege to show all kind of formats of contemporary dance pieces,  
for all kind of public.

Then we have Czech Dance Platform.

We present Czech Republic based artists  
to the Programmers and Presenters.

How would you characterise your own personal interest in dance practice?

What excites you?

We all have dance previews to work in dance management.

Maybe we can all tell a little bit our own mini story.

Mini story... Let's start with your mini story.

Well, I dance since I was five.

I did a career as a professional dancer.  
And came to Europe from Argentina  
looking to expand my career and my opportunities.  
So, my interest on dance comes as a way of living.  
I see life through dance and dance through life.  
So I think being the director of Dublin Dance Festival  
is a very exciting way of bringing forward those first years  
of myself dancing, creating and making work.  
Today what excites me about dance definitely is...  
the work that makes ourselves change, feel, think...  
How much dance can push boundaries  
towards what we define that it is a person, a society, or a community.  
Well, dance... What is dance for me?  
Dance has made and makes me discover myself and the world around me.  
Because I...  
Somehow, I said that I didn't choose dance.  
I didn't choose dance, but dance chose me  
because it was a bit by mistake.  
But...  
Then it grabbed me and it didn't let me go.  
I'm trained as...  
actually at the beginning, as a classical dancer, but...  
very soon I found out that I don't fit in the way of thinking  
and at the time, contemporary dance made me...  
inspired me much more.  
It fit more to my personality.  
Then, I worked in Czech Republic and also abroad,  
I traveled a lot thanks to dance.  
I met my husband thanks to dance.  
As I said, I try to...  
I try to give others or show others the possibilities that dance gave me.  
My experience is a little bit...

like English people say, "Jack of all trades, master of none".

That's my experience in...

practicing arts.

I started in theater, but then I don't feel comfortable with speaking.

I need to express things in other ways.

So I came to the dance, I finished at the circus...

I feel more comfortable expressing myself without words.

So this is my approach to the body work. I think it's important, it's our...

it defines... like, we are our body and how we use our body.

So for me, this is important to...

work around these ideas

in my dance practices or in my dance managing projects.

What I expect dance to provoke others is...

just emotion.

And it's just to...

bring things here and here.

A little bit...

I think that for me,

dance is the art which engages the human being

in all its complexity.

Somehow, for me, it's why it's also...

and it also connects with memory...

because dance is a way to be all together...

From the ancient... and from many, many years ago.

And I imagine, for example, prehistoric people using their bodies

to communicate, to create community, to be together.

And this connects our body with all the people

that has been before us.

Yeah, there's something ancestral about it.

There's something that we say...

there is a very interesting phrase that says that knowing the body...

So there is a body that knows and that body moves

through that knowledge.

I think dance is almost the art to bring that forward choreographically,  
because there is dance and choreography and the art of making dance  
and the practice of dance.

There is all this diversity of the form in itself.

I think what's exciting is when we start seeing  
how dance powerfully empowers people  
and people's lives and communities.

It brings a sense of belonging, cohesion...  
self-awareness.

We see them in children, in audiences,  
and then we see them through the arts of dancers.

But we are the passionate ones...

But also the knowledge and the skills that you are gaining by...  
being engaged in dance.

I had an experience once, I was in a group...

No, but it's true.

I had an experience, when I was in a group of thinkers,  
for a cultural city... for a cultural bid...  
of an European city,

and I was the only dancer, choreographer. I was doing a masters in festivals.

And the position that I brought to the group  
was to observe the city as a space.

Like when we were sitting here before.

Where we are... How are we with each other?

What is up and what is down, you know?

It's almost the relationship of self and space.

And self and the other.

I think dancers...

we are a very intelligent...

you have people and we have skills

that I think could be quite interesting in a much more plural,

multi-interdisciplinary way of thinking,  
because there is a way of interlinking...

It's very interesting when you start to be connected to the art form.

Can you talk about a performance by a Deaf or disabled artist  
that has had an impact on you?

- Yes. - Yes.

Obviously.

Well, I have to say, I saw two days ago...

a perfectly, really... It was fantastically done.

"Set and reset/reset" by Candoco Dance Company.

I danced the piece, I know what it is. But it was just made so beautifully.

That yeah... I can say yes.

With a fresh memory.

