

DANCE: CONTRASTING APPROACHES

By JENNIFER DUNNING

A CONCEPTUALIST of sorts and a pure-dance choreographer shared the program last Saturday at the Emanu-El Midtown Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. It should have been a revealing balance. But the dances of both Karen Bernard and Diane Jacobowitz lacked one crucial element: a point of view.

That lack of vision could have been the result of the strong extra-dance elements in the works. In Miss Bernard's silent "9 Thoughts," such scattered props as a paper bag, toy duck, reed floor mat or thermos served as focal points for individual dancer's walks and runs around the stage space. This was a dance about re-placing or manipulating props and bodies, in not terribly interesting ways. In only one section -- a solo in which Charles Richardson, one of the few dancers on the program with any presence, made his way to his prop on all fours, one leg stretching behind him luxuriously as he crawled.

Two things went on in Miss Bernard's very long "Broken Sense." There was Michael Canick's entertaining computer-game bleep music on the one hand, and projections of pastel paintings by Scott Wixon of geometric shapes and squiggles, on the other. Dancers dressed in extremely unbecoming costumes of tights and baggy colored T-shirts wandered across the floor, taking their place centerstage for aimless spasms of solo or ensemble dance that never quite distracted one from the score and slides.

Tom Wachunas's outer-space reverberations provided a sound field for four dancers to flow through in the comfortable cantileverings of Miss Jacobowitz's

"Saturn." The rather similar looking flow of "Purple Tarheart" was interrupted by bits of stutter-dance, a smidgeon of ballroom partnering and one Pilobolus-style jigsaw body bridge. But what claimed the attention most was inventive improvised accompaniment on the guitar, saxophone and clarinet by Robert Harrison and Peter Zajonc . Dance and score met for one satisfying moment when slow, unison stretches were juxtaposed with what sounded like a chain collision of cars. Like "Saturn," this piece ended in middance. One longed, throughout the evening, for just a whiff of development and resolution.

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