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THE DANCETHEATRE OF PINA BAUSCH

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INTRODUCTION

My first encounter with the work of Pina Bausch had such a dynamic effect on me that I was compelled to find out more about the work but also more about the extraordinary woman behind it.

This thesis aims to introduce the reader to the woman Pina Bausch and to discuss aspects of her work that are very much part of her own life and vision and to try to place her within the realm of twentieth century art in relation to those that have influenced her and to discuss some of the works in an attempt to make clear what it is that Pina Bausch has to say.

The first chapter will introduce the reader to Pina Bausch so as to give some insight into why she proceeds as she does.

In the second chapter I discuss her work as influenced by the Russian Theatre Director, Vesevolod Meyerhold.

In the third chapter I examine the Dada influences on the German dance scene in the 1920's that so fascinated the international dance scene at the time and which laid the foundations for the work that is continued today.

The 1960's was a time of great artistic growth and it was at

this time that Pina Bausch studied in the United States. It is likely that her exposure to the artistic work there, especially the avant-garde artists in New York, helped in the expansion of the knowledge she already had and especially with the renewed interest in American in the expressive dance that had so thrived during the time of the second world war, but which seemed to dwindle thereafter.

The final chapter considers the position of women in the German dance scene and how the work of Pina Bausch has spearheaded a way forward for women to emerge as important and vital participants in the development of their own particular art - the dance theatre, and in so doing opens up avenues for development in all the arts.

PIA BAUSCH



CHAPTER IIntroducing Pina Bausch

According to a sociological survey carried out in the Federal Republic of Germany (1), it was found that at the age of thirty-three most young females want to have "achieved everything" in their lives.

Pina Bausch, who was born in Solingen, a small town between Cologne and Wuppertal in West Germany in 1940, was thirty-three years old when Director Arno Wustenhofer engaged her as head of the Ballet at Wuppertal Theater. In 1959 when she was seventeen she won first prize in the final examination in stage-dancing, classical and modern, and pedagogical examination, stipended from the German Academic Exchange (DAAD) for further studies in the USA. She went to study at the Julliard School of Music in New York and at the same time was a member of the Dance Company of Paul Sanasardo and Donya Feuer. In 1961 she was engaged with the New American Ballet and at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

In 1962 she returned to Germany where she became soloist of the newly formed Folkwang Ballet Company under Kurt Jooss and it was here that she began to gather organisational experience of the running of a studio and, out of boredom, she began to design dances for herself and her colleagues. Out of these first attempts

at choreography and against strong male competition she won first prize of the well acknowledged Choreographical Competition in Cologne. This was to be the first major step towards her eventual engagement as leader of the Wuppertal dance studio and in 1973 she became Director of the Ballet Theater of Wuppertal

For Pina Bausch, however, this was not a place of rest but a starting point; the point from which she could turn the world of dance upsidedown. When she began her work in the Wupper Valley, the Wuppertal Ballet metaphorically speaking was listed on some regional maps of art, at best, but within two years the company which was now called the Tanztheater Wuppertal had advanced into the top group of German dance companies. Towards the end of the seventies the unstoppable advancement into world glory had begun. Some guest performances at avant-garde festivals such as Nancy and Parma aroused the rumour regarding this extraordinary work and which became a certainty when the company performed at festivals in Paris, Amsterdam, London or Rome or when they went on tour through Asia, Latin America and Australia. The performances on these tours exposed theatre audiences to a new experience. Pina Bausch and her Wuppertal Tanztheater became the export article that was to be in the highest demand within the cultural scene of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Despite her popularity however, the choreographer always remained

controversial. The Germany dance critics who had proclaimed her early work now began to doubt her integrity when she began to move away from the conventional ballet form, as well as modern dance in the search for new ways of expression in a theatre that is now synonymous with her name. Among the Wuppertal theatre audience there grew a front of firm opponents of whom the most fanatic even went so far as to make anonymous phone calls demanding that she leave Wuppertal altogether. As a result of this growing discomfort the Jury of the Municipal prize for artistic merit saw fit to compromise on the awarding of the Van-der-Heydt prize and Pina Bausch had to share this prize with a second rate painter in order to achieve peace once again among the more traditional theatre goers.

Today, her world renown is long since a fact and the final seal of her success took place in the Summer of 1984 when the company played in New York and as guest performers at the cultural programme of the Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

It is not by chance that Pina Bausch and her work evokes extreme reactions from her audiences. The work makes no room for mediocrity and forces a reaction, whether positive or negative. There is good reason for this demand on the audience. One of them is the choice of topic for the works presented. Practically all the works deal with central problems of human existence and forces the audience

to face these questions raised in the different works. The pieces deal with love and fear, longing and loneliness, with frustration and terror, with childhood, old age, death, with the exploitation of the human being through other human beings (and in particular of women through men) with memory and oblivion. The works deal with the difficulties of living with each other and seek to find ways to shorten the distances between two (or more) people.

The fact that the company work in Wuppertal is significant. This is a small industrial town where the problems of modern day living constantly present themselves. Like most towns and cities today Wuppertal has its share of unemployment and related social problems. Those that do work must daily attend to the mundane repetition of factory work and deal with the more personal problems that arise out of this type of environment, as the towns inhabitants must come to terms with industrial pollution and the anxieties that arise out of such a situation. The problems of human relations within such a society are what Pina Bausch focuses on. She observes closely this society, of which she is a part, then extracts aspects of it in order to create the work.

Pina Bausch's pieces commence to develop a language, or a type of communication which language and ways of speaking, until now, were incapable of doing. But the content of the work is only one of the two main reasons for the strong consternation of some of her audience to her work. The other reason is her perceptive and

relentless questioning of essential social and aesthetic issues. The conflicts the pieces deal with are not played about or harmonized but fully carried out. Bausch does not escape and does not allow the spectator to do so either. For everybody who sees her work, she is a permanent reminder of one's own insufficiencies, a permanent outrage, a continuous invitation to give up one's own routine and mental lethargy, to do away with unlovingness and begin with finding confidence in each other, develop a respect and partnership with the people we meet.

Describing what Bausch's work tries to convey, one automatically come across the term 'fear'. Fear as one of the major problems of today is perhaps the central pivot on which all of the work revolves. It is her own fear and the fear of her characters, fear that paralyzes and creates aggression, fear of being defenselessly left in the partner's hands, in the hands of persons one cannot trust, because that person - also through fear - could hit out and destroy you. The opposite of this fear is the strong wish to be loved - and out of the clash of those two notions and conflicts come the works of Pina Bausch. But there is also a comic element which is being increasingly used as she becomes more familiar with her technique and as she becomes more confident through her success and she now appears to have gained a somewhat detached attitude towards her own frustrations and obsessions, complexes and dreams.

When she started her work in Wuppertal there were two completely different, very concrete fears which she had to face. First the

fear of being eaten up by theatre routine and not being allowed any creative outlet whereby she could express her own individuality which is how it was when she was a student at the Folkwang school.

"I thought it was not possible at all to do something individual. I thought of the routine and the regulations and everything that there is and I thought theatre had to play the usual thing - and therefore I was scared" (2)

This fear, at least, proved to be groundless. The theatre, the obligation to produce, the expectations of the dancers in her company; all of this did not paralyze Pina Bausch but released immense power which she has used to such great effect. Along with this desire to achieve something came also the new fear of failing to achieve. Before every new production, Pina Bausch experiences

".... a deep tunnel, which is filled with sheer fright or failure" (3). "It does not help at all to say it will go all right, yes, it will go, I have already done a few things, but the fear is always the same" (4)

This anxiety before the presentation of a new work was clearly demonstrated even before she became permanently engaged as Director of the Wuppertal Tanztheater when she committed herself to do the choreography for the 'Bacchanal' from the Wagnerian Opera 'Tannhauser'. Immediately before she started work she got

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seriously ill. Today, she feels more stable and knows that this was her sub-conscious attempt to flee from her responsibility. However, despite her more secure approach to her work today she still feels this desire to run away before the beginning of a new work.

