

ERASMUS+ Report

Imre Vass

DANCETOPIA Symposium, Prague

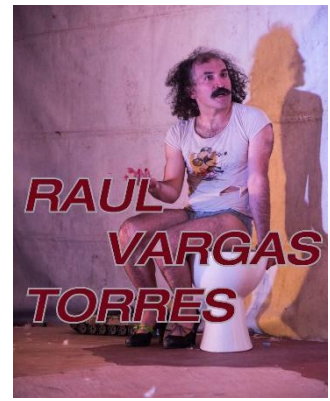
5–8 June 2026

DANCETOPIA is an international symposium dedicated to contemporary dance, performance, and artistic discourse, serving as a platform where these fields intersect. The four-day event featured performances, workshops, lectures, and professional discussions across several venues in Prague, including the Goethe-Institut, the Libeň Synagogue, and the Smíchov Community Space. According to its Instagram description, the symposium is "a place for dance imagining" that goes beyond utopian and dystopian visions, opening up new possibilities and perspectives through dance.

DANCETOPIA is a grassroots initiative founded by four artists who created the platform from the ground up to support emerging directions in dance and performance. Alongside its compact, diverse, and truly international programme, this independent spirit and dedication were particularly inspiring to me.

The central theme of the 3rd (2026) edition, was the relationship between authenticity and artificiality. The programme explored artistic questions situated at the intersections of the body, space, technology, and human presence. Each performance was followed by artist talks, offering valuable opportunities to deepen the understanding of both the works and the broader themes addressed throughout the symposium.

The workshops were led by internationally recognised artists. Choreographer and performance artist **Isabel Lewis** explored improvisation, dance, social interaction, and the creative potential of emerging technologies. Berlin-based artist **Peter Pleyer** focused on new approaches to dance pedagogy, compositional practices, and improvisation-based creative methods. Colombian theatre maker, director, and educator **Raúl Vargas Torres**, who lives and works in Berlin, led a workshop examining the intersections of the body, movement, visual arts, objects, philosophy, and circus. Artist **Katrina E. Bastian**, whose work is grounded in endurance-based dance practices, investigates contemporary social and cultural issues. Her movement-based workshop approached machine learning and artificial intelligence through the body as a form of "technology," encouraging participants to develop a more critical understanding of AI through embodied experience.



As the symposium began on Friday afternoon, I was able to travel to Prague on the same day. Following the conclusion of the event, I travelled directly back to Budapest.

<https://alicaminarcol.com/dancetopia/2026-2/>
<https://www.instagram.com/dancetopia.project/>
<https://linktr.ee/dancetopia.project>

PROGRAM

Friday, June 5

Opening Program at Goethe-Institut :

15:00-16:00 : Registration
 16:00-17:30 : from ONE to TWO to MANY - Peter Pleyer
 17:30-18:30 : Welcome Dinner
 18:30-19:00 : "ErgoPermaperformer" - Pavel Matela
 19:00-20:00 : "Asphalt Lovers" - Azolla Collective
 20:00-21:00 : Discussion on Authenticity & Artificiality

Saturday, June 6

Morning workshop at Goethe-Institut :

10:00-11:00 : Warm-up space
 11:00-14:00 : Doppelgänger Workshop - Isabel Lewis

 Evening Program at Komunitní prostor Smíchov

19:00-20:00 : Panel Discussion with Participating Artists
 20:00-21:00 : "Terminal" - Katrina E. Bastian
 21:00-23:00 : Dancefloor Sharing with DJ Spring (Jaro Viňarský / Vize Tance)

Sunday, June 7

Morning workshop at Goethe-Institut :

10:00-11:00 : Warm-up space
11:00-14:00 : Lines, Rivers or Bodies - Raul Vargas Torres

Evening Program at Nová Libeňská Synagoga :

19:00-20:00 : "Mnohodíneček" - Lucia Kašiarová & ufttenživot

20:00-20:30 : "ErgoPermaperformer" - Pavel Matela

20:30-22:00 : "SOLO 2025 + Slow Rave" - Peter Pleyer

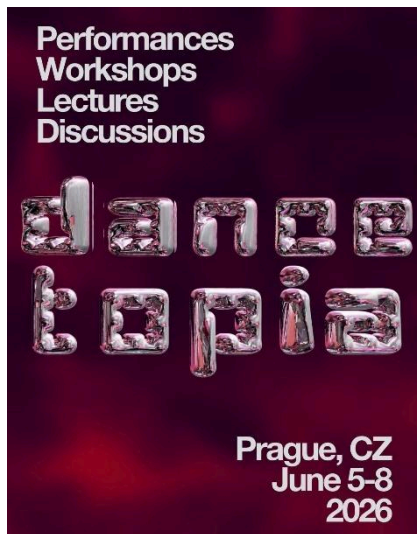
Monday, June 8

Closing Program at Goethe-Institut :

10:00-11:30 : Hardware vs. Software - Katrina E. Bastian

11:30-12:30 : Closing Brunch

12:30-14:00 : Cranky Viewpoints - Peter Pleyer



This symposium attracted my interest for several reasons, but the workshops were undoubtedly the most significant aspect. Every workshop was led by an artist with extensive experience not only in their own creative practice but also in sharing their artistic processes within an educational workshop setting. I regularly teach in the Contemporary Dance BA programme at the Budapest Circus Arts and Contemporary Dance College, where I lead a course titled *Creative Pool*. The course is built around key concepts, qualities, and working methods that emerge from my own artistic practice. For this reason, it was particularly valuable to participate in these workshops and observe the different pedagogical

approaches. It was inspiring to experience how each artist translated their creative process into a workshop format, and how their teaching materials, artistic methodologies, and personal presence combined to create distinct learning environments. The language they used, together with the moments of harmony and dissonance between intention and practice, offered valuable insights into a wide range of facilitation methods. Each workshop lasted three hours and was held at the Goethe-Institut in Prague.

