

mobius performing group

BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE

(lessons in physics and metaphysics)

a new/music theatre piece

designed and directed by mario-erik paoli

at MOBIUS
354 Congress Street
Boston (Fort Point)
542-7416

wed, oct 29 - sat, nov 1

8 pm/\$5.00

Mobius, Inc. is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, the Mass. Council on the Arts and Humanities, the Boston Arts Lottery Council, the Polaroid Foundation, the Boston Globe Foundation, the Eugene F. Fay Trust of the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Co., and generous private support.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE

Mobius is pleased to present BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE -- a new music/theater piece by composer director Mario-Erik Paoli, October 29 through November 1.

Evolving from the theory that the before science period (rhythm, cycles, nature-god) has more in common with the post-science period (relativity, the new physics, god-goddess) than with the science period (rationality, logic, man-god), BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE examines the way we perceive, receive and organize our knowledge. All this with a subtheme of male/female politics.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE can be likened to a musical painting -- an abstract painting -- which may or may not be explicit or narrative, but which has definite overtones, reverberating in the viewer on both a primal and an intellectual level. The piece is structured as a sensorial collage, juxtaposing lectures on general physics with music and images. The viewer is intended to approach BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE, according to Paoli, like a looking glass, creating a dialogue between each individual and the piece.

Paoli's musical theater pieces have a rare visual and evocative power. A member of the Mobius Performing Group for three years, he has worked extensively in music, theater, film and video. In BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE Paoli continues his exploration of ritual, the theater of images, and sexual polemics. Performing in this piece will be artist/scientist Rick Brown and artists Nancy Adams and Judy Collins.

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Contact: Laure Liverman - 542-7416

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MOBIUS

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BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE: lessons in physics and metaphysics

October 29-November 1, 1986

"This helps us to understand that poetry is anarchic to the degree that it brings into play all the relationships of object to object and of form to signification. It is anarchic also to the degree that its occurrence is the consequence of a disorder that draws us closer to chaos.... Theatrically these inversions of form, displacements of signification could become the essential element of that humorous poetry in space which is the exclusive province of the mise en scene."

-Antonin Artaud
The Theater and Its Double

Composed, designed and directed by Mario-Erik Paoli

Produced by Mobius Performing Group

With:

Rick Brown
Yvette Torell
Judy Collins
Nancy Adams

Music produced at Boston Film/Video Foundation, October 1986.

Technical assistance by Ed Mills

Special thanks to:

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DK: Yes, so for that very reason I prefer the audiences that don't know anything about Kyogen or Japan or what they're going to get. It was really exciting for us to tour public schools in Memphis this past spring. When we got to the first school, which was a high school, they paged the teacher who was supposed to be our contact person there and she came to the office after a few minutes and looked very puzzled and finally came over to us and said "Are you guys from Japan, to do the Japanese show here today?" And we said yes, and she said "Oh, I thought you were supposed to be dancing girls!" We said "Well, we're not." She was a little flustered because the women teacher's bathroom had been reserved for us as a dressing room. We told them that was fine and everything worked out ok. The students responded very well to the performance wherever we went and seemed to enjoy it and get something out of it. At one school, they asked us to teach them to bow in Japanese, and at another they wanted to know where they could get costumes like ours. It was just so refreshing to go someplace where there was no knowledge whatever of what they were getting and just hit em with it and see how valid it is as entertainment, which is what we believe it is.

JS: Do you perform any plays from outside the traditional repertory of two hundred and sixty-seven Kyogen?

DK: We prefer doing the classical plays because there's a form constantly to work toward, whereas when we do new plays it's our responsibility to create the forms. We have three non-classical plays that we do and we like now. One of them is just about a year and a half old. In the early years it took us a long time to really like the Yeats play, *The Cat And The Moon*. We knew that it was effective. We knew that my direction was interesting to people, but we didn't really like it until we'd done it about fifty times, because then it achieved a life of its own and the play does not allow us to change it any more. It's different from traditional Kyogen because we set what is to be done in it. All the forms are definitely Kyogen elements and Kyogen vocalizations, but there was nobody but us who was the final authority on whether it is to be done that way or not. The classical plays have a life of their own because they've been passed down that way all these years. We learn that life from our teacher. The form is alive, and it's the performer's responsibility to find that life and bring it out. We believe it's there, so working toward the perfection of the form means finding the full life of the piece. And so now Yeats's play has a life of its own for us, and it will object strongly if we try to do anything else to it, and so we enjoy doing it. It's a devilishly difficult play because the dialogue is very complex.