In this respect it is the people around her who help her face the challenge, who drive her forward and encourage her. The people in the company rely as much on her as she on them; they identify absolutely with their work and ask her to carry on with her work whereby the uniting of the two produce the final piece. Not only does Pina Bausch find the beginning of a new work a nightmare, likewise some of her company have equal difficulty in achieving the point of departure necessary to begin. Mechthild Grossmann, one of the dancers who has played important roles in many of the productions feels that Pina Bausch almost has to outwit herself in order to begin. She postpones it as long as possible then starts indirectly by approaching one of the company and suggesting something to evoke a response. These questions are asked to provoke an answer either verbally or non-verbally. The performer may commence by doing something from recall, something comic, macabre, mad, plain or normal. Sometimes the dancers explode, expose themselves, exhibit themselves while others hold themselves back, recoil into their own psyche. Nobody is forced to do anything they do not wish to do. From these responses Pina Bausch begins to piece together each of the elements she chooses from the different

responses and tries to link them to each other. Pina Bausch says, concerning her own style of working:-

"My productions do not grow from the front to the back, but from inside to outside" (5)

As rehearsals develop there usually emerges so much material that Pina Bausch could stage perhaps five to ten different works; anything up to twenty hours of performing material. By this time she is in full control and even her assistants' suggestions fall on deaf ears. Pina Bausch has learned that someone must finally decide and in her case she sometimes leaves that decision very late indeed. With 'Bandoneon' which was staged in 1980 the dress rehearsal became more an extension of the previous week's rehearsals rather than the final run through of pieces already decided upon. However, despite the fears that this approach exerts and despite the late finishing of the work, up to now, the procedure of working from inside to outside, of gathering material and eventually creating a montage of them has always been successful.

In the eleven years since Pina Bausch began her work in Wuppertal, in which time so many questions have been asked by her and her company. She has to date created fourteen full-length plays for her own theatre as well as outside work on shorter plays which include a free variation of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' which she staged with singers, dancers and actors. It is an extraordinary feat for this woman that she is capable of such an immense body of work.

Also, she has gradually distanced herself further and further from the traditional dance mode of expression. The deep psychological work 'Fritz' with which she commenced in Wuppertal in 1973, the Mahler 'Adagio' in 1974, or the three Stravinsky Ballets known as the 'Spring Sacrifice' or 'Rites of Spring', 1975, all of these works were not only extraordinary, but also extraordinarily good dancing plays. They did not, however, exceed the borderline of the dance theatre. The drastic change to new structures became clear in the summer of 1976 with the staging of 'Die Sieben Todsunder' (The seven deadly sins), music by Kurt Weill, text by Bertolt Brecht.

With this performance came a new type of play to the work of Pina Bausch and to the dance theatre scene in Germany. Created as a montage of happenings with dreamlike fuzzy pictures, many parallel actions, structured according to the principles of tension and release, loud and quiet, dark and bright, big and small, sad and serene, daringly balanced between art and triviality, disillusionment and pathos and repetition which is so much a part of every work created since that time. The plight of women as dependent and exploited beings in a man's world which already featured in earlier work now became the focal point in a presentation that gave vent to an aggression that somehow avoided the terrible tension normally associated with aggression. (6)

This aspect of the work has been criticized in relation to



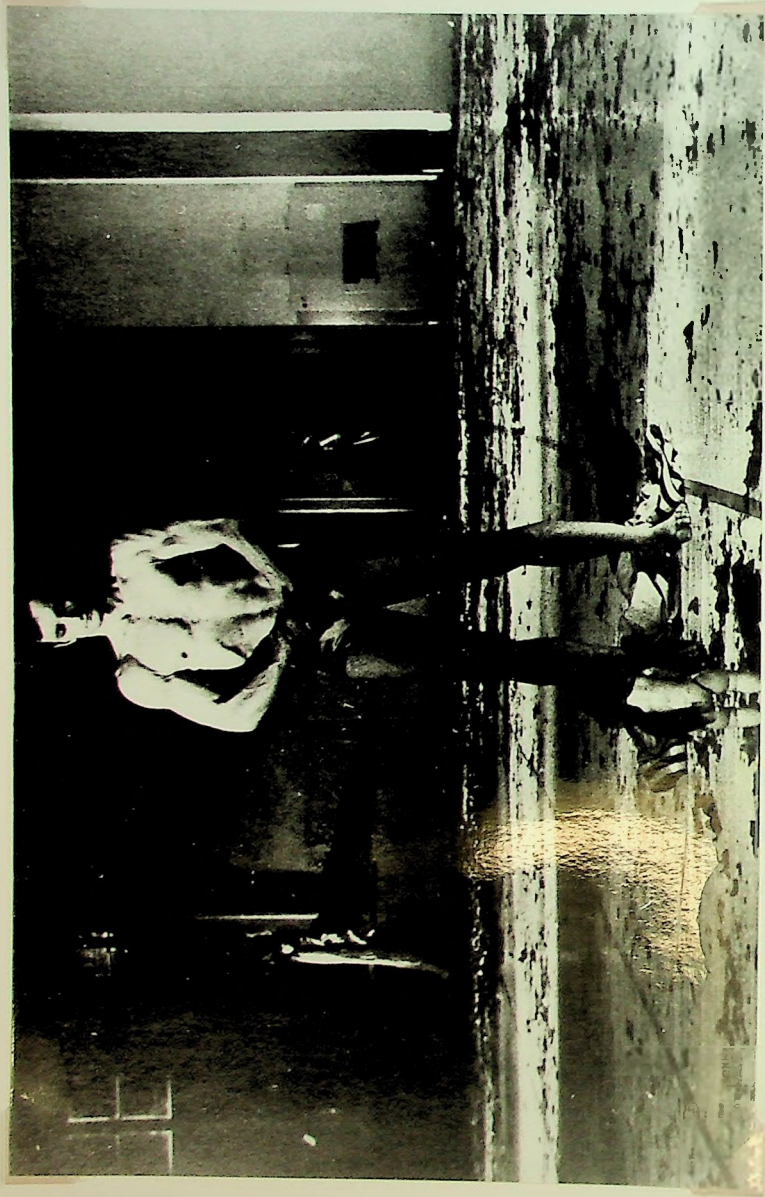
'THE RITES OF SPRING' - THE ENSEMBLE

feminist issues but it is not a comparison that Pina Bausch herself likes. Her topic is the emancipation of mankind, not only of women. Many of her American colleagues have gathered teams of women together but this to Pina Bausch seems like a bad premonition. Man and woman must solve their problems together; problems which derive from their social dependencies and the constraints and conventions of their lives. Progress is possible and from her own private observations she feels that it is even harder for men to emancipate themselves, because they have to cope with even stronger role expectations than women. (7)

Her work is very closely related to her own life. Rolf Borzik, with whom she lived and worked for many years and whose long and inevitable death can be traced in many of the plays, from 'Cafe Muller' to 'Arien' and which became something akin to a requiem even while Borzik was still alive. After Borzik's death she found a new relationship and in September 1981 her son Rolf Salamon was born and the change that such an event automatically brings about is also evident in her work in the recent past. Especially in 'Waltz' (1982), which is full of optimism - an optimism that is not so evident or developed in the earlier works. Apart from this more recent input of an element of optimism, the plays which came after that special Weill/Brecht evening, only changed gradually. In 'Bluebeard' (1977) the music of Bartok's opera 'Duke Bluebeard's Castle', serves not only as a symbolic substitute for the cutting



MARLIS ALT - 'BLUEBEARD'



JAN MINARIK - 'BLUEBEARD'

up of Bluebeard's women, to the breaking up of the taped music and to the mechanical repetition of some of the passages, but primarily to the turning away from the pure teaching of choreography as visualization of music. The play following this - 'Komm tanz mit mir' (Come dance with me), suggests a return to dance motions but in fact here for the first time she used language in its spoken form rather than as song. In the later plays language and speaking have a new function. In 'Legend of Chastity' (1979), and moreover in '1980', solo dances are substituted by great spoken arias and the classical dance formations are expanded by spoken words which articulate the central topics of the play.

For the moment it seems that Pina Bausch has left dance, as we understand it aside but actually it is the notion of dance that complicates the issue because it is not merely a question of the dance but rather a question of consciousness, or body consciousness and how you shape it. It does not need to belong to the traditional aesthetic form but can be completely different and still remain dance. This is the direction that the work of Pina Bausch is taking and the outcome can only become clear with the passage of time.

