

Dear Chair of the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund

Title: Two weeks intensive residency within Impulstanz Festival

Date: July 23 – 5 August

Impulstanz Dance Festival takes place every year in Vienna, Austria, in the summer months of July and August. The festival offers an intense further training programme where there is an opportunity to meet with internationally renowned artists, teachers and choreographers.

During the first week of studies I took part in different classes lead by Marion Ballester, Ignacio "Inaki" Azpillaga and Bruno Caverna. The classes varied from learning Rosas' repertory, partnering skills and playing with the extremes of movement. For the second week I was lucky to have gained a place on a coaching project also lead by Inaki Azpillaga based on the concept "Powerful and Fragile". I also learnt ground work techniques from San Francisco based dancer /choreographer Hermesdorf. The main aim of my visit to the festival was to enrich my knowledge of the dance world, research and experience different movement techniques, to meet other dancers and artists from different countries, to exchange ideas and to gain new inspirations. This was definitely achieved. There were many highlights of my trip to Vienna. Apart from being in such a great city, the fact that I was immersed in an environment that was open, free and focused towards discovering new horizons was incredible.

The suggestions that I have for future LUTSF scholarship winners are to do and see as much as possible, throw yourself into the workshops and projects and make as many contacts as you can. Take every new skill you learn back to the studio before the next session, explore them and integrate them with your existing skills and keep on reinforcing them.

I will share the knowledge that I have gained through meetings with other dance artists and my teaching that I do. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to embark on this trip, I am very grateful for the award and really feel that it has opened up my eyes in the way I see, feel and think about dance. Also please accept my sincere apologies for the lateness of this report.

Yours sincerely

Navala Chaudhari

Report from Navala Chaudhari

I arrived in Vienna on the 23rd July, a day before starting the workshops and projects that I had booked. I decided that it would be a good idea to register and familiarise myself with the transport system and work out how long it would take for me to travel to the venue. The festival was based at the Arsenal grounds. The surroundings were huge and I was surprised to discover that the studios were part of a large warehouse building comprising of 11 studios in total. I was astounded by the sheer size of the studios and also excited to get started the next day. I was greeted by a vibrant community of young dance professionals from all over the world and I was happy to meet with some dance colleagues who had been there a week previously. They gave me a quick tour of the grounds. The facilities were great; free internet service, outside café, changing rooms with showers, dancewear shop, bike hiring and you could even make your own dance video which would be played on a television screen for all to see. They then directed me to the workshop office where I picked up my pass. I was ready to get started. I was told that there was a performance happening that same evening and in my keenness to not waste any time I hitched a ride on the back of a friend's bike and we were off to the Schauspielhaus theatre to see Hooman Sharifi / Impure Company. The system in Vienna for purchasing tickets is great; if you wait till the last minute for the show to start and there are still tickets left you are able to purchase them for half the price, bargain!!! This theatre was small and intimate and in his piece "we failed to hold this reality in mind" Hooman Sharifi approaches his native country, Iran. This was my first taste of dance from the European scene and was different to anything I had seen before. On my way home I thought to myself that the coming two weeks would be eye opening and very interesting.

My day began at 9.50 a.m. for a two-hour workshop lead by Marion Ballester a member of Anne Terese de Keersmaker's Rosas. The work was based on a trio dance piece, which is part of the show called "Desh". We began by learning the piece with movement and as the week progressed we learnt and used written adaptations. Each person was given an individual role from the trio to work on and I was to learn Marion's part. We were put into groups of three and worked together on building the choreography. We also explored and became familiar with the choreographic tools used by Anne Terese de Keersmaker when creating work. We experimented with retrograde, dynamics, speed, time and space in relation to others present. I found that the choreographic writing of the trio has a close connection to the musical composition, which is a strong aspect of her universe. Here Indian music had a particular relationship with the rhythm. By the end of the week we were able to perform this small part of this piece to the music and I felt a great sense of achievement. I have also learnt tools that I can use when creating work myself. Unfortunately I was unable to film the final result because of strict copyright rules.

