

## Dancer and Choreographer, Mònika Lakatos from Hungary

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Photo by P Fassoli

When I was small child, around seven years old, I had already been dancing a lot, at elementary school and in my family, in different situations like birthday parties, New Year's parties, weddings, etc., and I remember when I was twelve or thirteen years old, I was together with my best girl friend at the Theater Erkel and we saw a wonderful Hungarian contemporary style performance with young amazing dancers. After that event, we danced on the road while we were going home. That was the real first moment when I felt, "I want to be dancer and I CAN do all the steps, jumps and turns." I felt that I am a dancer.

After that experience, whenever I saw a movie or other performances or fantastic dances, I felt the same feeling in my heart, in my body, and in my blood, and also at the same time I felt inside myself something special that distinguished me from others.

My elementary school was a singing and music faculty so that is why I learned music, sang in the choir and played the piano and flute. That was a very nice period of my life with many precious experiences of sounds and the rhythm. But I really missed the movements and eurhythmics, so that's why I kept looking for the possibilities to study dance.



Finally, at sixteen years old, I followed my classmate from high school to a very high quality dance school and I learned modern and classical ballet very intensively for two years. Before my exam at the end of semester I was very excited and I looked very much forward to it! The other dancers were afraid of that situation, but for me it was very safe and joyful. I was happy because I had waited for the stage.

After a half year of theater practice in musicals, I was continuing the study at the other higher level school. There were different techniques: Graham, tap dance, acrobatic, classic, contact improvisation, etc. After one year together with my dance partner, we created our first choreography. That period was very inspiring for us and we were very active and devoted to

creating and “work “.

I had strong contact with dance and creating movements and at the same time I had a special feeling that made me feel a little different from the others through my questioning: How are the things of life and what is the source of everything? How is the life and, of course, the death? The feeling was very natural, smooth and stable and that's why I felt strong and safe. But the question was really an “emergency”!

The first time I found many answers in the Buddhist biographies, books and films, and I had many conversations with my friends about this. I read almost all books from His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama. In one of those I saw the word “Dzogchen” and I read some details about that, but I didn't really understand how it was connected to Buddhism.

When I was about twenty-eight years old I began to grow a wish in my heart: I would like to find a Buddhist tradition or somewhere, a sacred dance that I can do as practice. I thought maybe not only sitting meditation exists and it would be very nice to use my main activity of the dance to do spiritual practice, to dance with real knowledge.



One day I heard from my friend at the Buddhist College in Budapest that every Monday a few practitioners of the Hungarian Dzogchen Community practiced a dance on a beautiful, huge Mandala with six females and six males with very nice slow movements and melodious mantra!

That was in November, 2003, when I was almost thirty-five years old. I was really happy and after the first meeting with Vajra Dance, I knew I had found what I was looking for.

In March of 2004, I got the first direct introduction from dear Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and step-by-step I studied the Vajra Dance, sitting practices and Yantra Yoga and the connection with Rinpoche, the Teachings and the Community became stronger and stronger. I found the source of everything.

Dancing and choreography for me is freedom, a joy and a kind of home. If I dance or create choreography, I am totally myself and it becomes easier to do the daily life and if the daily life becomes easier, so does the creation of the choreography. This is a very inspired state.

My method to create is very simple. The main or the base inspiration for me is the music. I listen to the music many times and let it manifest the first the character of choreography. The movement takes shape, and then I see a kind of picture about the whole performance. After that come the directions and dynamics or timing, and finally the small details like the steps of the concrete movements, ornaments, and finesses. The teachings and practices help that process very much. My mind is more open and free and my emotions more deep, clear and, at the same time, lighter. That way the movements come more easily and my body is joyful; that's why I can better express myself, and what I want to show.

Before Dzogchen practice I worked in the same way, but together with this knowledge, I am totally relaxed about from what everything manifests and it is why I am calm and at the same time energetic in my work and in my art. So the teachings definitely help that wonderful journey.

Almost thirty years ago I met wonderful artists: singers, musicians and dancers. We are in the same company and we work and play together on big stages mainly in Hungary, but sometimes outside. We are friends and colleagues. Although I did more kinds of contemporary, folk, jazz ballet, and butoh style dances, nowadays I'm dancing my favorite style, the joyful dynamic show dance with acrobatic elements.



In this year I turn fifty years old, so I don't know how much longer I can do this artistic form. I am almost a retired dancer and choreographer, but only sometimes I feel myself old.

Together with Teachings and practice, I balance my work, my art and my daily life. Obstacles are more transparent and easier to overcome and to continue the life. In this way, every moment is precious and the unique help is to be present. I'm very humbled by my instructors, my Vajra brothers and sisters and the precious Master. I 'm really home now, out and in.