The work of Pina Bausch exists alongside experimental work in other fields of art. More and more the boundaries between the art disciplines are breaking down and where at one time the work of Pina Bausch would be seen within the strict limits of dance it now

demands to be seen in a broader context despite the set position of the artist in society. The work preserves the right to the freedom to continue to investigate which is vital to the artist's life. The work of Pina Bausch relates strongly to the area of Performance art and it is in this area of art that the artist finds a way of presenting his/her idea in a very contemporary context. What makes performance, be it in theatre, dance or music hall, so much part of contemporary life lies in the fact that art is no longer art for arts sake. Because of the wide cultural influences in our lives today brought about by freer travel and the media, it is through the medium of performance that this whole cultural abyss can be encompassed and presented as something in which we all partake.

In Performance art as in the work of Pina Bausch there is no definite performance because we are made aware that what we are experiencing is only one of several ways in which the work can be presented. Because of the ever present sense of a change of meaning in the work, the whole experience of performance (dance or theatre or art performance) demands an active rather than a passive response from the spectator. In this respect we become aware of the plurality of levels by which a performance can be experienced. One cannot simply sit back and be entertained but must be a witness to the event. There is no beginning or end, no subtle rise to the climax, there is simply a process.

CHAPTER I - Footnotes

1. Westermanns Monatshefte, 1982. Jochen Schmidt
In der Werkstatt der Pina Bausch. Wo fangt es an
su tanzen. p 56-65

2. Pina Bausch - Wupperthaler Tanztheater
Ballet-Bühner-Verlag, Rolf Garske, Hedwig Müller,
Norbert Servex.

- 3.& 4. ibid

5. Westermanns Monatshefte. (as above)

- 6.& 7. ibid

CHAPTER IIVesevolod Meyerhold - the innovations and experiments in
Russian Theatre

History has taught us that art is not created in isolation, that it reflects in some way the time in which it is created and that influences from the past all contribute to the evolution of any art form in any given period.

If this is the case then it is important to look at the work of Pina Bausch in relation to those who have come before her and whose work has helped pave the way for the realization of her powerful work.

Vesevolod Meyerhold (1) was one of those artists of the past whose innovative experiments are so clearly reflected and continued in the work of Pina Bausch. Meyerhold was born in 1874 in Penza, southeast of Moscow. He was an anti-realist, attracted to symbolism and experimentation and in politics, a revolutionary. He began his career as an actor but went on to become one of the primary exponents of non-realistic theatre, an innovator of theatrical forms, the one most closely linked with his name is the 'Theatre of the Grotesque' (2). Meyerhold, like Bausch was a performer as well as a Director. Indeed, Meyerhold was the first

director to insist on the primacy of the director's role, the first to conceive it as a role, something to be played out, performed - but a creative force as well, equal to the role of the playwright in shaping the theatrical experience, an experience considered different from the playtext and not achieved merely by actors. The association of the director and the actor is vital to the realization of the play. It is this interplay between director and player that is the key-note in the evolution of themes in the work of Pina Bausch. Without the player her suggestions would find no outlet, would remain forever caged in her own imagination.

In this regard, Meyerhold developed a whole science of 'Biomechanical' exercises in an attempt to teach actors an extremely controllable technique but one that came, nevertheless, spontaneously and organically from the actor's gestalt. Biomechanical exercises is an elaboration of physical exercises which emphasized the actor's outward visualization of himself. It used the terms risunok (sketch, pose, outline) and samozerkalenie (self-mirroring) to force this self-awareness. Meyerhold also coupled a theory of psychological response with biomechanics. He declared that Stanislavsky's (3) and other systems of acting were mistaken because they asked the actor to base his stage behaviour on internal psychological motivations - a waste of time and energy since the

desired effects can be achieved more efficiently through purely physical means.

"From a sequence of physical positions and situations there arises those 'points of excitation' which are informed with some particular emotion" (4)

Thus particular patterns of muscular activity elicit particular emotions. Consequently, the actor, to arouse within himself or the audience a desired emotional response need only enact an appropriate kinetic pattern. Meyerhold sought to replace the earlier emphasis on internal motivation with a new one on physical and emotional reflexes. He said:

"The actor must train his material (the body) so that it is capable of executing simultaneously those tasks which are dictated externally (by the actor, the director)" (5)

Consequently, to create a feeling of exuberant joy in both performer and audience, it may be more efficient for the actor to plummet down a slide, swing on a trapeze, or turn a somersault than to restrict himself to behaviour considered appropriate by realistic social standards. It is this use of unusual physical behaviour to express normal human responses that made biomechanics seem incomprehensible and which even today many theatre goers would still feel uncomfortable with.

Speaking with the actors then about building their characters,

Meyerhold advanced a principle called 'paradoxical approach'. This consisted of making all kinds of suggestions about the character or their individual scenes that were in sharp contrast to generally accepted views or to whatever seemed immediately obvious. Pina Bausch continues this approach. During rehearsals she is very reticent with explanations to the performers. She encourages individuals to have their own imagination, to be more like themselves, to dare uncommon ways of thinking -

"Just dare to think in all directions"

"Do what you thought of doing" "Just try it out" (6)

She too goes towards various performers and starts talking to them. She suggests something to that individual that refers to that person and to their situation. Sometimes these suggestions do not consist of general proposals or general theories, but relate directly to the individual to evoke a response. Asked by a dancer whether a scene is meant to be with text or only with ambiance, she answers:

"One has to try it out. I cannot tell theoretically"(7)

These suggestions can be very difficult, for example, Spring - what kind of thoughts and feelings are conjured up inside you - how do you express this non-verbally, or verbally. Or, the actors mark susceptible parts on the body of the partner and show why they are susceptible. Or the actor is asked to describe the sensations of crying without actually resorting to the act of crying.

Along with Meyerhold's biomechanics he also involved the art of comedy and popular entertainment from whose physical movements some



'KONTAKTHOF' - ENSEMBLE

of his techniques derive. At one point in his career he became attracted with the circus and music hall, - bright and brilliant forms of spectacular show with an emphasis on tragic farce and comic grotesque. Instead of mystical illumination through symbols and intuitive glances in the mysteries of life, he aspired now for a dynamism leading to loud joy, to a union of actor and spectator in a gay revelary of light, colour and movement.

More and more we see these two elements enter into the work of Pina Bausch. In the more recent works, i.e '1980' and 'Waltz' she involved elements of comedy. In one ridiculous sketch in '1980' the whole company began to lay out rugs on stage and arrange themselves on them in elaborately prepared semi-nudity as though for sun-bathing, to the sound of 'Somewhere over the Rainbow'. The music throughout this piece was German popular music of the 1920's and in earlier works she has also incorporated popular songs along side classical music as in 'Kontakthof' (Contact Zone) (1978) where the music of Chaplin, Karas, Jean Sibelius and others is used.

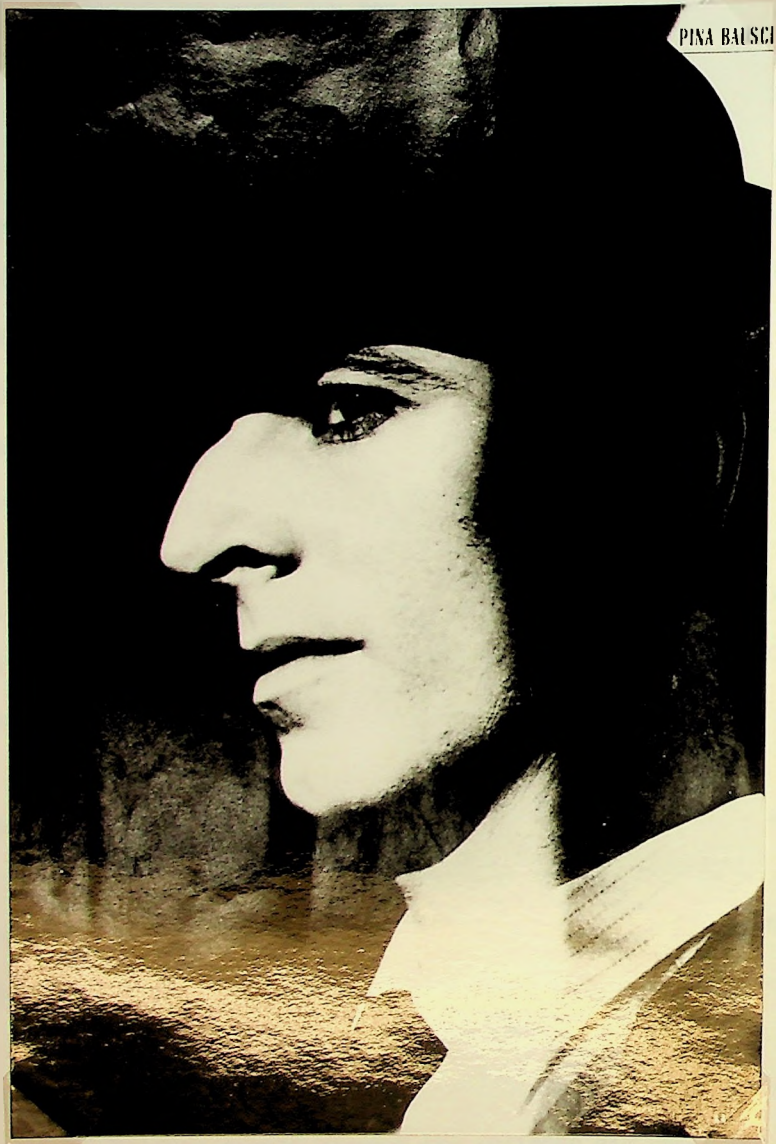
Coupled with this Meyerhold aimed to suppress all the barriers between the stage and the audience. Stairs led from the stage into the auditorium, actors came from the orchestra, walking through the aisles. In the 'House of Interludes' (8), a theatre where he tested his ideas, the hall was arranged as in a tavern with spectators sitting at separate tables and dances being performed in their midst.

