



The Dance

FRANCES HERRIDGE

New York Meets Israeli Group

The Batsheva Dance Company is from Israel but its inspiration is Martha Graham and American modern dance. In acknowledgment and gratitude, the American-Israel Cultural Foundation gave her a special award during the intermission of last night's premiere at the City Center. Still artistic advisor of the company, she helped train them and allows them to use several of her works. The high point of the initial program, in fact, was her "Errand into the Maze."

The group, which was named after its founder, Bethsabée De Rothschild, has a number of assets. Chief among them is their superb movement. Any piece they do shows to advantage, whether the fascinating "Errand" or Glen Tetley's somewhat pretentious and overlong "Mythical Hunters," which has never looked so good.

In "Errand," Rina Schenfeld made the psychological struggle of a woman with her subconscious fears more lucid even than Miss Graham herself. Miss Schenfeld, a strikingly beautiful girl, combines inner strength, flexibility and elongated stretches in a way that gives transparency to her movements. You can see the emotions impel each gesture, making her body as eloquent as any voice. She is magnificent in the Graham role.

Other women in the group are not far behind, notably Rena Gluck and Nurit Stern. The men, though not as spectacular, dance with intensity and intelligence.

Three pieces on the program are new to us. There is Norman Walker's "Baroque Concerto No. 5" to the Vivaldi music—a pleasantly fluid ensemble work that makes a joyous introduction. More interesting is Moshe Efrati's "Sin Lieth at the Door," on the Cain and Abel theme. Efrati himself is the brooding complex Cain, irked by Abel's placid nature, and

induced by the demon in himself to murder his brother. The contrast in movement between the two is effective. Even more so are Miss Schenfeld as the sinuous demon, and the vivid electronic score by Noam Sherif.

The final "Rehearsal!..(?)" shows amusingly how the casual rehearsal of a new dance work gradually becomes the finished performance. At first a few of the group try improvisations to a record. Then gradually, with no discernible break, all join in a single creation. There are no more watchers, just performers.

The company will be here for only two weeks, with various changes in program. It would be too bad to miss them on their first trip to this country.

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