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Dance in Review

By JACK ANDERSON

Sara Pearson/Patrik Widrig and Company Bessie Schönberg Theater

Large crates dominated the stage when Sara Pearson/Patrik Widrig and Company presented "Do You Remember?" on Wednesday night. Sometimes the crates in this hourlong production, designed by Carlo Adinolfi, were simply solid objects to dance on and around. At other times they symbolized friendly and hostile powers.

Stagehands frequently moved the crates about, bringing them together to form a single huge platform, only to separate them or stand them on end. Each shift of position affected the choreography created by Ms. Pearson with the assistance of Mr. Widrig. Dancers bounced and sprawled on the crates and kept jumping off and over them to a collage of taped music.

Although such sequences were inventive, they occasionally seemed nothing more than examples of the self-consciously clever things bright choreographers can do with props. Then, suddenly, the objects took on new meanings.

These transformations occurred when Marcela Ortiz de Zarate Broughton, a member of the company, began to reminisce about fleeing her native Chile after the military coup there in 1973. She spoke about her philosophically heterogeneous relatives, who included atheists, Communists and Roman Catholics, and about living in exile. As she did so, the crates were no longer just crates.

There were moments when the dancers treated them as shelters or islands of refuge. But without warning, the crates turned into walls to scale and barriers blocking escape. They also came to resemble prison cells. The theatrical ingenuity of "Do You Remember?" ultimately called attention to a whole moral and political world outside the theater.