Curtains and footlights were abolished. A half-moon proscenium went deep into the house, the stage was lit by huge candelabra standing on the floor and by chandeliers hanging from the ceiling and all lights were on in the theatre during the performance so that the whole house has the aspect of a festive ballroom. It was a triumph of 'theatricality' as opposed to the 'drama of authentic emotion' of the more traditional theatre (i.e. Stanislavsky) - a show for the pleasure of the senses.

"For Meyerhold a performance is theatrical when the spectator does not forget for a second that he is in a theatre and is conscious all the time of the actor as the craftsman who plays a role. Stanislavsky demanded the opposite: that the spectator become oblivious to the fact that he is in a theatre and that he is immersed in the atmosphere in which the protagonists of a play exist" (9)

"I don't want to show life as it is, or the way it should be, but the way it is in dreams" (10)

In traditional theatre the actor is the isolated individual in an endless attempt to reveal the intimate past to an invisible and unreacting audience. Meyerhold rejected this image above all else. Theatre as spectacle. In Meyerhold's theatre the viewer is made visible and made to confront the author and director/inscriber, as presenter/commentator, as "author of the spectacle"



LÜTZ FORESTER - '1980'

In 1975 Pina Bausch collaborated with a stage designer whose ideas were to be important for her productions over the next five years - Rolf Borzil. The theatre of Pina Bausch does not take its point of departure from a written text by a playwright where stage setting is also suggested. Instead the sets develop alongside the play which also comes about through experimentation and rehearsal. In this way props are added or discarded according to what action is decided upon, not only by the director or set designer but also by the player who may suggest using something because they need to hold onto an object, because of it is comfortable, because the object is symbolically important or simply because it just happens to be there. Borzil's sets have been extravagant in a most unexpected way and are another of the most striking aspects of the overall work because they introduce organic elements like leaves, fresh grass, water and flowers.

Except for a low platform, the stage in '1980' is stripped bare back to the rear wall of the theatre and covered with sod and grass. However, like Meyerhold the action in Bausch's work is not confined to the stage area. At the beginning of '1980' a youth enters, sits on a platform and begins slowly catatonically eating. Couples enter as a Beethoven adagio is heard. Slow, dreamy ballroom dancing begins. The dancers parade through the audience and back. One woman is separated from the others, who say goodbye to her, though all remain on stage. The stage becomes the medium. It gathers its energies into a centre which breaks into two centres, then three,

then diffuses into a loose all-over texture, suddenly empties, fills, empties. An actor sneaks through the audience teasing selected persons while a barrage of happenings continue to occur on stage and in other parts of the hall. A butler serves tea through the audience until called on stage to pour. Gazing across the proscenium he says:

"Would anyone else like tea"

He returns to serve the audience (11)

In Meyerhold's time this involvement of the audience was not accepted in the traditional theatre. Nowadays, however, many productions are designed to induce audience participation. Modern dramatists and directors rely not only on the efforts of the actors and the facilities afforded by the stage machinery but on the efforts of the audience as well. Pina Bausch's plays are produced in such a way that they are still unfinished when they appear on stage. This is also an approach used by many modern directors because it is felt that the crucial revision of a production is that which is made by the spectator. (12)

Under Meyerhold's hand the whole of a performance became a crystallization of meaning. And the code of that meaning, beyond the language of the text was movement/gesture and the reaction that gesture ineluctably calls forth.

"Only theatre, by combining language with patterns of gesture and reaction can encompass a future, and thus link the notion of probability to human behaviour. It is in this sense that theatre is always revolutionary. It points towards a future without having to present that future; rather it shows us the virtualities contained with the present, and asks for response" (13)

Meyerhold wanted to give the spectator the possibility of seeing the actor in all the complex richness of his movement, and the action in all the richness of its spatial progression - movement flowing not merely from left to right before the spectator's eyes, but forward and back, penetrating the audience. In the works of Pina Bausch there is not only backward and forward movement, or sideways movement, there is movement in every conceivable direction. People cross the stage like a street. Diagonal crosses are among the elements repeated over and over again in many of the performances. In the work of Pina Bausch what one sees is parades of human behaviour, insecurities, complexes, rituals. The man and woman walking behind each other are tired and aggressive, embarrassed and haughty, cramped up and friendly, courting and defensive, frightened and searching - visible reactions to invisible situations. The seemingly personal or common movements are not packed in a theatre story, they themselves constitute the story, refer to traces of life lived and un-lived.

It is for the theatre of the Grotesque that Meyerhold is most



JOSEPHINE ANNE ENDICOTT - 'DIE SIEBEN TODSUNDEN'

famous and aspects of Pina Bausch's work has been likened to this type of expressionism or absurdity. Meyerhold and Bausch have embraced stylization away from the realism of the traditional stage and they have used elements of the grotesque in order to do this. This grotesque style, according to Meyerhold,

"Is the one that reveals the most wonderful horizons to the creative artist"

"'I', my personal attitude to life, preceded all else.

Everything which I take as material for my art corresponds not to the truth of reality but to the truth of my personal artistic whim" (14)

Without compromise the grotesque ignores all minor detail and creates a totality of life in 'stylized improbability' (a phrase used by Puskin)(15). The grotesque does not recognize the purely debased or the purely exalted. The grotesque mixes opposites, consciously creating harsh incongruity and relying solely on its own originality. Just as in Gothic architecture, a miraculous balance is preserved between affirmation and denial, the celestial and the terrestrial, the beautiful and the ugly, so the grotesque parades ugliness in order to prevent beauty from lapsing into sentimentality. The grotesque deepens life's outward appearances to the point where it ceases to appear merely natural. Beneath what we see of life are vast unfathomed depths. In its search for the supernatural, the grotesque synthesizes opposites,

that's how incredible it is. Compared with that
the things we do are tiny" (17)

Her tiny specks of reality sharpen intellect, sensitivity and
the eye for the reality one often takes, not only diffusely,
for a life lived without edges.

In '1980' for example, the marvel of it is that every calamity
you've ever shaped is on display, in some guise or other, and if
it isn't, the enchantment of the spectacle seduces you into
projecting what is missing onto the bizarre parade. Her actors
heave and twitch and pose, combining the elements of visual delight
and ambiguously tender observation of our maladies and nothing is
held back, no one is spared.

The art of the grotesque is based on the conflict between form and
content. It aims to subordinate psychologism to a decorative task.
In this way design is very important - not only the settings, the
architecture of the stage and the theatre itself, but also the mime,
movements, gestures and poses of the actors. Through being decorative
they become expressive. For this reason the technique of the
grotesque contains elements of the dance; only with the help of
the dance is it possible to subordinate grotesque conceptions to
this decorative task (18). Where does the human body possessing
the suppleness of expression demanded by the stage, attain its
highest development - in the dance. Because the dance is the



MECHTHILD GROSSMANN - 'BLUEBEARD'

movement of the human body in the sphere of rhythm. The dance is to the body what music is to thought: form artificially yet instinctively created. At the point where the spoken word fails in its power of expression, the language of the dance begins.

