

TO: *Willy*
FROM: *Stephen*

Dark Corners

Sally Silvers & Dancers

The Kitchen
June 12 through 16

Eduardo Alegria
& Paz Tanjuaquin
St. Mark's Church
June 7 through 9

BY DEBORAH JOWITT

Sally Silvers dancing brings to mind photos and film clips of German dancer Valiska Gert, who in the 1920s impressed audiences with a style they found "bizarre" or "eccentric." Silvers's strangeness is less pantomimic and less self-conscious than Gert; it can be soft, even lyrical, but her chin may tilt in a direction that seems opposed to the path she's traveling, a limb may fly askew, feet become clumsy, a curious yet mindless gesture follow a more dance-y movement without breaking the flow of a phrase. My mind's eye usually conjures her up exploding from a crouch into some sweetly gawky bit of acrobatics or making her limbs wander in diverse and unaddressed directions.

She's the unparalleled executor of her own choreography; her solos are gems—smart, often poignant. But her appetite for unusual moves unusually juxtaposed informs her group work as well. In the new, full-length *Pandora's Cake Stain*, her fastidiously formal approach to her material creates a delicious tension with the strange goings-on (three women drop into a sit with their legs wide apart, then each, in unison, grabs one leg and plunks it a little further from the other). And her choreography isn't a matter of gestures; it's full of fast, wisy footwork as well as sculptural tangles and sudden stops.

In *Pandora's Cake Stain*, she assembles 10 all-star dancers and sends them ricocheting through a fractured scenario inspired by Alban Berg's *Lulu*. Jennifer Tipton provides redly dramatic lighting, and Bruce Andrews live-mixes a plum cake of a score that includes bits of *Lulu*, old songs (Marlene Dietrich's voice crackles into "Falling in Love Again" in German), and a variety of odd, corrosive sounds.

People unfamiliar with the plot of *Lulu* or the Frank Wedekind play, *Pandora's Box*, on which it's based might not have the pleasures—or the questions—of those in the know. Of course, they'd appreciate Silvers's subtle but pervasive sense of period atmosphere and strange, dark drama, the kinky moves, and the fascinating dancing. There's a recurring foursome, wearing what look like long oilcloth aprons worn backward (Kate Gyllenhaal, Phillip Karg, Alejandra Martorell, and Alison Salzinger), and an intermittent bevy of women in '20s bathing suits (Kosail-Ja Hwang aka Kumiko Kimoto, Silvers, Laura Staton, and, sometimes, Martorell). The first quarter also dances to Mexican songs, wearing other wacky outfits (Silvers designs her own costumes), and does a wonderful snarled number that might be a parody of Balanchine's mannerly, linked designs. Whose arm goes where and who ducks under what are constantly amazing issues.

Eduardo Alegria stalks Hwang, sourly voluptuous, and Martorell replaces her in his grasp. Lulus everywhere.

When Martorell, in a white party dress, retreats, leaning backward in terrifying light, she's suddenly as distorted as an image from *The Cabinet of*

like a bereft pet, staring up in darkness. A little more clarity vealing plot might enhance it and not harm the complexity vers's vision. Still, for a first full work, it's some accomplishment



She's a Lulu: Sally Silvers in her *Pandora's Cake Stain* at The Kitchen.

Roles fly around. Now it's Silvers who's the heroine; Sean Curran, dancing with intricate and maniacal jerkiness, grapples with her as if she were a cumbersome burden. Now Staton, in a diamond-patterned dress like Silvers's, plays model to David Neumann's somewhat brutal painter.

Dr. Caligari. Moments like this, Silvers's solos, and various duets radiate lurid drama. So does the end, when Mark Robison, turned Jack the Ripper, slowly, brutally lays out the women one by one. Silvers scrambles among the corpses, dragging one to a decent position, climbing on another

Eduardo/interesting in Silvers's work seems always to be recognizable things in context: wildly eccentric in his own nutty piece altogether. I found some manic splurged film clips together surrealism that goes down ice cream. Lord only what it means.

This much is clear: Al Martorell and Nixon Beh two adorable innocents, I "Kissing Cousins," who house or wander awkward about, clinging to each other in a Latin version of "and Gretel." Then there's as Lucy, wearing heels short, rocky dress. A I (Patricia Davila) go a book with a gun inside. he'll eat it. Instead he sniffs, who seem to enjoy ring him like big bugs be taching themselves to him.

Add occasional pink sudden blasts of music, noises, birdsong, the so seriously damaged doves, and the gun, fired. And amid a d flashing red lights, the "Don't shoot!"

This thoroughly campiness was paired, somewhat advisedly, with two quiet, lyrical by Paz Tanjuaquin. Tanjuaquin (mer student of mine) is a love mover, with the deftness in a that certain small, slender work Alegria's flamboyant then
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Training Wheels

Educators Produce
Dazzling Dance
and Dancers

BY ELIZABETH
ZIMMER

If I were a doctor, they'd recite their symptoms. Since I write about dancing, they seek recommendations and accolades. When they prod I often draw a blank, but lately the list rameth over, mostly with the work of dance educators. Whether training dance aspirants or choreographing for themselves, men and women invested in the next generation are definitely reaping rewards.

"Masters in Performance Breaking the Age Barrier," the gala concert at this year's American Dance Guild conference at NYU on June 8, felt like a string of firecrackers, one pop hit after another, fabulous women in glamorous red dresses, venerable gentle-

men, mysterious crones—and hardly a one under the age of 60. Of a dozen works on the program, perhaps the most startling was *Willie's Lulus Sing the Blues*, Carmen de Lavallade and Geoffrey Holder's plaint giving voice and tude to the women in Shakespeare's plays, the famous speeches, and their subtexes, rendered in the cadences of diva de Lavallade's black America. The

lesson of the performance (co-ed by Tina Crull, Barry Fische committee of ADG stalwarts) seem to be that mature dancers never die; they ripen into actors tresses able to tickle and move ones more profoundly than dance athletes ever do. Other st on this program: my colleague cal Jowitz, who chronicled th tion of her long career; gently ing the mannerisms of various; and raising enthusiastic howls I dience members whose tennis field roughly parallels hers; Bull, a very funny musician-dancer-turned-professor-turned
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