

## ALBERT VIDAL: A PERMANENT QUEST

When an artist has attained to an absolute mastery of the tools of his trade, has finally succeeded in crystallizing all his efforts into a personal style, he is usually satisfied to settle – as he has every right to do – on the patch that he has made his own. That is something we see all the time in painting, in music, in poetry; and also in the performing arts. It is only a very few indeed who are capable of turning their eyes to new horizons and, with all the technique acquired, launching out on new ventures, sailing to discover continents as yet unknown.

One of those few is Albert Vidal, whose curiosity is constantly urging him on to the most improbable adventures. When you haven't heard from or of him for months, it is never easy to imagine where he can possibly be, or what new interests have attracted his attention. He may be in Bali, studying the local dancing, or in some low dive in Saragossa to discover the tawdriest, most degenerate remains of what was once music hall; in Japan, learning the elements of *butoh* from one of the most distinguished exponents of that genre, or in Granada, delving into the most jealously hidden secrets of flamenco.

After that will come the return to his farmhouse in the Pyrenees, the exercises in the open air and active reflection. For Albert Vidal expresses himself through an instrument from which he demands the most perfect virtuosity: his own body. And the final result of the process constitutes yet another advance in his art. It may be a dance to be performed in a public square, an aperitif jerkily imbibed at the bar of a tavern by an 18th-century automaton, or even, as was the case in Vic, the representation of his own burial, complete with obituaries, coffin, keening women, funeral procession and hearse. Albert Vidal is constantly enquiring, and there is nothing gratuitous about his enquiries. For him – and for us when we see it – each new show is a shutter opening on to magic.

Xavier Fàbregas