However, the conception of what dance is has changed in this century and continues to do so. Pina Bausch comes from a strict dance tradition but the latest performances of the Wuppertal Tanztheater are almost completely devoid of what is commonly considered dance. Just as Pina Bausch approaches each new work with caution, so too she approaches and starts to learn to dance again. She is looking for new formulations and definitions for dancing, enlarging them, surmounting rigid barriers and advancing to regions where dancing begins. An inviting gesture, a gentle turn of the head, a glance, a walk toward each other and a touch - everyday motions are already aspects of the dance. While dance has taken more and more a back seat in the work of Pina Bausch, its principles still give the pieces its structure i.e. the principles of repetition and cross references. But who knows for certain where dance begins and where it ends. So far all the great dance innovators have redefined what they understood by dance, and Pina Bausch is no exception. I shall discuss aspects of the dance in more detail in a later chapter.

One of the final and extremely significant comparisons between the

work of Meyerhold and that of Bausch is that of community. Meyerhold offers us theatre as spectacle: a conception worked out in opposition to Stanislavsky's untenable notion of realism in theatre, of 'real life' upon the stage. To the idea of an art existing by itself and for itself, where the viewer is idealized and the audience is absent. Meyerhold opposes an art whose very existence is the transaction between viewer and author.

Meyerhold offers us a theatre of the world and our existence in it. He offers us, in other words, a vision of community. And the work of theatre - the arrangement of images in spectacles, where we spectators, as a group, can see ourselves as a group and can understand that the performance touches our behaviour - is one of the truest expressions of community today in that it attempts to rescue us from solitary slavery to the power of the written word, to the authority of the printed book. To believe in books is to believe that things can last; to believe in theatre is to know better. To contemplate performance is to understand that all things flow and change and no authority can stem that flow. All performance vanishes; only the idea of performance persists, in the memory and imagination of the community within which the performance took place - the community constituted, in fact, by the very performance. It is in the memory of a community, then, that we must look for Meyerhold. We must seek his ideas in the realm in which he created them - beyond text, in imagination and in memory. It is in this way

that Pina Bausch has gathered together all that he taught and wrote and experienced and it is from here that she takes her point of departure.

The Tanztheater of Wuppertal is a community within a community. It has been suggested by some critics of Pina Bausch's work that it would not be as it is if the company worked and lived in any other place other than Wuppertal, for example in Bavaria. It has been suggested that her whole body of work has a special 'Essen' (the area of Germany in which Wuppertal is situated) flavour. However, this is merely conjecture, but perhaps on studying the social and political history of the region, it might become more clear as to the importance of the dance theatre remaining there.

The company of dancers and actors with whom Pina Bausch has surrounded herself is also important. The entire troupe come from many different parts of the world - German, French, Dutch, Swiss, American, Czech, Australian - eleven men and sixteen women. I believe it is not insignificant that this blend of many nationalities and therefore many different cultural backgrounds, play a special and vital role in the formation and discovery of the works we have seen

The philosopher Carl Jung evolved the theory of the subconscious which in the case of the Wuppertal Tanztheater may offer an insight

into the rich mixture of people and the rich mixture of experiences and presentation that comes of them. Jung spoke of 'racial unconscious' as a fourth division of the mind's structure.

"He (Jung) posited that the human brain has acquired its particular structure in part through the necessity of dealing, generation after generation, with certain basic patterns of experience, and that, because of this structure, the brain responds more quickly to some stimuli than others. The racial unconscious is "nothing but a possibility ..."which from primordial time has been handed down to us in the definite form of mimemic images, or expressed in anatomical formations in the very structure of the brain. It does not yield innate ideas but unborn possibilities of ideas " (19)

It is these possibilities that most interest Pina Bausch and her company. These possibilities that Meyerhold began to explore and that Pina Bausch continues to explore. Perhaps Bausch will succeed where Meyerhold failed? Living at the time he did, his task was not easy. He dreamed a vision of community but understood only authority. He talked of equality, but competed hierarchically with his teacher Stanislavsky or his pupil Eisenstein. He imagined the Revolution, acted out its ideals, but could not live it. He delighted in the forms of disorder, but only insofar as they were raw material upon which he could impose his own sense of order.

Meyerhold was unique among directors because he adhered constantly and defiantly to the idea of art as experiment, as a dialectic between form and ideology, that could never be resolved. This is seen in his mature work where he makes a rapid switch from one perspective to another, from one set of emphases to another.

"My Credo" says Meyerhold "is a theatrical language simple, laconic, that leads to complex associations" (20)

This is the language of Pina Bausch, the language she continues to develop. Perhaps it is not the desire of Pina Bausch to succeed. When her pieces come to an end, no answers are given. The journey leads only to isolation and silence but the questions are asked and it is from there that we will proceed.

CHAPTER II - Footnotes

1. Vesevolod Meyerhold was born Karl Theodore Kasimir Meyerhold in 1874, near Moscow. He was an exponent of Russian experimental theatre.

2. 'Grotesque' (Italian Grottesca) is the title of a genre of low comedy in literature, music and the plastic arts. Grotesque usually implies something hideous and strange, a humorous work which with no apparent logic combines the most dissimilar elements by ignoring their details and relying on its own originality, borrowing from every source anything which satisfies its joie de vivre and its capricious mocking attitude to life.
Meyerhold on Theatre p.137

3. Stanislavsky was also a Russian theatre director who worked with Meyerhold but who was an exponent of the Natural Theatre as opposed to Meyerhold's non-realistic theatre.

4. Meyerhold at Work. The Soviet Experiment p. 322

5. *ibid.* p. 322

6. The Theatre of Pina Bausch by RAIMUND HOGHE. The Drama Review Series. Vol. 24, No. 1. 1980 p.63

7. ibid. p. 63

8. The 'House of Interludes' was Meyerhold's own theatre
 but one where he only experimented with his new ideas,
 not a commercial theatre. Russian Theatre p. 172
 Marc Slowim

9. Russian Theatre p 172 Marc Slowim

10. Meyerhold at Work - Introduction. P.Schmidt
 P.Schmidt

11. Art Forum Vol. XXIII No. 2, 1984
 Pina Bausch: Thomas McEvilley

12. Meyerhold on Theatre. Edward Braun. p. 256

13. Meyerhold on Theatre , Edward Braun, Introduction

14. Meyerhold on Theatre, Edward Braun

15. Puskin, Alexander S. Russian poet and dramatist. (1799-1837)

16. Meyerhold on Theatre Edward Braun, p. 138, 139

17. The Drama Review The Theatre of Pina Bausch,
 Raimund Hoghe. Vol w4, No. 1. p. 64

18. Meyerhold on Theatre Edward Braun p. 141

19. Stated in Psychology of the Unconscious Carl Jung, 1912

20. Meyerhold at Work Chapter IV. p. 90, P.Schmidt

CHAPTER III

Laban, Wigman and Dada - the beginnings of new forms in German dance/theatre.

'1980' was premiered in New York City in the Summer of 1984. Among many of the exciting and extraordinary elements of this work, the revival of Dadaist performance vocabulary is brought to life with astonishing vigour. For New York audiences this performance may have conjured ^{up} images of performances of the 1960's with its attempts to assault the sensitivities of the audience through shock value and other outrageous attacks. The sixties was an extremely active period in the arts, especially in the area of performance art and movements like 'Happenings', 'Fluxus', 'Arte Povera', to mention but a few, all contributed to the establishment of new forms in expressing the artist's ideas outside of the traditional means of painting or sculpture. In the western world the sixties was a period of intense change, of growth in material wealth and the beginning of wars. Many artists reacted against the changing values in their society and sought a means of expression that gave weight to the depths of their feelings. Many of these movements contained elements of Dadaist philosophies and in retrospect the theatrical 'tantrums' of dada seem almost affirming rather than shocking when placed alongside the art of the sixties.

However, it is to the Dadaist that we must turn to as the first exponent of anti-artistic values in an effort to express their dissatisfaction with the war in Europe at the time and in reaction to materialistic bourgeois capitalism in which the whole art scene of the time was wrapped up. To Jean Arp dada had its own meaning:

"Dada aimed to destroy the reasonable deceptions of man and recover the natural and unreasonable order. Dada wanted to replace the logical nonsense of the man of today by the illogically senseless. That is why we pounded with all our might on the big drum of Dada and trumpeted the praises of unreason..... Dada denounced the infernal ruses of the official vocabulary of wisdom. Dada is for the senseless, which does not mean nonsense. Dada is senseless like nature. Dada is for nature and against art. Dada is direct like nature. Dada is for infinite sense and definite means. (1)

In creating the anti-art of the dadaist every spontaneous impulse every message from within, was greeted as an expression of pure reality. Absolute spontaneity, chance regarded as the intervention of mysterious and wonderful forces, pure automatism as a revelation over which consciousness had no control - these became the techniques that opened the way to a more comprehensive view of the relationship between Self and the world.

