

Radio Memory / Brandon LaBelle

Script 2 – question and answer period between two:

Q: I want to thank you for your enlightening presentation. Your work has been an inspiration to many of us here, and it is a sincere pleasure to have you here. I did want to ask you something though. You mentioned how your work in the theatre has a lot to do with music, and I wonder if you could elaborate on this?

A: Well, yes, it is hard to explain really. Sometimes I'm not really sure myself, about this connection, but I always feel something with music that influences all my creative work, even though I am not a musician. It is something basic and mysterious...

Q: Maybe you can say something about how you experience music?

A: Music for me is like a form of passion – you know it is there, you feel it, you are in the middle of it, and yet you can never control it. You can try of course, and musicians I imagine know more about this than I. But still, maybe it is because I'm not a musician that I can appreciate it as an experience, as something that swarms around us, you know, like a force. When I hear music, of course, music that I like, I just want to smile.

Q: Yes, I think we can all generally identify with that feeling, that sense of music as a force, as a passion... But I wonder too if that is a slightly romantic way of putting it? I mean, music is also written, it is thought about, written about, it has a language, it is very rational as well. And some might even say that this rationality is what makes music so important, as a cultural expression.

A: Like I said, I'm not a musician, and I don't make music, I listen to it as an ordinary person, as someone who listens to the radio or to records, and maybe that's what I like about it, that it is popular, you find music in every culture in every country everywhere, and there you find everyone listening to music, in different ways, for different reasons... But it is everywhere – people seem fixated on music, whether they know it or not, whether they think about it or read about it, or talk about it. That's what I mean I guess, we don't really have to talk about it, we feel music and maybe that's what it offers us, this feeling, which takes us outside all this talking and language and discussing...

Q: Yes yes, of course, I see your point. And I wouldn't dispute this, I also enjoy music, like everyone else... but maybe we can return to your creative work, and this feeling you have that music is behind everything creative you are doing. I think that is very interesting, especially as you insist that you are not a musician. Can you say more, how does music really influence your work in theatre?

A: I think I learn a lot from music, because of this feeling I get from it... It is something that I can't explain, I can't really give you the answer you are looking for, I mean, what do you want me to say, what can I possibly say to this, to say something would be to ruin

the feeling... Words can never tell you this feeling, I have, words will never be able to convey this special connection to music.

Q: I'm sorry, I know, I don't mean to pin you down or to ruin the feeling, but maybe you can give a specific example? Like from your work, is there a work of yours that has music behind it? Like a specific connection you can explain?

A: You really are persistent aren't you!

Q: No no, I just think this is really interesting, and since no one else seems to have a question, maybe we can pursue this more...

A: I'll have to tell you... I think this all operates more on an unconscious level. I have never done a specific work related to a specific piece of music, this is not of interest to me. My theatre work has a lot to do with the body, with movement, and the banal situations we find ourselves in, which in many ways seem the opposite of what I feel for music – I think music delivers us from the banal situations of life, that is why so many people love their iPods, because it creates excitement and rhythm and feeling that can be carried along, as a kind of partner to our ordinary activities and experiences. I mean the other day, I saw this girl in the cinema watching the film with her iPod on! Can you believe that! I thought, she's creating her own soundtrack, literally, and for her maybe the music she heard only made the film more interesting... But to return to my work, and the unconscious, there is that one scene in *The Disappearance of Love*, which I did a few years back, where the girl, Lola, falls asleep in her parent's bed in the morning, and dreams she is in a garden. That scene, I have to say, was something I did and had no special feeling for, I mean, nothing personal to me... But then, during its premiere, when it was first staged in Rio, I was in the audience, and that scene happened, and I couldn't believe it, but I realized, it was a memory of mine! I was unsure at first, but then when Lola wakes up to the song on the radio, and realizes where she is, it struck me, it was exactly something I had experienced as a little girl. I must have been around 5, and my parents had this big white bed, with white everywhere – the curtains, the walls, the furniture, it was all white. And I had woken up one morning not feeling well, and had crawled into bed with my parents just before morning, and I had fallen asleep there. And I remember having this dream that I was sleeping in a garden full of flowers, these brilliant glowing flowers, and it was all so beautiful, like the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen or felt. When I woke up I realized it was later in the day now, and my parents had left for work, and I was alone in the house, or at least I felt alone when I woke up, and the sun was shining in the window and reflecting all the white in the room, and I felt like I was still in the dream, in the garden, and this song was on the radio, a song my mother loved to hear, and everything felt bright and beautiful... I think this memory must have been locked away, in my unconscious for the past 30 years, and it had come out when I made that scene, without my really knowing it.

Q: So, you feel that the memory is connected to the music?

A: O yes, totally! I mean, the dream, the flowers, the feeling, I am sure that really all of this must have happened in a period of a few minutes really, probably the length of that song, because I knew that song, as my mother always sang it when it was on the radio, and it made her so happy, and when she was happy I was happy too, it was all connected, and I'm sure that the dream happened because I was hearing the song, while sleeping... it was there, and I'm sure it made the dream possible, it created that beautiful feeling inside.