

"CRITICS"

"Dance and Dancers" August 8, 1968

"Errand into the Maze is one of those rare pieces, virtually a solo though with another person involved, which somehow give the impression of a totally complete work. Even in Le Spectre de la Rose and Le Jeune Homme et la Mort, the two most notable classical examples of this category, both characters in each case meet on an equal level, but in Errand the Ariadne part is everything while the Minotaur figure is little more than a presence, albeit a vitally important presence. In the Ariadne part, Graham ran the gamut of all the things she is and stands for, and although John Percival writes about the dancing later, I must say something about Gatsheva's Rina Schenfeld because it is upon the performance in the Ariadne role that the entire work rests.

This was a perfect example of how another artist can take over a role and while sticking closely to every essential in the part's construction, can make it seem something utterly personal and, I would say, as valid as when it was done by the first and great creator. This did not come from the fact that Schenfeld is a young and beautiful girl, possibly nearer to the age group we imagine for Ariadne, because the part is ageless. Although the work on the surface concerns Ariadne and the Cretan Minotaur, the over-riding theme is of woman's conquest of fear, possibly sexual fear, and how by entering a mental landscape 'like the maze of her own heart' she can follow the thread which leads to her eventual freedom with the overthrow of that hidden fear symbolised by the Minotaur. Schenfeld's triumph was that she managed to hold the stage with the understatement of surging emotions.

The solidarity of fear is emphasised by the fact that the Minotaur, powerful and impassively played by Moshe Efrati, has to move through all his living moments with his arms pinioned by a huge bone which gives the total silhouette a

certain menace. Although this is a work for two people there is a third element which seems an integral part of the whole - Noguchi's setting. His phallic verticals which form entrance to the territory into which Ariadne moves, and around which she winds the all-important almost umbilical cord, his menacing Miro-esque silhouette forms in the distance, all this together with sensitive lighting create the terrain for this dark journey into the mind.

Jealousy is the burning factor in Cave of the Heart, the third of Graham's works to be mounted on the Batsheva company. Although it comes from approximately the same period as Errand into the Maze, created a year after in 1947, it brings a far more narrative approach to the Medea legend, a fact emphasised by the use of a Chorus (Schenfeld again) who virtually dominates the work. I think, though, that the balance between this and the Medea role alters according to who plays them. Although I never saw Graham's Medea, I did see Helen McGehee whose dancing, burning up with hatred, certainly dominated the work. With Batsheva, the Chorus, telling the tale as well as interceding in an attempt to halt the flow of sinister events, dominates Medea (Rena Gluck) as she revenges herself on the ambitious Jason (Efrati) after he had forsaken her and their children in order to marry the Princess of Corinth (Galya Gat) whose death was caused by a poisoned crown.

Cave of the Heart is a microcosm of the way in which, with the greatest economy, Graham can tell in movement a tale of dark deeds in high places - something she was to develop and elaborate in her later and possibly greatest work, Clytemnestra. The most heartening thing about all three Graham revivals was that, providing a company is as good as the Batsheva now is, many of Graham's works can be kept alive for posterity."