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\$1 beyond the greater New York metropolitan



Tom Brazil

Marcelo Coutinho, left, Dean Moss and Kacie Chang at the Kitchen.

## DANCE REVIEW

### *Shadowy Half-Lives Cavort With the Ghosts of Swing*

By JENNIFER DUNNING

Ghosts from several worlds and times inhabit Dean Moss's new "Spooky Action at a Distance," performed on Wednesday night at the Kitchen. Most immediate are the ghosts embodied by Mr. Moss and his dancers, Kacie Chang and Marcelo Coutinho. Fred Astaire is seen as clearly, on a television monitor, putting on blackface for his "shadow" dance with Bill (Bojangles) Robinson in "Swing Time," an inspiration for the piece.

The next layer of ghosts includes a large silver creature, dressed in a stiff black net suit, that hangs over the shadowy half-lives unfolding below. In the furthest reaches of this universe are film images of dancers projected on the black back wall, as insubstantial as wisps of smoke. Crowding in around them are wisps of another sort: bits of 1930's-era popular music and music by African composers, and excerpts from the writings of Noam Chomsky, Richard Feynman and David Ruelle, some of

them about quantum physics.

"Spooky Action at a Distance" is probably not for those who like dance with a strong center. Mr. Moss's images fly off like sparks from a non-existent torch, creating a moment's glimpse of the perimeter.

Mr. Moss is also not interested in delivering gut-wrenchingly plain messages about society. Instead, the black dancer and choreographer puts on the black suit and slips in and out of a solo that draws on the kind of eccentric capering that came to represent slave dancing and a generation of black performers in Hollywood film, including stars like Robinson.

"Tale Telling Telling," a 1997 solo choreographed and performed by Mr. Moss to music by Kevin Volans, is less subtle but just as ghostly. Its central image, of a black man in a dark suit that becomes dusty with white chalk powder, is powerful.

David Fritz designed the lighting for the program. The stylishly insubstantial costumes for "Spooky Action at a Distance" were by Gia Grosso and Leah Chalfen.