It's my first... My memory is fresher than yours

because we have seen this morning, Chiara Bersani.

And I saw this piece some years ago

and this morning I renewed my experience

with this piece and this big artist that Chiara is.

To show the audience her body,

to show the audience her quality of movement.

And we have had the privilege to see it in the National Gallery,

in the middle of these big pictures of these bodies...

these bodies painted...

I think...

I'll remember for a long time this morning experience.

I saw the work... well, I've seen a company, actually,

it's called "Dançando com a Diferença".

It's a company that is based in Madeira, an island in Portugal.

And it's a very interesting project because they work...

Most of the artists have different type of disabilities.

They work with choreographers that would normally work with companies

without this mix,

or these different abilities or disabilities.

I saw the work of Tânia Carvalho with them,  
and now I just saw the work of Marlene Monteiro Freitas.

What really impacts me is... I know by being a dancer,  
in the practice of actually is to go through the process  
of memorizing, remembering, creating, and being in the room  
with others

and in my own understanding of what the body is.

And I can't really feel the power of the experience  
because the body is also different.

So it is almost what comes from the piece.

It's the piece, but being performed by these bodies,  
which are me and not me.

So it was really powerful, that way of understanding the difference.

And that the difference was allowing me to feel  
something very specific and special like we did today with...  
with Chiara as well.

Okay, so...

How did we hear about the artists of the company that we saw.

Now we know the question.

I didn't know "Dançando com a diferença" until I went to...  
a Platform in Portugal that... programmed them.

I had no idea before.

I discovered Chiara in Santarcangelo Festival,  
many years ago.

So related to the question,

I think that going to festivals or to Platforms is a good way  
to discover new artists.

And well, it's one of our main places to...

to discover new artists.

Yeah, I think it was the same for me, Candoco...

I think I saw it for the first time

at a British dance edition.

So it was a showcase of British works.

- But it's interesting... - But Chiara, for example, I didn't know.

Well, the first time I saw her was in Italy.

And I didn't know actually, so I discover her during the performance.

I discover a lot of artists, because we did a commission now to Marc Brew, who is also an artist and a wheelchair user.

And...

it's interesting when you put the emphasis into trying to find artists for a commission or for a different world up here.

But it's not the same one, it's not the same circle.

I think you find them through different circuits.

There's an interesting question,

"Why do we have to look outside our circuit?"

This kind of personal meetings with someone are important.

I know Candoco because I have a friend that was a dancer in the company.

So she told me about it...

this formal and informal ways of having the information.

Do you think...

you bring a different critical eye to the work of Deaf and disabled artists?

My understanding of the question is a bit what I was saying...

regarding of how I look, what I look...

How I understand what I see or how I critically see the work.

I was looking at Chiara today... And I was thinking,

"how would I perceive that same work if it was with a different body?"

And then I say to myself, "who cares?"

Because...

Because we are trying to... we're trying to find too much.

To fit it in some kind of category.

So for me, I don't know what I bring myself...

but I know what they bring to me.

There's almost a possibility to... Undo...



A lot of ways of seeing work.

And then... there is something about maybe...

The more I see the work of people being made from their perspective,  
from their life, from their lens,  
the more I understand critically where they are standing against others,  
because of course there's good work, bad work, work of interest...  
or relevance and not...

Maybe it has something to do with what we've talked previously.

The privilege.

The privilege to be in our position.

Leading an artistic project.

And...

We have the obligation...

we have not only the need, but the obligation to have...

this very wide...

regarding to all the artistic...

projects.

You look at me like I should add something...

When I look at the question and afterwards you say it's just like...

Also as an ex-dancer and as a person who lived the life that I lived...

It's a different critical eye, but I don't...

Somehow...

As a professional you have different... but otherwise it's...

What do you think the appetite amongst your audiences is  
for work of Deaf and disabled audiences?

Do you think...

audiences bring different critical processes to the work?

That's an interesting question.

And we were talking about this today.

Because...

I mean, in terms of the appetite,

I don't think people know.

I think...

if you ask them, they will say yes by curiosity.

I think everybody will say yes, but I think...

You know when you taste something for the first time?

Like food from a different country...

and then you start liking that taste and you want more.

Like mangoes. When I discovered mangoes, then I wanted more.

