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Janis Brenner and Dancers at Joyce SoHo

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Dancer/choreographer/vocalist Brenner celebrates her life in the arts and honors those who enriched the world of dance.



Janis Brenner opened a four-date run at Joyce SoHo Thursday evening. The program, entitled **5 Decades**, featured choreography that spanned the decades of Brenner's illustrious career. Meredith Monk created the first piece, "Break", in 1964. Without music, Brenner stretches and bounces with a sense of clarity that life is made of self-contained choices both big and small. The "breaks" of car noises sound like the world disrupting the intimate process of thought within the isolated space.

"Figura" is a beautiful piece that features the excellent **Aaron Selissen** and 2008 Julliard graduate **Sumaya Jackson**. The Limon-inspired

choreography from Murray Louis is tropical both in music and movement. Jackson's youthful grace is simply lovely.

"Guilt" is performed in a closet, pulling the audience into this small area of claustrophobia and paranoia. Dancer **Kyla Barkin**'s eyes pierce the entire room with their intensity adding even more power to an already complex piece. Marianne Faithfull's gritty voice is like icing on this crazy cake.

Watching "A Matter of Time" was somewhat reminiscent of the Harold Pinter play *Betrayal*- the many twists and turns of unfulfilled love damaging the rejected. All four dancers- Barkin, **Moo Kim**, Selissen and **Pam Wagner**- add pure angst, frustration and longing to the work.



JB & D premiered "Dancing in Absentia", a new piece dedicated to the many dancers lost to the AIDS epidemic. Everything about this dance is haunting, from the vocal styling of Brenner and **Michelle Rosen**, the sculpted movement, and the photographs of the artists the community has lost over the years to the deadly disease. Seeing the images of those beautiful dancers- among them **Ulysses Dove**, **Robert Joffrey**, **Rodolf Nureyev**, **Michael Bennett**, **Arnie Zane** and **Alvin Ailey**-so alive with

the joy of being reminds all of us how devastating the losses were to this world.

Janis Brenner once again succeeded in sharing her precision of artistry. Enjoying her work next to the earlier pioneers made it clear that Brenner is quite deserving of her place in modern dance history.

The after performance reception was hosted by Dancers Responding to AIDS, a program of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. The organization strives to support those living the HIV/AIDS and other serious illnesses through social services.

