

**Mia Crisafulli interviewing Pietra Laura Lumy Ferreira Ohtaguro, dance student from London Contemporary Dance School, about Eleanor Marx: A Life in Movement
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My name is, and I am Pietra Laura Lumy Ferreira Ohtaguro.

What has the rehearsal process been like the Pascal Theatre Company?

I think it was very well structured. The structure was very well worked among the group of people who were there. This voice work too. Because I remember the first rehearsals were really scary for me. I thought of giving up because I couldn't use my voice so loud, and sometimes scream. It was something completely new and different for me. It was out of my comfort zone. So, it was a little bit scary at first, but we always had support from Julia, from Lesley, from Atlanta. So, it was like everyone was like comfortable. There was always respect among us. It was really a nice space. At first, it was scary because I am shy. And I never used my voice in rehearsal and stuff. I got myself thinking if I did belong there, but as the work went on, I was getting used to it. It was completely fine. In the end, I was really happy.

Compared to your Brazilian collaborative training? How did Julia's approach seem similar or different?

Julia's approach was involving. There was more engagement from all of my body. Since the first rehearsal, we were invited to already use our voice no matter if we were insecure. We took it step by step. But this is something that never happened in our Brazilian classes. You wouldn't ever work with voice and engagement of pelvis, to your abbs, to your chest, to your throat. Since the first rehearsal coming up to your voice coming out, we never do this in our dance classes in Brazil. So, it was different and it was cool. Julia always did everything every exercise, like she was part of us. She put herself in the circle with us. And as we were doing like one by one, she did it too. This was something that won't ever happen in our Brazilian classes. Sometimes the professor just put themselves off and tell us what to do and Julia was always between us and guiding us, correcting us, and always stimulating us. From my personal experience, the first rehearsals, the first time I used my voice, I was really low, really shy. She was like, 'That's good.' 'Keep going.', stimulating you. This is different. We had this attention. I don't know if it was because we were just a few people, a little group of people. So, it was possible for her to pay attention more individually. But it was something that doesn't happen in Brazil too. She knew our names. And she used to give individual instructions. This is something that is different from our Brazilian classes.

So, what is something you've learned that you plan to carry with you?

This engagement: the pelvis, abs, chest, and voice. How to use my voice, how to be loud without screaming. How to project my voice without hurting myself. This was something my friends told me. When you use your voice, it's like a different voice. It is not like when you're talking to us, we talk inside. In rehearsals we could hear a different voice, an outside voice, and this was really cool because I was listening to a new voice from myself. This was something I kept practising, like by myself in my room. Like, whenever I was alone. I started practising because I knew I felt like something different was happening. I felt I was learning something. I think this is the first one that continues to be in my mind. I keep paying attention to it.

And the breathing too as everything is engaged. So, I start thinking about it like a dancer. How can I use it? How can I use this pelvis control to like inhale and exhale, at the proper time at the proper moment? This breathing exercise using your voice using your pelvis is the first thing I keep in my mind.

Has this project opened any new thoughts or ideas for you?

I always thought I was a terrible actress. I couldn't do anything. If I stared at people and they were staring back at me, I would be like, 'Oh no.' It was like so scary. I still had this feeling during the rehearsals. But on a day of the performance, I felt something different because I could look at people's eyes and I wasn't scared. I was really involved in the piece. This was a new feeling for me. I don't think I could ever be an actress. But it was like something had changed. It was easy for me to look into people's eyes. I remember the first time I looked at a man's eyes, and he was looking at me and I didn't freak out. And I just kept going. So, the second time we were doing it, I thought if I was able to look at him, maybe I could look more at people. So, the second time, I'll have a look at them. And the third time I was like confident, I was thinking, okay let's look. And this was something interesting, too.

What did you find most interesting about Eleanor Marx?

I think what I find more interesting about her is not her specifically but the fact that no one knows her. For me, and for most of the population too I didn't know her. I knew that Karl Marx, the big one, had a daughter, but I didn't know anything about her history, about what she has done. It was really, really interesting. The moment I felt I was part of it was when I sat down and did some research about her to see if everything matched with everything that was going on in the piece. I was talking about this to my other Brazilian friends. We, at the first rehearsals when we first got the lines, we didn't actually understand what it was that about. Because for us, it was just like a bunch of words together. We didn't understand the meaning, the context. Some of the first rehearsals when we got the two Eleanors, and everything was kind of set up. We started understanding. We started to understand what this was all about, the politics, the

feminism. This was interesting so I was like, this is interesting. I wonder if it's true. I did some more research about it. I think it's more interesting about her because she was so important, so amazing and no one knows this. And I feel happy to be part of something that tells her story to spread her story.

Has the project made you more curious about invisible women from the 19th century?

I don't think so. We always talk about how women are erased from history. But we never really go after this information. But I don't really know how would I. I think I was so mesmerized by the whole Eleanor thing, like anyone else. I was so fixed on her history. I didn't think about I didn't think about the other women. But this was just me, now I do.

Is there anything I haven't asked you that you'd like to say?

I don't think so. I just want to say the people, the staff, they are really nice people, we will miss them. We'll remember them forever. Because it was like a new experience for us. And we didn't meet nice people here. They were always so nice to us. And I think it will stay in our minds, our professional side, and also emotionally, a caring, safe, lovely space.