

IN PERFORMANCE: DANCE; Glamour Takes a Toll, Especially on the Feet

By JACK ANDERSON

Karen Bernard

Here Arts Center

Karen Bernard donned personalities as well as clothes in the witty program she presented on Wednesday night. Ms. Bernard is a solidly built dancer with a big, round face capable of making every lift of an eyebrow or twitch of her lips comically effective.

In "Runway" she, Nuria Divi and Mary Ann Lacey portrayed models, assuming the sorts of languid, haughty and enticing poses associated with fashion shows. It was followed by "Ya Ya," in which Ms. Divi and Ms. Lacey kept presenting Ms. Bernard with various articles of clothing, which she put on while Richard Olson photographed her. Each change of apparel inspired a new change of expression.

Both dances concerned aspirations toward ideal images of glamour. But moments when Ms. Bernard's body sagged and her character's aching feet made her hobble in her high heels suggested that such ideals may be unattainable. And the facial expressions looked as manufactured as the clothing.

Yet the models who paraded and posed in these dances were in circumstances that perpetually required them to show off. No wonder, then, that "Runway" made my theatergoing companion remark that burlesque shows as well as fashion shows feature runways with bodies on display.

Wearing casual slacks and a sweater in "Western Flannel," Ms. Bernard stood scanning the horizon with firmly planted feet, then crawled on the floor and glanced warily, as if sensing an impending danger. She appeared to be acting out adventures in her own private western or suspense film.

All the performers returned in "Encore," a cheerful kicking dance in which they invited theatergoers to attend a reception afterward. JACK ANDERSON

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A version of this review appears in print on May 22, 2001, on Page E00006 of the National edition with the headline: IN PERFORMANCE: DANCE; Glamour Takes a Toll, Especially on the Feet.