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Mihály Kornis: Hungarian Ring-dance /Körmagyar/

Serious farce in two parts

Characters: 5 men, 5 women

First performed: Víg Theatre

Budapest, 21st January, 1989

The author models present-day Hungarian society with the famous-infamous scheme of Arthur Schnitzler's Ring-dance. The plot is ten sexual acts and their immediate precedents and consequences developing in such a way that one partner of each couple takes part in a following scene together with another person who in turn forms yet another couple with somebody else a scene later and so forth. In the very last scene the ninth man meets the first woman and so the circle is complete.

In the first scene a Gipsy prostitute picks up a soldier on leave in a square in Budapest having the worst reputation of this kind. It is not for money, just for pleasure, however that doesn't stop them in having a dirty row and a fight at the end. In the second scene it is the young soldier who picks up a young charwoman in a disco where she hopes to find "great life". But after the climax they turn away from each other in disgust. The little charwoman never hesitates, though, when in the third scene she is seduced by the careerist "young comrade" harping slogans of reform, improvement, and promising her an apartment which he forgets immediately after the act of love. The "young comrade" expects the elegant young wife of "old comrade" in the fourth scene. He besieges her ardently till the lady, defending her virtue furiously up to that point, practically sweeps him off his feet. The fifth scene is a peaceful act of lovemaking between a married couple, old comrade and his younger darling wife. The husband, a representative of a dated political line, feels his position insecure, he wants to seek consolation and quitness in his wife's arms. Sensuous excitement waits for him in the person of a young sportsgirl whom he manages to seduce after a drunken party. He too, dishes out all kinds of fabulous promises to the girl, who in the seventh scene goes to see a young writer. She hopes that he is powerful enough to be her sugar-daddy and to put her in to the Academy of Drama. The writer eagerly hunting experiences fit for literary material seeks adventure, the girl seeks quick results. So she

gets layed but when the write cools her hopes she rushes off dirtily swearing. The eighth scene sees the young writer in the dressing-room of the talented young actress. Lovemaking is now out of boredom, as a kind of conclusion to a debate of aesthetics. The actress gets more excited, however, when, in the ninth scene, she is visited by a wealthy American bank nobility of Hungarian origin. The millionaire is full of illusions towards his fatherland, he sees the home of uncorrupted human relations, art and literature in this country. He would only like to show his respect to the beautiful and talented young woman. Finally he takes advantage of the actress offering herself, or rather he lets himself be seduced, but after it he's repelled by his former compatriots who would sell everything for dollars. The tenth scene finds the millionaire waking up beside the Gipsy prostitute in New Year's morning. His mouth tastes bitter, all disillusioned, with the possible menace of AIDS hanging above his head.