The dadaists were anti-art, anti-history, anti-permanence and pro-spontaneity which makes it quite a simple step to an understanding of the dada's valuing of 'process' (the manner by which the work is accomplished) above 'product' (the work itself). This belief in the process as the creative force is one of the driving forces behind the work of Pina Bausch. Everything that is accomplished by her and her company relies on the ability to act spontaneously on a given subject and thus evolve a theme or overall whole that becomes the core of the work rather than starting from a pre-conceived script. In this respect the process is the means whereby their ideas come to fruition while the end product does not become the prime target. For an actor process and product merge. Though there are many moments in performance which are the products of rehearsal 'decisions', the creative art in its totality must occur at every performance anew and to truly make his art work, the actor must constantly remain open and 'in the process of...' Once the actor has finished his performance, nothing of his art remains visible - only the memory or impression remains. This was the approach of the dadaist and is also the approach of the Wuppertal Tanztheater but with one major difference - dadaist aims were primarily destructive while the work of Pina Bausch is primarily constructive despite references to destructiveness.

The dada actor was the 'personal actor'. When Hugo Ball was on

stage he was identified as Hugo Ball, not some character. As with the Wuppertal company they do not take on the personalities of characters, rather each of their own individual traits are maintained and even exaggerated. For example, Mechthild Grossmann, has a very distinctive voice and when it is heard it is impossible not to associate the voice with the person.

Dadaist artists used everything at their disposal to express their ideas. Theirs was not an art of unity and harmony but rather it included a notion of 'Collage' whereby all elements worked together. Marcel Janco perpetuated an evening at the Cabaret Voltaire (2), in a painting which is annotated by Arp:

"On a platform in an overcrowded room, splotted with colour, are seated several fantastic characters who are supposed to represent Tzara, Janco, Ball, Huelsenbeck and your humble servant. We are putting on one of our big Sabbaths. The people around us are shouting, laughing, gesticulating. We reply with sighs of love, salvos of hiccups, poems and bow-wows and meows of medieval bruitists. Tzara makes his bottom jump like the belly of an oriental dancer. Janco plays an invisible violin and bows down to the ground. Madame Hennings with a face like a madonna attempts a split. Huelsenbeck keeps pounding on a big drum, while Ball, pale as a plaster dummy, accompanies him on the piano" (3)

This Collage technique is one that is frequently used by Pina Bausch and as in the description just mentioned elements of her collage seem as unrelated to each other as they did in dadaist performances. '1980' is a play that presents us, throughout the entire three and a half hours duration, with this collage technique. In Part II of '1980' the players parade through the audience while a gymnast silently works out on parallel bars at the distant rear of the stage. A magician appears and displays his inexplicable cuttings and reparations. A girl dances with a sprinkler. Women wrap corpses. A woman shakes Jell-O on a plate and then shakes her breasts. A shot gunman staggers around a grave. Another girl juggles green and red Jell-O. A girl strips, a boy eats, a Chinese girl is buried. An actor tries to disgust the front row by playing naughtily with his food. The Chinese girl is buried again. The staggering gunman sits down at last at a table by the grave. Lights flash and a frenzied jitterbugging takes possession of everyone. They jiggle insanely, then slow flawlessly into a tranquil ballroom dance. And so it goes on and on with no beginning middle or end.

As with dadaist performances there is constant regression into childhood games and it is probably this aspect of dada that is most closely linked with the work of Pina Bausch. The phonetic gibberish of the sound poems which the dada performer reveled in is as suggestive of a move toward childhood as the name 'dada' itself.

Ball wrote that the aim of the dadaist was to "surpass oneself in naivete and childishness" (4) and he described in no uncertain terms his unswerving attraction to childhood:

"Childhood as a new world, and everything childlike and fantastic, everything childlike and direct, everything childlike and symbolical in opposition to the senilities of the world of grown ups" (5)

Theatre for Pina Bausch "has a lot to do with things children do".

"The things we do sometimes you can actually do only when you are a child - splash around in water, get greasy, paint yourself, play. That you can do this on stage once more as a grown-up is great, I think" (6)

Rolf Borzik created many of the games in the works of Pina Bausch. He also created the spaces in which they are played, the big wide spaces that do not seem to be forced upon or superimposed on the player but develop instead with them and their story. In 'Arien' (1979), for example, the entire stage is covered in water that is ankle deep. Close to the footlights, a row of chairs are set up. With tired, serious faces, the women walk toward it. Some are in such a state of sadness that they seem to be on the way to an execution, probably their own. Gradually they sit down on the chairs and give themselves up to the men. To the sounds of Mozart's 'Little Night Music' they are changed by the men. They are dressed

in old clothes, colourful wraps, pastel-shaped girly dresses. Their faces are painted in gaudy colours. They are handed bizarre props - until nothing reminds one of what they were. While this piece of the work incorporates childish pursuits, it could be interpreted as Pina Bausch's way of describing how women can be forced into certain stereotypes as the dominant male adapts them to their own imaginations. However, Pina Bausch does not concern herself with a theoretical analysis of female esthetics but leaves that to the theorists and critics. In this respect it is difficult to determine exactly if there is strong political motivation behind the work. Definitely the works deal with very sensitive issues related to contemporary life but as Pina Bausch refuses to be labelled or pin-pointed into definite political categories, the study of those aspects of the work is left up to the critics. However, in my opinion the works speak very directly for themselves in what they have to say about contemporary life. This aspect of the work differs from dadaist work only in so far as dadaist artists were more forthright with regard to the political intentions of their work. However, the impact of the work of Pina Bausch is no less strong despite its more indirect political suggestions.

In Europe in the early twentieth century dada influences not only penetrated into the lives of many poets, painters and performers but also into the German dance scene.



'KONN TANZ MIT MIR' - ENSEMBLE

"Just as in music or in painting there is no such thing as an 'ugly' sound or outward 'dissonance', so too in the dance the inner value of every movement will soon be felt and the inner beauty will replace outward beauty. From unbeautiful movement issues an unrecognized force and living power. From this moment on the dance of the future begins" (7)

It was to Zurich as well, in 1916, as the Cabaret Voltaire settled into the Spiegelgasse, that Rudolph von Laban moved his experimental dance studio. With him came his star pupil and collaborator Mary Wigman, of whom Pina Bausch is a direct descendent (in the dance sense). These two dancers were breaking new boundaries in the world of dance in Germany especially in the area of 'non-musical rhythm' which for a dancer meant exploring rhythm in a soundless space. In 1913 to dance without music was heretical and audience and critics who later viewed the 'soundless' performances found them 'weird' and 'morbid'.

A further area of experimentation was in the dancer's relation to space. The forms of nineteenth-century ballet focused on the subtle plays of the body with itself rather than with the space in which it was executed. The dancer moved in space but not into it. To explore the reshaping of space, Laban used a 'machine' called a 'space crystal' - "a cage made of wire in the form of a polyhedron,

in which the dancer is enclosed, to enter into affinity with space and so to be galvanized into contact with the fourth dimension" (8)

Much of the experimental work in performance at the Cabaret Voltaire was based on dance. Hugo Ball included painting, music and dance in the programme of the cabaret and his friendship with Kandinsky kept him in touch with the painter's experiments in art and the dance. Alongside Ball's work with sound and movement, Laban and Wigman used the sound of a gong to stimulate the dancer's movement. Of these 'abstract dances' Ball wrote:

"A gong beat is enough to stimulate the dancer's body to make the most fantastic movements. The dance has become an end in itself. The nervous system exhausts all the vibrations of the sound and perhaps all the hidden emotions of the gong beater too, and turns them into an image - a poetic sequence of words is enough to make each of the individual word particles produce the strangest visible effect on the hundred-joined body of the dancer" (9)

The dry violence of non-melodic music and gongs was very much in tune with the grotesque movements of the dancer. Mary Wigman was not a petite woman as was demanded of the classical dancer. Instead she was big boned, large breasted and awkward but she had such an intense self-expression that Laban once resorted to calling her a "clown, you grotesque monster". However Wigman was

nor alone in her own pursuit of her art as she was following in the footsteps of Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis on whose inspiration the New German Dance was founded.

