

THE KITCHEN

VIDEO

MUSIC

DANCE

PERFORMANCE FILM

512 West 19th St. (Btwn 10th & 11th Aves) New York, NY 10011

Reservations: 255-5793

The New York Times

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NEW YORK, MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1989

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Reviews/**Dance**

Ordinary People in Everyday Doings

By JACK ANDERSON

Blondell Cummings made meaningful dances out of the minutiae of human behavior in her program on Friday night at the Kitchen.

Looking weary in a scene from "For J. B.," a work in progress, she washed clothes and hung them on a line. Yet, as she did this, she felt the urge to transcend her surroundings and dance. The title referred to Josephine Baker, the St. Louis-born dancer and singer who became the toast of Paris in the 1920's and 30's. One could easily believe that the woman Ms. Cummings portrayed would have such a triumphant career.

The solo displayed Ms. Cummings's remarkable concentration. So did "3B49," which she danced with Tom Thayer, another performer with a fine stage presence. To music by Carl Stone and Michael Reisman and recorded interviews with taxi drivers, Mr. Thayer mimed driving a cab. Ms. Cummings, one of his passengers, was variously belligerent, tender, mocking and hysterical in a display of virtuosity that also made sharp comments on urban life.

Excerpts from "Relationships: Good and Not So Good" examined social situations, pleasant and unpleasant. Mr. Thayer was touching as a father calming a squalling baby. Later, he and Ching Gonzalez played handball. Their ball was imaginary. But their increasing competitiveness looked real indeed.

Most of the work was devoted to party scenes for the two men and Giovanna Agostini, Yvonne Essandoh, Susan Milani and Lisa Wheeler. The revels occasionally turned nasty as they accused one another of insensitivity and racism. They also played a game in which they showed off. It was no innocent sport, for the loser of each round was shot.

After the dance, Ms. Cummings apologized because a malfunctioning tape made it impossible to hear all of the score by J. George Cisneros and the text she wrote with Sterling Houston and Dennis Poplin. Nevertheless, this study of social and antisocial acts still looked interesting.

The performance was dedicated to AIDS Awareness Day and included a moment of silence in memory of those in the arts who have died from AIDS.