

By Deborah Jowitz

I don't think of Ze'eva Cohen as a facile choreographer. Everything that she does on stage as a soloist or sets on others looks as if it has proceeded from feelings well understood and imaginatively rendered. Her *Quartet*, to a haunting score by Robert Kaplan, shows four women (Michele Pereira, Neta Pulvermacher, Catherine Tharin, and Christine Zaepfel), each of whom has a very different way of moving. That's an interesting idea. One can sweep her arms into sharp, straight gestures, another can be energetically resilient, another make curving movements we can read as "maternal." When two dance together, each retains her independence; it as if they've snagged on each other in passing. What's unclear, though, is *why* each is dancing; their characters seem to exist in a vacuum.

Ariadne, a solo performed by Caryn Heilman, has a form Cohen has explored before. The dancer's journey along various paths on the stage suggests an ambiguous "journey" through life. Like the mythical Ariadne, the woman might be mapping out a way through a maze—now making soft, groping gestures, as if to brush something away, now stopping to let her body congeal into almost archaic postures. You see her going from light into darkness and back into light; her responses to what she sees or feels create an elaborate but mysterious environment, while the harsh, impassioned voice of Irene Papas cries out in the Vangelis music. Heilman performs as if she's been

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beautifully coached, but the passion of the quest doesn't belong to her.

Cohen's *Walkman Variations* is skillfully put together and engaging enough, but its humor seems more superficial and less observant than I'd expect from her. It's as if she's parodying a phenomenon, but not investigating it. Seven dancers get turned on by their Walkmans (indicated by the way they hold their hands by their heads from time to time, or vibrate a hand near their ear). The music scratches them, gets their feet going and their bodies wriggling, incites them to feats of daring. But Cohen's fastidious sense of design and pattern make the dancing look squarer than the music sounds. The raucousness, the impudence, the sensuality of the Pointer Sisters and the kind of dancing people do to that music don't figure at all.

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