I think that there is something about...

What is this word? "Appetite".

I think that there is "need", but I don't know if there is "appetite".

I think audience have an appetite for this kind of works,

but also for the risky or very innovative works.

Audiences want to be sure that the thing they will see...

They prefer comedies with famous actors.

In terms of appetite, It's not...

It's strange to answer in terms of...

I have a problem with "appetite", because I'm not English native speaker.

So I have maybe some other...

but I would say yes, of course.

But then there is the second question...

Do you think audiences bring different critical processes to the work?

I think yes, most of them, yes.

But it's also a bit like we were saying today...

with this critical person that couldn't write about a piece

because she didn't think... because she was afraid to offend.

There is something interesting that...

The work of Marlene Monteiro Freitas is really provocative because she puts the body of different disabled artists into something that we don't want to see.

Because it's like almost like,

"oh yes, arts and disability is okay,

but not sexuality... not too much value..."

It's like "happy work".

So it's almost like... We also...

It's like, "oh it is it...?"

When people say, "Isn't it great for them?"

And I'm like, "this is great for everybody."

So I think we still need to grow and I think audiences...

have a filter sometimes, when they're seeing the work.

I think the more exposed, the more they will start to see it without the sensation that this is something to be celebrated specifically, or especially...

but more received as any other artist.

I think another clue could be...

to understand the artistic works as artistic works.

How would you rate your overall knowledge

of Deaf and disabled artists working in the dance community?

From 1 to 10.

- 1 being bad and 10 being really good? - Yeah.

Well, I have to say that when I started that process of commission...

Today, I can say I'm closer to between a seven and an eight...

I don't think that I have an enormous amount of knowledge of everybody out there,

but I'm closer because I did that research.

So I really went deep,

and I started to call people who maybe knows people.

It's very interesting how when there is a need, you start to search.

How is it that you are going to deal with this?

But if there is not a need or a push or a will, you just don't move.

So I think that there is something that sometimes feels a bit imposed.

My knowledge grew, but also showed me how far I was...

on the knowledge of today's...

landscape of artists.

Even in my own country...

Ireland.

It is very interesting...

and sometimes maybe that's the way.

In my close context...

Maybe it's a seven,

but my global knowledge is not further than...

the two or three well-known names, like Candoco, or Chiara or Claire or...

The same.

And there is a little difference because dance community is really large.

But do we talk about professional dance community?

So then, yeah.

If there are disabled artists who are not part of the dance development  
and incubator projects,

how might you as promoters be able to ensure you don't also overlook them?

Yeah, it's a question.

And it's the same that you explained this morning to us,

that maybe until a certain age it's possible to do it,

but then only the normative bodies are...

The possibility of being professional... but not the others...

I think it depends on the role of the organisation.

Our organisation is a festival.

So as a festival today, my role is to not overlook

in terms of the...

In my term, which is three or four years,

that there is a representation of that diversity of voices.

So then projects, artworks...

might need to include works from or made by or performed by...

A mix of able and disabled artists.

Now...

We, particularly, are now working between three organisations

to commission Marc Brew, to do...

and that makes a huge difference in terms of our capacity.  
And we hope that we are going to lead the voice in the future  
with this commission to continue the dialogue of the needs.  
Because not only we need to... Education...  
like if I was a university, I'd say I need to open the doors  
to more disabled artists to be able to...  
train professionally, to become the artist that they could...  
the makers, the thinkers, the writers.  
Inside the ecology there are a lot of gaps,  
but then there is the social thing...  
and then I don't know how it is in your countries,  
but even when you look at it, and put the money,  
and even when you do the effort,  
you find the social system against you.  
Because if they take salaries, they lose rights.  
Social rights.  
Because they get social rights, because they don't work as much.  
So there is something there on the social system  
that sometimes doesn't work with us.  
So it's interesting when you start to go inside that tunnel  
like, "okay, let's open this discussion."  
Well, where are the walls then?  
So, if I go back to the question...  
I think that if...  
If they're not part of dance development and incubators projects,  
we have to go and to look after them.  
It's like they're...  
We should be more...  
There should be more positive discrimination in this.  
So...  
Okay. That was fantastic!  
- Thank you. - It was a pleasure...

to share this conversation with you.

Bye guys!