

DA NCE

Deborah Hay
The Kitchen
April 3 through 6

Demetrius Klein
Dance Company
P.S. 122
March 27 through 30

BY DEBORAH JOWITT

Deborah Hay's concerns and style have altered since her Judson Dance Theater days in the '60s, but her imagination has always been marked by playfulness in seriousness, by a blend of sophistication, thoughtfulness, and seeming naiveté. Her solo *Voila* (1995) was first a dance, then a libretto. In Mexico, Hay looked back on her concerts in her now hometown, Austin, writing down what she had done and the images that colored the performances. She then sent the prose poem to two former students, Grace Mi-He Lee and Scott Heron, as a score to decode and perform with her in New York. Sue Poulin lit all three solos.

The structure has the wit of non sequitur and the controlled wildness of free association. Horse memories figure in it: prancing, galloping, clucking. So does trying out rudimentary Italian and, three times, telling an illogical fragment of dream about a medieval bird hunter. So does firing pistols, and working at making fart noises with one's mouth. The libretto records such events as "Wild jittery crooked fingers/poked upwards at the air."

Our pleasure comes from watching three exceptionally witty performers and absorbing the differences between them. Hay is part earth mother, part transgressive elf. Dressed in a peach-colored brocade tunic with a fabric "tail" and a matching peaked helmet (designed by Angeles Romero), she vaguely resembles both hunter and bird. Now quiet, now robust, now falling to pieces, she gives every sound, every movement its own unique weight, as if each were a magical discovery to be savored.

Ride 'Em

Lee creates more of a scenario for herself, influenced by the horse and gun references. She wears chaps, a vest, and a cowboy hat (by Lee and Samantha Hill); five sheepskin rugs lie in a semicircle. A bell that Hay carefully rings now sounds when Lee knocks it in the course of a wild gallop. Her long wait upstage, back to us, becomes a peering into distances, slightly bow-legged. She follows the prescribed *uno* with a *due* and an earnestly nutty little lesson in math. But the libretto resists realism, and Lee, in her own charming way, is as mysterious as Hay.

Heron, a convulsive comedian, invests everything with fierce energy; lifting something "vague and non-imagined," he becomes a grimacing weight lifter. Strapped to his back is a pink stuffed bunny in a baby carrier. Daisies rim his pants and shirt. He wears two balloons on his stocking cap; his silhouette on the back wall during the fart sequence looks like Mickey Mouse. Perhaps to go with his incisive, spiky legs and occasional ballet stances, Poulin gives him the most bravura light

changes, and he performs in a corral of fluorescent trails.

A lot to think about: the relation of dance to words written about it, the transmission of material from one sensibility to another. A lot to relish.



TOM BRAZIL

Deborah Hay, hunter and prey, at the Kitchen

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