The primacy of group work for Ball was echoed by Wigman and is also carried on by BAusch.

"It is not the soloists achievement which is pregnant with future. This will always remain a single and purely maximum achievement... But the young dance generation should put all emphasis on the group dance. There are all possibilities, there is a future" (10)

When we look at the work of Pina Bausch it becomes evident that in many cases, especially in the pieces conceived by herself and the company, that there are not major solo parts. Each part is as significant as the next just as each actor may often appear in a whole range of parts and not just one. This spreading out, away from a central focal point was an idea also advocated by Meyerhold. He believed it was not right for one part to be overloaded with material while others contain so little that they can be left to inexperienced extras. For the new theatre he envisaged no extras, no bad parts only bad actors because he believed any part becomes important if it is played by a good actor.

This approach also reflects the community spirit in Meyerhold and Bausch and which is also evident in the work of Dadaists and Mary Wigman. In the following by Wigman, of the work in her new Dresden studio to which she moved in 1919 she might well have

been describing the Cabaret Voltaire, Dada Gallery experience:

"We .. were a small experimental club in which everything was tried out which the imagination would yield and which the bodily abilities would permit. But we all, without exception were fanatics, obsessed with what we were doing" (11)

As stated in the first chapter Pina Bausch has her share of opponents. Aside from the subject matter she chooses, another aspect of her work that causes consternation, especially among classical dance supporters is the fact that the company 'resort' to ugly and clumsy movements and images. Many of the positions they take are ones we all recognize, yet would not like ourselves to be seen in. However the problem arises mainly because we are simply not used to exaggerated gesture and when confronted we are made to feel uncomfortable. This concept of what is beautiful and what is ugly is one that continues to change and resolve itself and one that Pina Bausch has had no small part in establishing a changing aesthetic appreciation of the beautiful and the ugly. It would be true to say that for Pina Bausch there is no 'ugliness' in the strict sense of the word. Just as the dada artist found the concept of 'ugliness' a liberating one so too did the dada dancer, and its impact is clearly evident from the following quote made by Kandinsky in 1912 :

"In dance... we are on the threshold of a future art...
Conventional beauty must go and the literary element,
"Story telling" or "anecdote" must be abandoned..."

Painting and dance must learn from music and every harmony and every discord that springs from internal necessity is beautiful (i.e. functional): but it is essential that they spring from internal necessity alone. The 'ugly' movements suddenly become beautiful and emanate an undreamt of strength and living force. At this point the dance of the future begins" (2)

A very tender and strange new dance experiment is developed by Pina Bausch and her company in 'Arien'. By and by the dancers, all standing alone with closed eyes begin - with strange, groping motions that seem hermetically shut and are confined very close to the body - to let dancing be suspected as a possibility to experience oneself and the surrounding space. It becomes a possibility not to dance away from oneself but to come to oneself through dancing. But like all the other dancing experiments from 'Arien', like rock and roll performed by the ensemble that ends with a racing competition or like the exalted dancing movements of single individuals that end with sudden splashes into water (which is the stage set) - this dance ends very suddenly. A loud sound from the outside ends it and the self-enquiry that is as quiet as it is utopian. The dancers open their eyes. A moment of alarm, of insecurity, the trouble of finding again the old securities, of winning some distance from oneself and of finding one's way in the strange thing called reality, which hardly permits any self exploration, interrupts the departure.

As Pina Bausch has experienced an element of unacceptability so too did Mary Wigman and the Dada performance in the 1920's. Both Wigman and Bausch sought and seek an expression that has evolved from a totally new way of looking at art in the world - expression as a direct reaction to experience. Possibilities for body movement would be probed in detail while emotions determined form and the inner life emerged.

"The crude slams with the sole of the bare foot against the floor, the walking, running and lying on the stage, the spiral placement of the torso and asymmetrical positioning of the legs were met with responses of 'ridiculous etc'"(13) (a description of a Wigman dance but equally applicable to Pina Bausch).

By 1917 the Laban/Wigman dancers were working alongside the dada performers at the Dada Gallery. The experimentation continued and the foundation was laid for the development of a German Dance form that is today reaching heights of achievement on many social and aesthetic levels. Pina Bausch is one of those dancers who continues to work in the creation of new forms.

CHAPTER III - Footnotes.

1. Hans Arp: 'Dadaland' On my Way New York 1948
'I became more and more removed from aesthetics' p 48
2. The Cabaret Voltaire was opened on February 5th, 1916 in Zurich to create a centre for artistic entertainment which is now known as Dada.
3. The Dada Painters and Poets. Robert Motherwell, 1915
Jean Arp 'On my Way'
4. Latest Rage the Big Drum Hugo Ball p. 64. Annabelle Melzer
5. ibid
6. The Drama Review The Theatre of Pina Bausch, Raimund Hoghe
Vol. w4, Nol. p. 68
7. Hugo Ball, 1917
8. Maria Theresa, "What dancers think about the modern German dance " The dance Magazine May 1931 p.14.
The rapid advances in science and technology at the end of the nineteenth century had very much encouraged the myth of the machine. In creating his 'space crystal', Laban was joining those avant-garde artists who had found, in the imagined workings of a machine, a way to prod a real movement of the mind: Duchamp's 'bachelor machine', Roussel's 'bed sky' and 'diamond aquarium', Jarry's 'supermale' in his electric chair, Lautreamont's, amoureuse sewing machine.

9. Hugo Ball Diary. p. 17
10. To further this group work Mary Wigman founded her school in Dresden. Ball lived and worked within the dada circle and Duncan, Laban, Dalcrose, even Loie Fuller either lived within a group or built a school around themselves.
11. Wigman, quoted in Sorrel, Hanya Holm. p. 17-
12. Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art
p.p. 71-72
13. Latest Rage the big Drum , Annabelle Melzer, p. 103.

CHAPTER IVThe Dancetheatre of Women and Conclusion

One of the main differences between the modern dance choreographer and Pina Bausch is that the former tend to have developed a unisex type of movement performed equally well by men and women. Both Laban and Wigman, as well as Hugo Ball, promoted a certain 'hermaphrodite' quality in their art; a sexual changeability that would enable them to change from male to female viewpoints at will thereby leaving the movement so open that it did not become sex specific. As far as can be ascertained this has been a classical strategy among choreographers until Pina Bausch came on the dance scene. Bausch does it differently. In her work the roles of male/female are very strongly delineated. Men appear as a group. Women appear as a group. They reach across established sex barriers and they address each other characteristically. The way Pina Bausch sets up the particular tensions between the sexes, the tenderness and the frustrations, makes her work different from other women who also are finding the need to react against the classical stereotypes of the dance tradition. It is significant that in the Federal Republic of Germany today, the majority of dance choreographers are women.

Alwin Nikolais, one of the older members of American Modern dance has expressed his own opinion on the dominance of male or females

in the dance world at any given time. He said, that in his profession there was always a change of male/female choreographers. The founder generation of American modern dance were women, e.g. Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Mary Wigman, Dore Hoyer and others, while the next successor generation were male dominated, e.g. Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, John Butler, Jerome Robbins and Nikolais himself and others. The next generation, Nikolais suggests would be women again and this suggestion seems to be true at least in Germany where Twyla Tharp, Lucinda Childs, Laura Dean and Trisha Brown are accompanied by some men like Steve Paxton, Bill Jones, Douglas Dunn and even younger people like Reinhild Hoffmann and Rosamund Gilmore.

The reason for the rise of women to such a dominant position in the Germany ballet scene since the end of the seventies is probably a sociological rather than an artistic one, although if this were strictly true, these sociological reasons should also have brought about a strengthening in the position of women in other areas of the arts - a change which however is only evident in literature and films but not in the spoken theatre, music or painting and sculpture.

Of course the rise of women to important and aesthetically influential positions on the dance theatre front is reflected in the changing position of women in society in general - the fight for which the women's movement has played a decisive role.

One can only speculate on the reason for the high proportion of women in the free dance groups that have sprung up throughout Germany since the seventies. Perhaps women, having once made the decision to do a thing are more persistent than men, and are also tougher and less pretentious in their demands from life.

