

Reviews MAZY

Falter Spezial, HELMUT PLOEBST
Austria



Helmut Ploebst, "A maze called I", Falter Spezial

A maze called I

Willi Dorner has been a regular guest of this festival since 1996, with his first contribution dating back to 1992. This year he is presenting "mazy," his most interesting and mature work. The dancers embark on an expedition into the maze of their "selves," and they also temporarily position themselves on physical planes that threaten to dismember the corporeal. A structure of complex solos and duos explores and unravels the relations between body and consciousness, memory and the present, presence and mediation, psyche and space.

..."mazy" radically depicts the subject's struggle to achieve an inner order, and shows how this order continually splinters. As soon as one feels particularly close to one's own "I," able to grasp it, one is again catapulted away. Dorner's work is informed by the body-philosophy of the Alexander technique as well as by phenomenology, in particular the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Since his two striking duos "intertwining" and "an-Other" (ein-Ander) Dorner has developed an increasingly dense body language and has left behind the dance and the theatrical terrains of his previous works.

...Dorner's work refers to philosophical foundations despite the fact that Viennese dance criticism is still mostly hostile towards theory. Furthermore, it does so without draining or paralyzing the expressive medium of body movement. [Helmut Ploebst]

Silvia Kargl

"A new impetus to the dance in Austria"

Dance View, Vol 17, No 2, Spring 2000

"A new impetus to the dance in Austria"

Last summer's ImPulsTanz Festival revitalizes the dance scene in Austria

...Which leads us to this year's big surprise, seen not from the Austrian point of view. For the first time since the start of ImPuls Tanz it was a piece from an Austrian choreographer which really turned out to be innovative: Willi Dorner's mazy with music by Heinz Ditsch was amazing indeed. Dorner is a Viennese dancer and choreographer, who completed his dance education in the USA and in France, working with Zvi Gotheiner and Mark Tompkins among others. There he became aware of the difficulties for the contemporary dance in Austria, particularly the opportunities to study contemporary dance in Austria, with the exception of the Sommertanzwochen, are "a tragedy", according to him. The leading Austrian contemporary dancers share an education taken abroad. To have a permanent company is equally difficult, because compared to theatre, music and film the Austrian dance scene is the stepchild of the cultural policy, which is a contradiction to the fast rising interest of the audience.

...Dorner's mazy is neither easy to understand nor palatable to see. But it is one of those pieces you will not forget. Based on inspiration from the literature of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophical ideas, Dorner found a very distinctive way of creating duets and solos for five dancers, including himself. At the start, audience still arriving, the dancers marked off the dancing space of a square with adhesive tapes. He does not need stage architecture or theatrical costumes. Short videos, no spectacular light show, and text spoken by the dancers keep a close relationship with the dance and do not imply any decorative function, which happens in most dance theatre-productions nowadays.

...Helga Gussner finds strange combinations for movements of certain parts of the body. She look like a spider with four arms, which moves on the floor, trying to keep its balance. Later on the dancer's hands become emancipated from the body and try to communicate with each other. The tension of the choreography derives only from the purity of the dance, especially in the duets. Intertwining, a duet that can also be performed separately, can either be danced by two men or two women. It deals with two bodies that seem to be entirely tied up with one another, there is not a second of rest, one movement initiates the next, perpetual motion is the outcome. The title mazy is derived from maze, symbolizing what Dorner felt when he read parts of Merleau-Ponty's theory. But even without the knowledge his view of the world just when you think you understand what is going on, something will break your expectations. In one scene Saskia Hölbling tries to explain her movements performed one minute before, but the body language is much faster and deeper than the words. The video shows a boy costumed as

