

18 weekend

**Hot Buttered Soul**

Come get the funk out with Isaac Hayes, the artist formerly known as Chef, as he gets his groove on this weekend. Just don't ask to see his chocolate salty balls ... Saturday, 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. B.B. King Blues Club & Grill, 237 W. 42 St., 212-997-4144, \$40 advance, \$45 DOE. **METRO**

# Tribute band

## Janis Brenner respects her elders

ELIZABETH ZIMMER

elizabeth.zimmer@metro.us



**PROFILE.** Some young choreographers seem to appear out of nowhere. Others train for years with established artists, learning technique and style and basic principles, their every move an homage to history.

Janis Brenner belongs to the second category. A gamine with short dark hair, she's celebrating 25 years as a choreographer by honoring her teachers, modern masters Murray Louis, Alwin Nikolais and Meredith Monk. Her four-night run at Danspace Project acknowledges the influences that have shaped her life and art. She'll perform in at least two pieces nightly, joined by guest artists such as singer-composer Theo Bleckmann and juggler Michael Moschen.

A native of Long Island, Brenner trained from the age of five. She went to

Adelphi where Phyllis Lamhut was teaching improvisation, and studied the techniques of Nikolais, Louis and Lamhut five days a week for three years. "I had to study with

these people," she says. "So I left school, and in 1977, I got into Louis' company. I was also singing, in folk groups, in a rock band." She stayed with Louis until late 1984.

"What drew me to Murray was the joy I saw in the dancing — a total investment in the kinetics of moving, the speed, the lightness, the spontaneity, the wit, the beauty. He used many different kinds of music, from Brubeck to Tchaikovsky to electronic Nikolais scores; each dance found its own gestalt. I tend to work the same way." Louis, who is 80, plans to attend opening night.

Brenner spent 17 years

with Monk, with whom she still performs. "I figured out that I had to dance first; I could sing later. But 30 years on I'm still dancing, traipsing around the world. I'm in shock." Mitchell Bogard, an Emmy-winning television designer and her husband of 23 years, is her lighting designer.

Each program includes the tragicomic "Solo for Janis," which Richard Siegal created for Brenner in 1997, and the second movement of Louis' 1974



Janis Brenner &amp; Guests

in 13 years; he's coming out of retirement to do this." Sara Pearson, Michael Blake, Betsy Fisher and Peter Kyle also join her.

"Danial Shapiro was the first person I asked when I had the idea of reviewing the work," she remembers. "He was planning to rehearse with us this summer, but he had prostate cancer, and

passed away on Oct. 3. Peter came in to replace him; the performances are a tribute to Danny even as we celebrate Murray."

**Janis Brenner & Guests**  
**Through Sunday**  
**8:30 p.m.**  
**Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church**  
**131 E. 10th St.**  
**212-674-8194**  
**www.danspaceproject.org**

"Porcelain Dialogues," to Tchaikovsky — "the slow part, because we're all in our forties and fifties. Robert Small hasn't been onstage