For example, the demands and challenges we are confronted with in the work of Pina Bausch. Like the demand for tenderness sought out in 'Kontakthof' (Contact Zone) (1978). This play exercises in tenderness, experiments in tenderness, quests for tenderness. The sound of an old record plays "Zieh mich an dich, wir wollen Tango tanzen" (draw me close to you, we want to dance the Tango). Friendly smiling pairs stand opposite each other and touch each other. A man takes the hand of a woman and bends her fingers backwards. A woman approaches a man and bites his ear. Another pinches the partner underneath the arms, closes his eyes, draws out a single hair, takes away his chair and they leave the stage arm in arm. As the play progresses the touches continue. Only after the frontier has actually been crossed does one note with surprise that the gestures of advance have become something different. Tender gestures become blows. The transitions are fluid. At the end of the play men touch a woman. They cover her body with touches. Hands stroke across her hair, eyes, brow, mouth, nose, chin, ears, neck, arms, legs, breast, stomach, back - until the woman collapses underneath what is understood (by men) as 'tenderness'.



MEYRL TANKARD - 'KONTAKTHOF'



JAN MINARIK - 'BLUEBEARD'

In another part of 'Kontakthof' this quest for tenderness is approached from afar. A pair are separated by a wide distance. A man and a woman sit at the two opposite ends of the big empty room furnished only with simple wooden chairs. They smile timidly at the distant partner. Bashfully they take off single items of clothing. They look at each other shyly. Slowly they undress before each other suggesting an uncovering of our 'bare spots' and insecurities. Yet across the protective space they get very close to each other while the outward distance remains the same. (1)

The reality which a choreographer like Pina Bausch and her colleagues have brought to the German dance scene is not that of an unbroken 'realistic' narrative, rather that of a painful rubbing against conditions which the ballet author no longer takes for granted. The beginnings of this kind of friction against norms and circumstances, battering against the walls of convention a crumbling of forms and a destruction of smooth processes are visible in many of the works of the dance theatre and especially in the work of Pina Bausch.

While Pina Bausch refuses to be categorized as a feminist or socialist, her works are eminently political in so far as they question - radically and existentially - the conditions and pressures of our social interaction. Perhaps it is that women now find it easier to express their role within society and to

make demands for themselves. According to Susanne Linke women are more capable of dipping into their own psyche and spreading their personal experiences, sometimes even with a destructive character. This is because of their education and experience. The stereotypical notion of men is different. In their role men seem to want to climb the ladder and put on high cultural plays, with high subject matter (which is okay for ballet but not for the dance theatre). The dance theatre wants more thoughts, complications and even destruction.

Pina Bausch's most recent work did not have a title at the preview when it was staged in June, 1984 in Wuppertal. Maybe it does not need a title. The spectator who saw '1980' can see some similarities in this new work. The scenes and pictures are familiar but at the same time it is completely different. There is very little music, very few spoken words. The images are however still presented through childhood games alongside a dead celebration. Dance and War, Melancholia and Depression appear in all the scenes.

Hunting, catching, kissing - all children's games but in the Wuppertal Tanztheater's latest work these games are cruel, sad, sometimes mean jokes - setting up a power and the tension of destruction for the spectator. It can be fun to blow up balloons but when someone comes and begins to blow up every balloon so that it bursts, then it ceases to be fun any longer. Jan Minarik, one

of the male dancers of the company plays an important part in this new play. He is playing war games but he is dressed in a red bathing cap, red sunglasses, his nose is flattened by an elastoplast, on his hands he wears red rubber gloves and he wears red swimming trunks with a huge bottom. He continues to destroy the balloons and when he is tired he sits down on the floor and looks around him with an open mouth, with an angry and stupid expression on his face.

Minarik is the representation of the man we fear. When something like a dance, a fete or a love scene happens in the play Minarik appears and reorganizes everything so that the dance or the love never happens, it only starts and then is destroyed.

At the beginning nobody dared to mount the stage - the dancers creep around the sides of the walls and escape when he appears. When a girl appears he takes her away or he takes a girl and uses her body as a cudgel and hits another person with her. When he eats he spreads pieces of meat on his hand and arm, garnishes the food with radish, tomatoe and lettuce and then presses a tube of mustard over it all. As he exerts his power throughout the play, it is almost ended before he receives his punishment. As he begins to put a funeral wreath around the shoulders of a girl, he suddenly starts screaming - why is a secret that Pina Bausch does not share.

Towards the end someone comes into the light and starts a monologue, an explanation, but it is nothing, he says nothing because there is nothing left to say. And then when everything seems to be finished, the theatre starts again. Enormous christmas trees are brought on the stage and it becomes a forest. A woman in a red dress appears, then a man, but they do not become a couple; the man always turns away before he reaches the woman. A singer starts to sing while at the same time an orchestra starts playing. When the music stops everybody disappears. This is the end of the play. (2)

CHAPTER IV - Footnotes

1. The Drama Review, Raimund Hoghe, 'Kontakthof' 1978
2. Die Zeit No. 23, 1984, Benjamin Hendrichs.

BIOGRAPHY

- 1940 Born in Solingen near Wuppertal in West Germany
- 1955 Begins at the Folkwangschule under teacher Kurt Jooss
- 1959 Finals in stage-dancing, classical and modern and pedagogical examination stipended from the German Academic Exchange (DAAD) for studies in the USA
- 1960 Special student at Julliard School of Music in New York and at the same time a member of the Dance Company of Paul Sanasardo and Donya Feuer
- 1961 Engaged by the New American Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera, New York
- 1962/68 Returns to Germany where she becomes soloist of the newly founded Folkwang Ballet Company under Kurt Jooss and travelled at home and abroad; for example: Festival of Two Worlds, Spoleto. Festival Jacob's pillow - USA, Salzburger Festspiele, worked with Jean Cebron
- 1969 Choreographer of 'Fairy Queen' an opera by Henry Purcell for the Switzerland Festival
Won first prize for choreographer with the Cologne Ballet in 'In Wind the Time'
- 1968 Choreographer in the repertoire of the Folkwang Ballett - 'Fragmente' music by Bela Bartok

- 1970 Guest choreographer in Holland
Staged the Ballet, 'Nachnull' music: Ivo Mätec
- 1971 Appeared in Germany and in USA at the Dance-festival, Connecticut, Dancefestival Saratoga, Overseed the ballet 'Aktionen fur Tanzer' music by Gunter Becker
- 1972 Choreographer for 'Tannhauser'
USA Dance festival Saratoga and worked for the Dance Company of Paul Sanasardo New York
Staged 'Wiegenlied' music: childrens songs by Pierre Henry
- 1973 Guest performance in Stuttgart, Rotterdam, DEN Haag, London, Manchester. Recieved the prize from Nordrhein-Westfalen for young artist.
- 1973/74 Director of the Tanztheater Wuppertal with the following works listed since that time.
- 1974 'Fritz' - Music: Gustav Mahler, Wolfgang Hufschmidt
- 'Iphigenie auf Tauris' : a dance opera with music by Christoph Willibald Gluck
- Choreographer the Reveu Swei Krawatten and the Free Jazz Improvisation.
- 'Ich bring dich um die Eche...' (I lay you down under) Music of old hit tunes.
- Adagio: Five songs for Gustav Mahler
- 1975 Orpheus und Eurydike. Music by Christoph Willibald Gluck.

1975

Fruhlingsopfer (The Rites of Spring)
Music by Igor Stravinsky

1976

Die Sieben Todsunden (The Seven Deadly Sins)
Music by Kurt Weill. Text by Bertolt Brecht

1977

Blaubart - beim Anhoren einer Tonbandaufnahme
von Bela Bartoks Oper 'Herzog Blaubarts Burg'
(Bluebeard while listening to a tape recording
of Bela Bartok's Opera, Count Bluebeard's
Castle)

Komm Tanz mit mir (Come dance with me)
making use of old songs

Renate wandert aud (Renate emigrates)
Music: popular songs and perennial favourites

Er nimmt sie an der Hand und führt sie in
das Schloß (He takes her by the hand and leads
her to the Castle)

1978

Cafe Müller: Music by Henry Purcell

Kontakthof (Contact Zone)
Music by Charlie Chaplin, Anton Karas, Jean
Sibelius and German hits from the 1930's

Keuscheitslegende (Chastity Legends)

1979

Arien (Aries)
Music by Beethoven, Mozart and old Italian arias
sung by Benjamino Gibli

- 1980 Bandoneon staged while travelling in South
 America
- '1980' Music: German popular music of the 1920's
- 1982 Waltz Various music
- 1984 Win stuck von Pina Bausch
 Music by Mendalson

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