

DANCE REVIEW | JANIS BRENNER & GUESTS: A 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

# A Night, Live and Filmed, of Retrospection, Reunion and Birthday Cake

By ROSLYN SULCAS  
Published: February 3, 2007

“Please, would you take your seats,” said the exasperated [Danspace Project](#) official for the third time as the intermission at Thursday’s opening night performance of “Janis Brenner & Guests: A 25th Anniversary Celebration,” threatened to extend indefinitely.



Tom Brazil

Janis Brenner dancing “Solo for Janis,” which Richard Siegal created for her, at a 25th-anniversary celebration at Danspace Project on Thursday.

A revival of the second movement of Murray Louis’s “Porcelain Dialogues” had just been performed by Ms.

Brenner and other former dancers from the Murray Louis Dance Company. Mr. Louis had been presented with a birthday cake to celebrate his 80th year. Tribute had been paid to Danial Shapiro, a former Louis dancer who died last year. Then the lights went up, and another performance of a sort took place as the dancers, still in their white sequined costumes, excitedly rediscovered former colleagues in the audience.

The evening had started with a premiere of sorts by Ms. Brenner and Lindsey Dietz Marchant: “Lake,” a “live” version of a dance film made last year by Ms. Brenner and

Marisela La Grave. There’s an onstage couple in front of a film of themselves sleeping beside a lake. Then they disappear from the film, and Ms. Dietz Marchant performs a solo that is somewhat formulaic in its high-flung-legs evocation of inner turmoil.

Meredith Monk, on film, was in the “Guest Work” slot (Michael Moschen, Theo Bleckmann and Richard Siegal are scheduled for subsequent performances) in two sections from a 1980 concert. Ms. Brenner, who has performed with the Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble since 1990, followed with a beautiful rendition of Ms. Monk’s “Wa-lie-o-oh.”

Ms. Brenner danced too — along with Michael Blake, Betsy Fisher, Peter Kyle, Sara Pearson and Robert Small — in the lovely, gentle sextet from “Porcelain Dialogues” set to extracts from [Tchaikovsky’s](#) Quartet in D. It was given additional resonance by the quietly emotional performances of the older dancers.

Also on the program were three solos, two (“Shun-Woa” and “Contents May Have Shifted ...”) by Ms. Brenner, and one, “Solo for Janis,” by Mr. Siegal, a former company member, who makes brilliant and poignant use of Ms. Brenner’s physical wit, comic timing and vocal abilities.

E-MAIL

PRINT

SAVE

SHARE

ARTICLE TOOLS

SPONSORED BY

A FILM BY MIRA NAIR

GILBERT & SULLIVAN'S  
THE  
PIRATES  
of  
PENZANCE

16 PERFS ONLY!  
SAVE 25%  
nycopera.com  
Enter code  
NYTDS  
Call (212) 721-6500  
or go to NY State  
Theater Box Office  
NEW YORK CITY OPERA

### MOST POPULAR

E-MAILED BLOGGED SEARCHED

1. Darwin's God
2. Without Health Benefits, a Good Life Turns Fragile
3. English, Irish, Scots: They're All One, Genes Suggest
4. Oil Innovations Pump New Life Into Old Wells
5. Mortgage Crisis Spirals, and Casualties Mount
6. Choice Tables | London: Where Indian Cuisine Reaches for the Stars
7. Time Change a 'Mini-Y2K' in Tech Terms
8. In Guatemala, Officers' Killings Echo Dirty War
9. Editorial: The Must-Do List
10. Paul Krugman: Valor and Squalor

Go to Complete List »



That piece deserves to be seen more widely, as does Ms. Brenner's "A 'Peace' for Women," set to [Steve Reich](#)'s choral "Proverb." A couple engaged in the rites of seduction are understatedly juxtaposed against two consecutive trios, moving through beautifully crafted, interwoven moments of fluid motion and stillness. Clad in white, dancing with fervor, they looked like angels in the church.

Performances continue through tomorrow night at Danspace Project, St. Mark's Church, 131 East 10th Street, East Village; (212) 674-8194; [danspaceproject.org](http://danspaceproject.org).