

WAVES OF TALENT



Dance Dora Sowden

Our most charismatic dancer – Rina Schenfeld in 'Wave' (Ya'acov Agor)

THOUGH I had seen a rehearsal of the first part of Rina Schenfeld's *Waves*, the element of surprise was not lacking at the Tel Aviv Museum (February 3). Also, because I had to miss the last few minutes of Part II, I caught up with them in Jerusalem at the new Rebecca Crown Auditorium (February 10).

Schenfeld proved in this work that she is still our most charismatic dancer and that her choreographic streak is not just inventiveness and experimentation but a drive forward from post-modernist abstractions of the '70s to something new to say.

Waves is an essay of philosophic content expressed boldly in movement. One clue was in the quotations from Virginia Woolf given in the programme: "The earth... settles and swings beneath our feet... and in me too the wave rises..." Another pointer was the music: a mixture that included Tibetan sound.

In it all there was invocation – surrealistic, ritualistic, expressionistic, mystic. With five helpers, Schenfeld (described as *Myself* in the programme) attempted to bring all nature, human and animal, organic and inorganic, into the ceremonials of dance.

From waves made with agitated cloth, *Myself* rolled out into adventure and fantasy. What was essentially elegant retained the rhythms of primitive worship, the symbolism of anguished experience.

Yet I doubt whether the work would have carried such fascination without *Myself* at the centre, using space and time, matter and movement to convey her wanderings – and warianhood.

IN THE FIRST part, by far the more laconic and communicative, peacocks strutted (the long feather-tipped wands ingeniously manipulated). The scene palpitated with life – being and becoming. In some episodes, especially the duets with the wands and with rams' horns, there were strongly erotic elements.

Schenfeld formed diagrams not only around herself with a stretch of material but with her own body and those of others. The moves were sometimes like those of puppets, the poses making shapes that sculptors might devise. One caught glimpses of religious devotion and human deviations, wild and playful, sexual and weird.

In the more elaborate Part II, lighting by John Davis fed the illusion of fire, metal sheets made thunder. The dancers brought sand in plastic wrappings and let it seep through their uplifted hands. Yet it was Schenfeld's solo with a long piece of fabric attached to two poles that gave the imagery focus. She used the material as a sail, a flag, a garment, and, with crossed sticks, to suggest suffering. (She wiped away tears.)

Yet altogether there was almost too much happening in this section. The episodes with stones were reminiscent of Kei Takei, who used them better. The real water in the glass containers was superfluous, for the mirror sheets on the floor already suggested water and the imagination had been sufficiently stimulated to make the real thing a rather clumsy intrusion.

The dancers, besides Schenfeld, were Sigal Sperling, Tamar Feigenblatt, Merav Surri, Tamar Borer and Naomi Bloch.