My next two-hour workshop began at 12.05am. This gave me just enough time to recharge and change my sweaty clothes due to the beautiful sunny weather outside. I was met by a much larger group, hence the size of the studios and a much larger than life character Bruno Caverna, a Brazilian from Rio de Janeiro who would be my teacher for the week. We began the lesson by clapping rhythms in time and telling our fellow dance colleagues our names. This was a fun way to put names to familiar faces. The atmosphere was open and relaxed. This workshop was called playing with the extremes and when we began to move I began to understand why!! The class was a very intensive training ground that never stopped. Based on an energetic floor work that Bruno Caverna had developed himself, with an objective of researching and exploring the polarity that exists in every life situation. We were encouraged to listen and investigate our breath in relation to our movements and which inner states of mind or breathing would affect our quality of them. He demonstrated the movements and then the floor was ours to practise and to give our own personal expression. Some of the techniques and elements used were gliding on the floor, turning and twisting, spiral principles and techniques of headlong in a flowing dynamic. At the end of the week although I had a few bruises I felt so much stronger both physically and mentally. He was an inspiration to meet and the greater depth of knowledge of my body that I have experienced will inform my training for time to come. I also hope to invite him to teach in London in the near future.

My final workshop of the day was "Partnering" with Inaki Azpillaga. For the last ten years he has been in one way or another related to the work of Wim Vandekeybus at the company Ultima Vez. I first saw the company in Amsterdam and was blown away by this physical theatre company. As expected this was a very physically demanding class. We dealt with ideas of sharing and communication, which are essential aspects of our daily lives and through partner work we searched to express this. We learnt and

explored different exercises to open up instinct and awareness in dealing with each other. Weight, feelings for timing, leaders and followers and trust became our daily technique terms.

For the second week I took "ground work" in the morning with Kathleen Hermesdorf and then from 12-6 p.m. I was involved in the coaching project led by Inaki Azpillaga. In the morning workshops we trained and experimented with low, inverted and off balance shapes. We began with a thorough warm up and partner practice to build strength, structural instincts and control in relationship to the ground. We learnt somatic techniques and used these to inform our bodies when moving in space. She had a great energy and continuously encouraged us to let go and release tension so that our movements became fluid, free and seamless. Her approach to upside down techniques gave me a new way of thinking and by the end of the session I felt I had discovered new pathways and conquered old fears moving in and through all planes.



The coaching project was limited to 20 people and this gave more time for individual attention, which I was looking forward to as some of the workshops had 30 or more students participating. Also as there was more time we were able to delve much deeper into subjects and explore them fully. We defined the atmosphere through moving rather than formal technique and Inaki proposed games and feelings as an environment to develop our movements. We created solo pieces, taught them to each other and then analysed how the body learns. We imagined what it would be like to be blind and looked at how much the body could learn only through the sensation of touch. We looked at fragile states such as narcolepsy (uncontrollable attacks of sleep paralysis) and tried to embody and express this. We practised group exercises of trust and challenged one another to take risks. We practised simple exercises of looking into one another's eyes to discover who the person was behind them and how much we were willing to give and receive. There was so much that we covered but

one thing that stands out is that he always pushed us to go beyond our present limits, to believe in what we were doing, to always be in the moment and encouraged us to think intelligently and not just do.

The time and experience I had in Vienna has really opened up my eyes. The way I see, feel and think about dance has altered and I feel in a sense liberated. Now back home I see the work of companies and choreographers with different eyes. I am more inspired to see and work with people I may not have thought of before and I have a new appreciation of the work here in London. It has given me inspiration to take my dancing to the next level and it has pushed me to question what I am interested in and what I do and don't like.

Every day I was bombarded with new ways of thinking, concepts and ideas. I have learned how to work and create in different ways and this has given me a curiosity and hunger to investigate. I continue to search for new inspirations. Meeting and dancing with such a diverse and open-minded group of people has given me freedom of self-expression and newfound confidence in myself as an artist. It has made me realise how important we are as the next generation of dancers, to have a unique voice and to keep on pushing boundaries.

It is important to know why you want to go to Impulstanz and use the workshops and festival to suit your goals. There is so much to see, take and learn that it is sometimes overwhelming if you don't stop every once in a while to catch your breath. I miss the pace. Be prepared for it. If you're not in a class, you're watching a show, or attending a lecture, or asking questions, or at a post performance party ... it never ends! You leave your room in the morning and you don't return until late that night. Every single minute of the day is dance, dance, dance but I never tired of it! Implstanz festival is definitely a place to visit and I would encourage every young dancer/choreographer to take part in this great dance experience.

Navala Chaudhari

