



Press Release

Ethno Poetry Cuba 2007, Chapter IX Black Wings for music, movement, text and slides; conceived and performed by **Eugenie Kuffler** and **Chakra** for a shadow dancer and a musician performed by **Kim Robinson** – movement and **Eugenie Kuffler** – tenor saxophone, flutes and percussion will be premiered on **Friday August 31 at 8pm** at the **Woods Hole Community Hall**, 68 Water Street, and Woods Hole 02543. **Tickets \$9**. Reservations: Ondine Productions 508 548 4659.

These **Black Wings**, open onto a society attempting to fly through clouds of insecurity and frustration. Castro, the Commander in Chief of the nation, is quasi invisible, the system functions, the ship sails on but no one knows what will happen next. **Black Wings** was conceived for a performance in April 2008 by “Conexión Habana” in the magnificent double marble staircase and balconies of the ex-“Centro Gallego” now “el Gran Teatro de la Habana.” The members of Havana Connection, an ensemble of 8 Cuban dancers, musicians and comedians plus Eugenie Kuffler, invented their own roles in response to the title offered to them – “Alas Negras.” Their roles: The Cloud that Wanted to be a Bird, The Man Who Almost Flies, Love in a Pod, Harmonica, Colonel Buzzard, Apo Calypto, Kabala and The Black Man who came down from the Mountains. Of this colorful cast only the esoteric Kabala has made it so far to the United States. It is around this character that Eugenie Kuffler has conceived a solo, stateside adaptation for the Woods Hole Community Hall.

In the first eight chapters of **Ethno Poetry**, the central role has been that of “The Traveler,” the one who discovers herself in a new culture and who then leaves, but in the 9th chapter, this foreigner is doubled by Kabala, an atypical representative of the Cuban Jewish community. Her costume is designed by May Livory, a French ethnologist, graphic artist, and couturiere. The drawings on the skin colored leotard elicit the the vectors of the sephiroths and the bio-energetic circuits of chakras; the makeup and jewelry is inspired by the Falasha, the Ethiopian Jews; her enveloping mantle evokes a wandering hag. Kabala represents the resistance and creativity of an immigrant culture within a dominant culture; she is also the traveler’s guardian angel. There is another major if invisible character in this piece - Juan the Cuban of Catholic, Spanish descent. He wants The Traveler to know what he has experienced, weighty information that The Traveler integrates only through Kabala’s transcendental assistance.

Using two remote controls the performer projects slides on a big screen - images of daily objects, of the members of “Conexión Habana,” of inhabitants of the shanty town Romerillo and she dances in front of the screen or behind it, projecting shadows and she sings, plays the piccolo and small percussion instruments and she tells the stories that describe this unique period of Cuban history, a moment of suspension, of silence and hope.

Each year since 1999, a new chapter of **Ethno Poetry** has been performed in Cuba – in Havana, in Sancti Spiritus, Bayamo, Santiago de Cuba or Jiguani in the Sierra Maestra and also in the Woods Hole Community Hall with the ensemble “Woods Hole Connection”. Chapter IV, “The Edge of the Shadow (2003) included the dancers Klara Koenig, Geordie Holmes and Heidi Mrusek, the rock drummer Tuck Hayashi, the pianist Dan Sawyer and the Brazilian percussionist Ricardo Frota. Chapter V – Venus’s Window (2004) was a duo with E. Kuffler and Ricardo Frota. The other chapters, seven of which have been performed in Woods Hole are: I – Agua y Tambor (1999), II – The Roof of Oblivion (2000), III – Cargo (2001), VI – A Green Plant in a Tin Can (2004), VII – Dry Harvest (2005) and VIII– A Narrow Space between things (2006).

Chakra. the 2nd half of the evening, develops the bioenergetic circuits imprinted in Kabala. “Chakra” which means “wheel” or “junction” in Sanskrit, is an element of the Hindi technique of yoga which attempts to control vital physiological functions, to master the body and thus to attain a unity with the essential nature of the person. In this theatrical presentation, the dancer, reduced to a shadow, alternates yoga positions linked to the 5 Tibetan chakras: pelvis – earth, umbilicus – water, heart – fire, throat – air and brain – ether with improvisations stemming from those parts of the body and to the natural elements to which they correspond. A musician’s improvisations accompany the yogini and interpret the same natural elements.

These performances are dedicated to **Klara Koenig** (1908 -2006).



Photos: Romerillo, Ciudad Habana. E.Kuffler, 2007

Kabala. André Heimler, Paris, 2002.

Costume: cape – Susan Burige,

leotard, jewelry, makeup – May Livory

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