

Two as One

Despite a seven-year stint living and working in Japan, it is clear that theatre audiences have not forgotten local contemporary dancer Jacki Job. There was strong support for her recent one-off performance of *Two as One* at Cape Town's Artscape Theatre, danced with Kenshi Nohmi and accompanied by taiko player Hidano Shuichi from Japan, as well as South African soundscapist/musician Garth Erasmus.

 By [Debbie Hathway](#) 17 Aug 2011



Inspired by the themes of rhythm and flow, *Two as One* aims to promote an understanding of how vastly different country's cultures, geographic location and rhythm can affect physical expression. Through Job's experience in Japan, she soon realised that she could be a cultural bridge between the countries and developed this piece with that in mind.

The forerunner of a bigger production

Two as One is the culmination of a two-year collaboration that has been funded by the Japan Foundation and presented on stage by Artscape, Spiral Productions and An Creative. It is the forerunner of a bigger production planned for next year, funding permitting, which will feature a larger cast of Japanese and South African dancers selected through an audition process. Nohmi will choreograph the South Africans while Job will create for the Japanese and artistically direct the work.

Job has performed with Jazzart Dance Theatre, taught at the University of Cape Town and the Rambert Ballet School in London, and worked extensively with musicians and dancers in Japan. She moved to that country on a scholarship from the Japanese Cultural Commission in 2004 and began to study the philosophies of the dance and performance techniques inspired by the Ankoku-Butoh movement. Job was attracted by Butoh's focus on identity and lifecycles, and studied with master teacher Yoshito Ohno.

Producer and An Creative president Mayumi Nagatoshi, who will be raising financial support for the 2012 production, said that Job's learning of Japanese modern dance and Butoh complements Nohmi's training. "They both have a sense of Butoh, which is an underground style of dance that has been with us for about 50 years. Their movement skills are very broad, so they can communicate more with the audience."

A rousing drum solo

And that they certainly did. After a rousing drum solo by Shuichi, Nohmi sets the scene under a spotlight, quite still, executing movements on a perpendicular scale. Job, meanwhile, runs around the stage in a wide circle, contrasting his movements with her very physical display, immediately highlighting their differences through movement. "*Two as One's* theme covers countries, cultures, gender and identity, showing how tw

people (the dancers) begin to communicate and eventually become one with each other," Nagatoshi said. "Similarly, the musicians play contrasting tempos at first individually and then begin to complement each other."

The influence of Kabuki theatre is also evident. Known for its dramatic, often avant garde style, it is demonstrated through dance, skill and costume in *Two as One*. Nohmi dons a striking lion's mane and ma: while Job adds flower-like headdress and mittens prior to performing one of the most memorable, *minima pas de deux* I've seen. The strong masculine image contrasts well with the soft, femininity of Job's character. "They attract one another, but as soon as they realise the masks are fake, they carefully remove them so that they can just be themselves," said Nagatoshi.

It's that progression that was the highlight of the piece for me. Their movements were slow and gentle, a caress here, a fingertip connection there - duly wrapped up in each other to reflect the beautiful lyrics of the accompanying old Japanese song about love (sadly cut short due to a technical glitch).

Rapturous applause was the only outcome for a piece of this quality by an impressive group of performers:

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