

# The New York Times

March 29, 2007

DANCE REVIEW | PERFORMANCE MIX FESTIVAL

## Sometimes Even Glances Help You Embrace Shape and Space

By JENNIFER DUNNING

Showcases have long been a fact of life in New York dance. The effect tends to be a somewhat haphazard cramming together of artists chosen by audition. But the 21-year-old Performance Mix Festival has always been a showcase of a different sort, reflecting the personal taste of a director, Karen Bernard, who is herself a practicing performance artist.

There were a few misfires on Tuesday night, when the festival opened a weeklong run of six different programs at the Joyce SoHo, but the work grew more interesting as the evening wore on. "Parallel You," a duet from Nichole Canuso's "Faulty Lens," added an expressive context to the preoccupation with shape and space that was dryly evident in Ms. Canuso's opening "T43." In "Parallel You" gestures, small moves and even glances kept the gentle momentum going while initiating fuller, more expansive dancing. In the process a building relationship between lovers (Ms. Canuso and David Brick) was quietly suggested.

On the surface Kelly Hayes's "Wonder (a brand new dance)" was a goofy free-for-all for three women (Ms. Hayes, Katy Orthwein and Storme Sundberg) in bright flouncy dresses. But almost unnoticeably tucked among the bounds, flops and bounces were brief meditative gazes that made "Wonder," set to David Bowie's cheeky "Little Wonder," a much more interesting piece.

Sally Silvers, a veteran of the city's avant-garde dance, was her usual knotty, mysterious self in "Yellin/gg/ravy," a solo set to an equally mysterious text and sound score by Bruce Andrews. Ms. Silvers and her dances would be offputtingly inscrutable but for their buried humor and intense commitment to some inner logic. In contrast Frédéric Gravel's "Gravel Works 1.4" was a duet (for Mr. Gravel and Marilyn St.-Sauveur), composed of best bits from Mr. Gravel's repertory, whose shrugging cuteness invited shrugging audience attention. Mr. Gravel did announce a last-minute change in programming because of a dancer's injury.

Morgan Thorson's "Worst Case (progress)" was a raggedy, vivid mess of a trio (for Ms. Thorson, Karen Sherman and Anna Shogren) that had some of the distinctive grittiness of Ms. Bernard's work, with eerie lighting by Julie Ana Dobo that was a particular pleasure. Five dance videos opened the program, among them Miriam Ginestier's charming "it takes two to tango," a faux-silent film featuring Rosita, an eloquent canine performer.

*The Performance Mix Festival 2007 continues through Sunday at the Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer Street; (212) 334-7479 and el.net/nda.*