



**"Whispering Colour"
Folkwang Tanzstudio
Mui Cheuk Yin**

Folkwang Tanzstudio
Tanzlandschaft Ruhr
co-production

In a beguiling descent of petals

Folkwang Tanzstudio Premiere

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Michael-Georg Müller

Crickets cheep. A winter storm gusts. Yellow and green petals descend from the heavens to be transformed, in mid fall, into icy white flakes that are caught in upturned umbrellas. "What do we understand about falling petals?" asks Mui Cheuk Yin from Hong Kong of the audience gathered in the new hall at the Folkwang Academy in Essen.

Her new work, full of poetic moments and a beguiling sense of lightness, has had a rejuvenating effect on the Folkwang-Tanzstudio. The company, jointly directed by Henrietta Horn and Pina Bausch, certainly performed to best form at the premiere and earned high approval from a prominent dance audience – Pina and, seemingly, the entire Wuppertal ensemble had made the trip to Essen to support the choreographer from Asia who cut such an impressive figure at Bausch's Jubilee in 1998.

In the opening scene dancers whirl their bamboo and tortoise-shell parasols through a spring landscape then, one after another, exchange these for regular weatherproof umbrellas that they gyrate like spinning tops as they dance. Mui Cheuk Yin's sequences drift into winter or spring and are accompanied by soft and floating melodies from Thomas Wacker and Meredith Monk taken up by bamboo flutes and lamenting Japanese violins. Smoothly and not without a touch of irony, the Chinese choreographer blends her own culture with that of the West. Her dancers, combining elegant severity, stylised temple poses and raw contemporary dance, match her achievement all the way. Only at the very end does the movement really break free becoming abrupt and angular and less contained. The piece is sprinkled with humour throughout but the most winning episode has to be when the dancers hold down a huge bellowing drape of material over the stage and transform it into an ice rink where the men skate around and attempt belly landings while the women run after them opening and closing their umbrellas. And the whole time a never-ending stream of multicoloured confetti is descending from the heavens. Snow white flakes turn into yellow feathers, red petals to green leaves and, as the title suggests, the colours of nature and the passing of time speak softly to us throughout. "Whispering Colour" is a dance performance far removed from conventional variations on the four seasons theme.