



Khamlane Halsackda in *A single act*. Photo: Sammi Fang

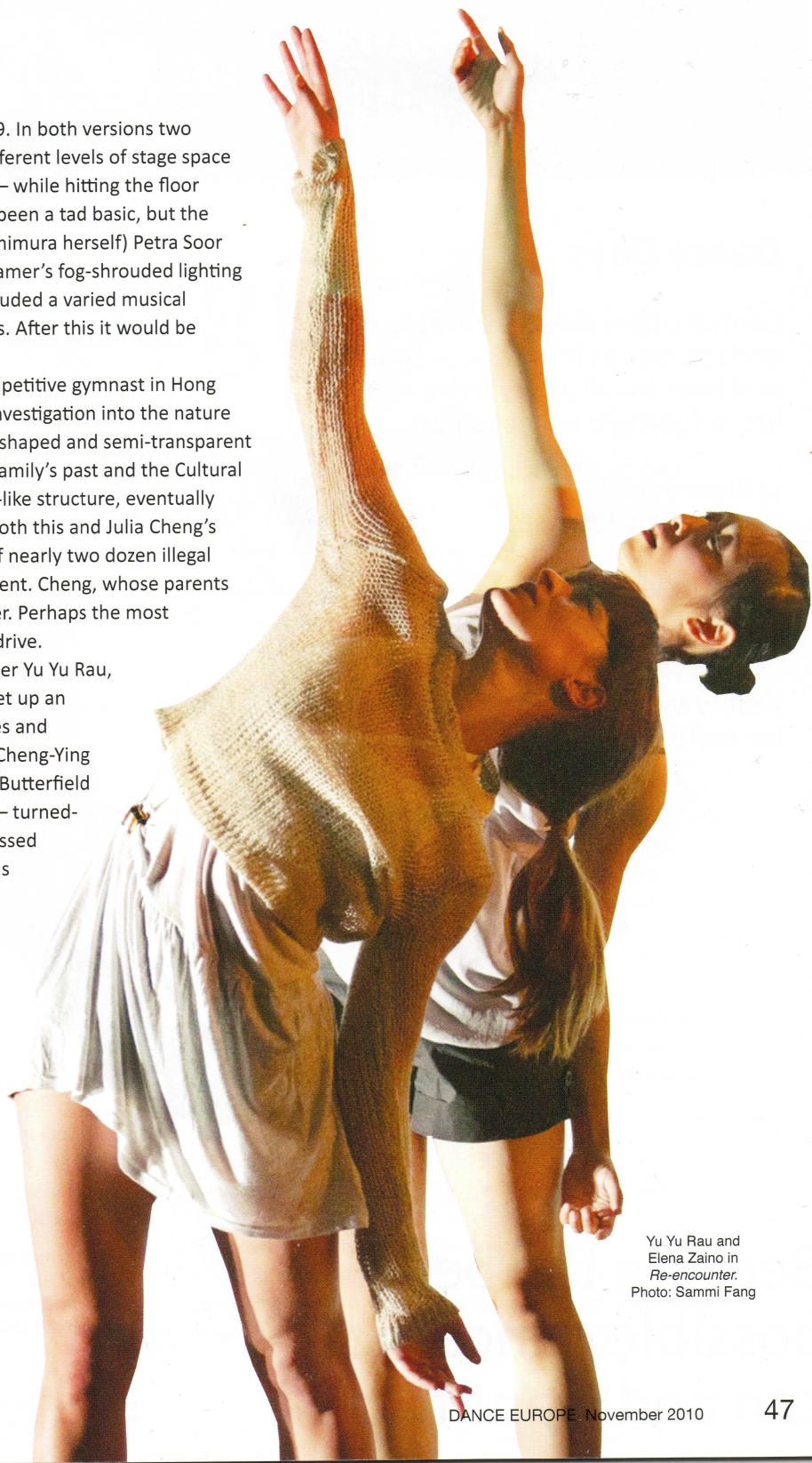
**THE ART OF
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another progression from a piece originally seen in 2009. In both versions two female dancers in brightly coloured tops played with different levels of stage space – sitting, standing or in a back-slapping, duck-like squat – while hitting the floor with their hands or feet. The steady rhythms may have been a tad basic, but the performances by Daniela B Larsen and (replacing Minamimura herself) Petra Soor were as engaging as the warm, bright beams of Andy Hamer’s fog-shrouded lighting design. Curiously, although she’s deaf Minamimura included a varied musical soundtrack as background to the dancers’ aural motions. After this it would be interesting to see how she’d handle an ensemble.

Lucia Tong trained in Chinese dance and was a competitive gymnast in Hong Kong. Her solo *The Art of Forgetting* was a tantalising investigation into the nature of memory, personal and political. The set was a tall, U-shaped and semi-transparent screen onto which were projected images from Tong’s family’s past and the Cultural Revolution. She worked in front of and around this skin-like structure, eventually ending up inside it with a small torch to light the way. Both this and Julia Cheng’s *The Other Side*, a quintet inspired by the 2004 deaths of nearly two dozen illegal immigrants in Morecambe Bay, merit further development. Cheng, whose parents were born in Hong Kong, is primarily a hip hop freestyler. Perhaps the most interesting thing about her dance was its sheer kinetic drive.

In *Re-encounter* the Taiwanese dance-choreographer Yu Yu Rau, an erstwhile teacher at the Cloud Gate Dance School, set up an exchange between various artists from different cultures and disciplines. These included the vocalist and lute player Cheng-Ying Chuang, composer Michael Picknett, set designer Ruth Butterfield and fellow dancer Elena Zaino. Strong shifts in motion – turned-in feet, or close to the ground martial positions – possessed a certain flow, while underlying the work as a whole was a sense of instinctual exploration. The results were promising. Something similar could be said of *With Eurydice*, a solo in which Jia-Yu Corti used myth to find movement, form and meaning. Having danced for Retina and Marie Chouinard, amongst others, she’s an experienced and emphatically grounded performer particularly adept at floor work. Both her presence and a soundtrack of astral bells helped to suggest that here was a woman passing through several dimensions.

Ultimately a lot of this belonged in work-in-progress territory, but as such *Stepping East 2010* was still an altogether commendable initiative. Step Out Arts plans to continue nurturing and promoting the work of British East Asian dance-makers. The evidence to date indicates that in both aesthetic and practical terms this is a sound strategy.



Yu Yu Rau and
Elena Zaino in
Re-encounter.
Photo: Sammi Fang