JS: What is the role of women in Kyogen?

DK: Traditionally there are no female performers in Kyogen. There are female roles. I think that the period in which Kyogen developed was very similar to the present day in that—we have a special term for it in Japanese—it was a period when the lower classes were rebelling against the upper classes and taking over, and in many ways individualism was coming into Japan at that time. Of course it was squelched after that, and now the people are just beginning to become really individualists on the surface again, to a certain extent. It's still not anything like it is in the West. Because of that historical situation, the female characters in Kyogen are very very strong, very very mean and very outspoken. So we don't do female impersonation at all. We simply dress in a woman's costume and use our own voices, and the movement is only restricted by the fact that the kimono is hanging down in a skirt fashion which is tight around the waist, so that you take smaller steps simply because the costume forces you to. There are different intonations for women and different textures of the style of the voice but it's not female impersonation as you would think of it. Our teacher trained his daughters to be performers but all of them, there are three of them and they all changed their minds. We have had several women performers in our company, and they learn and perform both male and female roles.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE

"Lessons in Physics and Metaphysics" OCT 29,30,31.

Designed and directed by Mario Erik Paoli NOV 1,2
with Rick Brown, Judy Collins, Nancy Adams

I've just been looking at a videotape of myself; ostensibly drinking whiskey. In fact, it WASN'T whiskey, but Lipton Iced Tea, but that macroworld deception is entirely in keeping with the themes of this little essay and of the piece. I found myself fancying that the scene might have been shot using some as-yet-undeveloped technology, some monstrous Rabelasian zoom lens which would let us look at the sub-atomic, atomic, and molecular substructures of the shots that we now have on tape.

At the atomic and subatomic levels (and the distinction would be really blurry, though to focus even for this lens-to-end-all-lenses); we would see total psychedelic chaos; particles zooming about every which way (QUICK! Can you define random?), bootstrapping themselves out of nothing and colliding and decaying all over the place. And what collisions! Impossible by our standarts, the ones we're used to, anyway. It's like two Mercedes ambulances colliding head on; and then when the smoke clears, instead of a heap of charred and twisted metal we find seven or eight Volkswagen sport sedans cruising around in close formation with old Ray Charles hits blasting out of their FM radios. We end up playing it like the National Safety Council and ignoring the individual collisions in favor of what we consider meaningful averages. At the molecular level we can detect the producer's little ruse, inasmuch as we see no alcohol molecules but rather tannic acid,caffeine, citric acid, and fructose.

What interests me about looking at the scene in this way; however, is that we have no way of knowing, from the information available to us, whether the projectionist has screwed up and is running the thing backwards. Events make as much (or as little) sense at this level, whichever way you set the direction of the timeline.

At the "real world" level, of course, if the "whiskey" flows from my mouth into the glass of from the glass upward into the bottle, we know immediately that a trick is being played. But to get to this level, we have to accept a great number of averages (or tendencies, or probabilities, or patterns,if you will) at the expense of a great many individual events; about which we can know nothing.

Biological evolution seems to have heavily favored "pattern receptors". The ability, innate or acquired, to average out the details to get to the big picture seems fundamental to survival. TIME is what the receptor systems need to assess and react to the patterns. The patterns, it seems, are there all along. It's only that somebody has to solve all of the equations, and that takes time.

Philosophers have always spent their time trying to tie time in with the complimentary concepts of good and evil, love and hate; or what have you. Science doesn't give a flying fuck for good and evil, only that we say as much as we can safely say about things as they are percieveable.

Mario is a philosopher, of sorts;and I'm a scientist, of sorts; and this little bit of entertainment will do absolutely nothing to resolve the conflict, I'm afraid. I'd be just tickled if we can just make you think a bit.

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...this is what led to the basic ideas of Before and After Science.

The basic premise of the Before and After Science concept is that 'Before Science' (alchemy, 'primitive times') we thought in 'circles', cycles, 'nature - ruled'. We respected nature, we 'flowed' with it.

The Science period brought 'linear thinking', beginning and end. Ways where developed to manipulate nature, we wanted to control nature to our advantage. We began to disrespect nature...

The post science period is bringing back 'thinking' in circles,cycles. Wholism, 'the whole' (... collage...Einstein, relativity, quantum physics...)

Once again we are beginning to respect nature. To respect the power of nature, the laws of nature. (the whole instead of the parts).

There exists direct parallels to this concept in: sexuality--politics--arts--- science---

- Mario-Erik Paoli



Higher Level Interpretations