

# Newsday

NEW YORK CITY

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## DANCE REVIEW

# The goddess Blondie, head over heels for Achilles

### THE SHOW (ACHILLES

**HEELS).** Choreographed by Richard Move. With Deborah Harry. Produced by the Baryshnikov Dance Foundation. Through Saturday at The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St., Manhattan. Tickets \$20. Call 212-255-5793 or visit [www.thekitchen.org](http://www.thekitchen.org). Seen Thursday.

### BY APOLLINAIRE SCHERR

SPECIAL TO NEWSDAY

In Richard Move's enchanting "The Show (Achilles Heels)," Deborah Harry plays Athena and a game-show host. But it's as herself, a real-life goddess of celebrity, that the Blondie star most reveals our hero, Achilles.

"Beautiful creature," she sings incandescently as her comrade-in-arms (and -face and -legs) makes his entrance through a slit in the folding screens that divide the stage. In Homer, the demigod Achilles is legendary for what he does: kill and kill. War is his "wild joy." Here, he is celebrated for what he is: buffed, beautiful and so self-regarding you want to smack him.

Harry may be 60, but her Tina Turner-esque legs and masklike face signal her immunity to time. She gets to remain the same forever, while Achilles will suffer for his vanity. That's the difference between the goddess and the man (young Rasta Thomas in the role originated by Mikhail Baryshnikov in 2002).

Richard Move has a thing for celebrity. In the sweetly hilarious Martha Graham impersonations he has performed for the past decade, he honors the grand dame posing in Blackglama mink as much as the visionary dancer plunging into "Night Journey." But "The Show" is not a ditzzy exultation of celebrity. It's not a stolid indictment, either. It understands legend in contemporary terms, as fame. Achilles' life story, like Harry's, is public knowledge. We know the drill: He has a flaw and it will kill him.

Liberated from laying out the story, "The Show" unfolds as a dream pageant, ferried along by Harry's high, searing voice and a score by experimental rocker Arto Lindsay that miraculously makes music from noise. With another suite of Pilar Limosner's surprising,



PHOTO BY FRANK THOMPSON

### Katherine Crockett in "The Show (Achilles Heels)"

evocative costumes for each new scene, the dance migrates from touching to ridiculous, tacky to beautiful, campy to tragic.

In the best moments, these

opposites merge. The news that Achilles' lover Patroclus has been slaughtered takes the form of dialogue snatched from a 1950s Hollywood epic. The dancers step like marionettes,

opening and closing their mouths while a voice stiffly announces, "Pat-ro-clus. Is. Dead." Pause. Another wooden voice: "Get. Me. My. Armor." The scene repeats three times, which is not only funny but terrible, capturing the stutter of non-recognition that overtakes a person when the worst thing possible has happened.

There is glorious dancing, a compelling hybrid of Merce Cunningham's sharp directional shifts in the legs and Graham's hieratic urgency in the arms. All eight dancers move with an unapologetic virtuosity rare in downtown theaters lately.

For the most tender moment — and the whole evening has a tender air — Achilles and Patroclus forgo modern dance for a slow waltz of accumulating passion as fragrant and understated as Rogers and Astaire.

When the lights came up on opening night, even the reliably down-Kitchen crowd let loose a few cheers.

### More entertainment

A review of the documentary film "Following Sean."

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