

## AYDIN TEKER

### «harS»

Harpes are not considered "sexy." Since Marie-Antoinette they are "feminine." And became a preferred instrument for romantic (ballet-) composers. Astonishing to see a harp in contemporary choreography, especially if it's cast as a "dancer." However, that's the idea of "harS."

"harS" is a solo the Turkish choreographer Aydin Teker worked out for and with the female dancer Ayşe Orhon. Teker has a predilection for "impossible" objects. In her former "Akabi," she had her dancers perform on shoes with soles so high as to prevent them from dancing at all. This bred a quite particular body language. Something similar happens in "harS."

At the start, the instrument lies down on the floor. It isn't the regular type of harp, made of wood, but a much stronger piece made of polycarbonate. The reason for this choice will become evident. Orhon picks it up to put it upside down, with the broad resonator facing the public. Her body almost disappears behind the huge instrument. One only gets a glimpse of her broad, strong feet. Slowly she puts them forward, one by one, pushing the instrument ahead in front of her. Then she lets it go.

Suddenly, it seems as if the harp takes the lead in the dance. While tilting forward

over the neck, the forepillar slides downwards between Orhons legs and pushes her upwards. You suddenly realize how strong and heavy the instrument really is. And: the movement of the forepillar between the legs of the dancer undeniably has erotic overtones, if only by suggestion. Orhon doesn't seem to be aware of it, she just keeps moving. She doesn't act, doesn't show emotion, she just moves with uncanny precision and mastery of her muscular system. At stake here is not a story, but a demonstration of the delicate balance between object and human being, the woman and her instrument.

Towards the end, there's a remarkable moment when Orhon's legs and lower body disappear into the hollow space of the resonator. In this awkward position, she lifts the instrument by the sheer power of her belly muscles, and then turns over and over. A mermaid whose lower body is a harp instead of a fishtail. Orhon – who really is a harpist – actually plays the instrument. Though not in a conventional way. While crawling up and under the harp, she often touches in a quite delicate way the snares with her hands and feet. She uses the resonator as a percussion instrument. The music that results has a wonderful quality, that brings to mind the experiments of John Cage with prepared pianos.

The final scene of the piece unites the musical and the choreographic aspect of the piece in one image. Orhon pushes the footpiece of the instrument against her lap, bends backwards and lifts the huge thing from the ground. Then she starts turning around at an ever faster speed, until the snares of the harp start singing. It is an achievement that is as impressive as it is magical. Pieter T'Jonck

Wieder: 5.-7. Juni Lissabon, Alkantara Festival; 14., 15. Juni Bonn, Biennale [www.aydinteker.com](http://www.aydinteker.com)