WORKSHOPS

Peter Pleyer: One to Two to Many and Cranky Viewpoints

One of my main motivations for attending the symposium was the opportunity to reconnect with Peter Pleyer, whom I have known for over twenty years. I have participated in several of his workshops—including improvisation and composition—in Berlin, Stolzenhagen, and Budapest. We last met in 2019 at the CARE gathering organised by Marcio K. Canabarro, an event similar in spirit to DANCETOPIA. I have always felt a strong affinity with Peter's artistic and pedagogical approach, and I wanted to spend as much time as possible with him throughout the symposium—participating in his workshops, attending performances, and engaging in informal conversations.

Peter's three-hour workshop was divided into two parts. The first, *One to Two to Many*, opened the symposium, while the second, *Cranky Viewpoints*, served as its closing workshop. The opening session focused on presence and attentive listening—to oneself, to others, and to the surrounding space. With patience and a gradual progression, Peter patiently guided the group of approximately thirty participants into a shared experience, laying the foundation for the atmosphere and sense of community that characterised the entire symposium. For me, it was both insightful and inspiring to gain an immediate sense of the Prague contemporary dance scene I instantly felt comfortable and surprisingly at home within this temporary community. Peter's second workshop, *Cranky Viewpoints*, was based on Mary Overlie's *The Six Viewpoints*, a compositional system developed for performing artists. Peter expanded this research in his 2024 improvisational performance *VIEW.POINT.MARY*. During the workshop, we improvised using the six fundamental elements of the system—space, shape, time, emotion, movement, and story—exploring their relationships through collective composition. During the second half of Peter's performance *SOLO2025*, the audience was invited onto the stage to participate in the *SLOW RAVE*, a collective dance experience conceived by Peter. I had previously taken part in its very first iteration during his residency in Budapest in 2019. Experiencing this score again seven years later was both meaningful and inspiring. As a result, I intend to open the *SLOW RAVE* format to Hungarian participants on several occasions during the 2026–2027 season.



Peter Pleyer

SOLO 2025 + SLOW RAVE





SLOW RAVE

Isabel Lewis: *Doppelgänger* Workshop

Several elements of Isabel Lewis's workshop were particularly memorable and relevant for me, and some of them also provided inspiration for my own teaching and workshop practices:

- At the beginning of the workshop, printed notes were distributed to the participants, providing a clear framework and reference material throughout the process.
- The continuity of the workshop was especially engaging: it unfolded almost like a performance, with continuous musical accompaniment creating a specific atmosphere and flow.
- Rather than focusing on a single project, Isabel presented fragments and methods from several different works and artistic practices, allowing us to gain insight into a broader section of her artistic research. The workshop drew from projects and practices such as *Doppelgänger*, *Dirty Looks*, *A-E-I-O-U*, *The Thick Present*, *Slug to Waveform – with Melodrama*, *Intently Attending*, and *Bodymorphing*.
- Her use of rich, playful, and distinctive terminology created a unique language around her practice, making the concepts both accessible and memorable.
- The final part of the workshop, *Communal E.P.I.C. Fiction*, was an extended, structured improvisation in which participants could apply and integrate the information, tools, and practices introduced throughout the workshop.

Raúl Vargas Torres: *Lines, Rivers or Bodies* Workshop

Several aspects of Raúl Vargas Torres's workshop were particularly inspiring for me:

- The warm-up and physical activation were both playful and sensual, creating an engaging entry point into the practice.
- Several exercises were familiar to me, as I have either encountered similar approaches before or use related methods in my own practice. It was therefore especially interesting to experience these exercises from an external perspective and through another artist's interpretation.
- The workshop placed a strong emphasis on performativity and the conscious presence of the performer.
- The physical intensity of the practice created a powerful and immersive experience.

Katrina E. Bastian: *Hardware vs. Software* Workshop

Katrina E. Bastian's workshop was connected to her performance *Terminal*, which we had seen two days earlier during the symposium. Several elements of the workshop structure were particularly valuable for me:

- The workshop was built with a very clear, simple, and accessible structure, allowing participants to easily follow the development of the process.
- The inspiration and conceptual starting points behind the work were introduced in a detailed yet accessible way.
- The different tasks and exercises were given enough time for exploration and immersion, while maintaining a focused and dynamic rhythm.
- In the final extended improvisation, participants were not required to follow the original score of the performance strictly. Instead, there was space to divert from the original structure, reinterpret the material, and develop a more personal response through improvisation.



workshops

PERFORMANCES

Among the performances, Lucia Kašiarová's solo *Mnohodiec* had a strong impact on me. The piece was built around a simple yet effective scenography, her own embodiment and voice; and a distinctive sense of humour, creating a rich and personal performance experience.

Peter Pleyer's solo *SOLO 2025* was also highly inspiring. He improvised for forty minutes based on authentic movement practices, while beforehand he created the context of the work in an informative and direct way through his introduction. This approach strongly resonated with me, as creating a clear and personal context for the audience is also something I consistently practice in my own work.

DISCUSSIONS AND PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGES

The symposium programme included two discussions directly connected to the main themes of the festival. In addition, there were two audience meetings following performances, one of them after a work-in-progress presentation, as well as an opening and a closing brunch, along with many other

informal situations that provided valuable opportunities for professional exchange, networking, and getting to know other artists and participants.

I would like to thank the Erasmus+ programme for supporting me during this short yet fully immersive professional journey. This opportunity significantly contributed to my artistic and professional development by allowing me to participate in an inspiring international environment, exchange knowledge and experiences, and become part of a vibrant contemporary dance community.

Thank you for the support.

