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## Arts & Leisure

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### A Dance That Both Is And Isn't

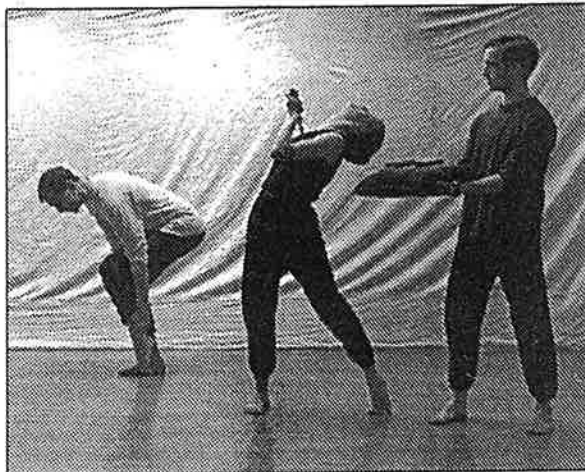
**N**EIL GREENBERG HAS BEEN A fixture in the New York dance community for 15 years, first as a member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, then as a choreographer in his own right. A lanky 35-year-old with a toothy grin and hoop earrings, Mr. Greenberg is also a gay man who learned he was H.I.V. positive in 1987. His older brother, Jon, died of AIDS-related illnesses last July. So did six other close friends in a two-month period.

Some of these personal details are woven into Mr. Greenberg's "Not-

About-AIDS-Dance," a new 45-minute work for five dancers that will have four performances at the Kitchen, beginning on Thursday and running through next Sunday. Not woven, actually, but projected onto the upstage wall.

The title, "Not-About-AIDS-Dance," is a sly swipe at audiences' desire to pigeonhole — or dismiss — certain contemporary work as agitprop. Like the work of many gay artists of his generation, the piece is informed by Mr. Greenberg's firsthand experiences with AIDS. But he also wants it to be seen for what it is: a dance. As such, it is equally about Mr. Greenberg's love of abstract, synchronized movement, rhythm and spatial relationships. At the same time, it reflects somber thematic concerns that have colored all his previous dances — loss, loneliness and vulnerability — yet does so with self-deprecating humor.

"The title," Mr. Greenberg says, "is influenced by my brother. He was an AIDS activist, but he didn't want his death to be about George Bush or Bill Clinton or even AIDS. What is a life? Is it about AIDS? If someone dies of lung cancer, is his life or death about lung cancer? This is a concern for the people in the H.I.V. community and those with AIDS — to keep having a life even if so many hours are consumed with taking care of their health."



Tom Brazil for The New York Times

Neil Greenberg, left, Ellen Barnaby and Christopher Batenhorst—Taking a sly swipe.

In "Not-About-AIDS-Dance" Mr. Greenberg's choreography is far from literal. The dancers are often isolated from one another on stage; there is no partnering. Attempts to get off the ground seem consistently thwarted. At other times, the dancing simply stops.

Mr. Greenberg punctuates movement by projecting statements onto the Kitchen's stage wall. These contain intimate information about himself and his choreographic process as well as odd tidbits about each of the performers — information not usually found in a Playbill. Some are flip: "Sydney music critics said Jo's work on the opera was banal, silly, unnecessary and her dancing weak. The nerve." Others are darker: "This dance is clearly my latest immortality project. I wonder if it will work."

Mr. Greenberg says he is not making a political dance, yet "all work is political. By revealing that I'm H.I.V. positive is to make sure I know it, so that I live my life as best I can. I don't have AIDS today — I'm asymptomatic, and it doesn't look like I'm going to have AIDS anytime soon. I feel it's important to help defuse the stigma of H.I.V. for everyone, that I come out, as it were, and say, 'There isn't a stigma to it. Look at what I'm doing.'"

WILLIAM HARRIS