

Hedwig Müller

In the (Golden) Section I

Bohner continued to address his theme of the dancer's identity with equal consistency in the three versions of the production "In the (Golden) Section". The friction with the institutional framework of the theater business, which was still present in "Show black white" (Schwarz weiß zeigen), however, is gone. In its place stands a work of art which now creates the outer frame and, on an even higher level, the confrontation with an aesthetic principle, namely the principle of what is considered harmoniously proportioned, as the title "In the (Golden) Section" indicates. When applied to the human body, the rule of the golden section, which states that if two sections of a straight line are placed in a harmonious relationship to each other the smaller section will always be to the larger as the larger is to the whole line, reveals that the point of division will always be approximately the center of gravity, the center of all dance movement. For Bohner, the relationships which result from the proportions and relations of the human limbs to each other and to the body as a whole are the content of his artistic work. Thus we may read the title of his solo evening without the parenthesis as well: "Im Schnitt" [a German idiom meaning "on average"]. The three parts of "In the (Golden) Section" are a kind of summing up of his work up to that point.

In the first part, with the spatial installation by Vera Röhm, a sculptor who works in Darmstadt and Lausanne, eight solid wooden stakes stand in the darkness like fence posts along the forestage, with a single one in the right rear of the stage area. The points of the stakes are broken off at different heights; the splintered gold-painted ends are covered with a plexiglass hood which extends the rectangular form of the wooden stakes upward. These "Additions", of which Vera Röhm has presented several exhibitions since 1975, open up various possible interpretations: the combination of wood and plexiglass at once combines and contrasts the natural and the synthetic, traditional and modern materials, the archaic past and the technological present. The broken has been repaired, the prosthesis completes the stump, the force with which the massive wood was broken off is still visible at the sharp split ends, at once monument and threat. The plexiglass hood does not hide the wound but does shield it, it does not appease but makes it less dangerous. The stake set apart from the others determines the tension in the room, resisting -- by its very isolation -- the deceptively harmonious order of the other posts standing at attention, partially cancelling out the sober segmentation of the room by the posts in front, remaining present as an irritant, even when the events of the dance move away from it.

To the music of Bach's "Well-tempered Clavichord" (in Keith Jarrett's arrangement), Bohner reflects the sculptures which at the same time mirror his bodily images. In his choreography he shows the movements available to him as a dancer, no longer, however, with the eye of the young dancer, who would like to execute them as brilliantly and breathtakingly as possible, but rather as an experienced, mature man who is analysing the foundations out of which the movements, which extend into the room, have emerged, with all of their wounds which, however gilded, cannot deny the pain suffered. In the individual segments of the stage, each delimited by two sculptures, Bohner carries out his bodily analysis. Head, shoulders, arms, hands, legs, hips, knees, feet.... All of the limbs are presented in their potential for movement, occasionally aided by a walking stick, which, to be sure, frees the leg being offered relief but points to disability and frailty. The images Bohner finds contain more than a sober analysis; they are not abstract, as the choreographic approach might lead us to assume. The circumspection with which Bohner dances, his handling of time and dynamics set new accents. When he puts his hands around his neck like a ring, with the tips of his thumbs touching, on one level he is showing us no more than the geometrical form of the circle, and yet he immediately awakens uneasy associations of being strangled to death. The forms of movement contain stylized everyday motions as well as sequences from classical ballet or expressive gestures -- what he learned from Tatjana Gsovsky and Mary Wigman emerges here.

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