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Performing Arts: Dance

JANIS BRENNER & GUESTS
February 3, 2007

Smart, good looking and well paced the program by Janis Brenner & Guests takes the audience on a delightful 25th anniversary celebration tour through February 3 at Danspace.

Once a student of Alwin Nikolais and soloist with the Murray Louis Dance Company, Brenner absorbed a clean technique and choreographic style. With a heartfelt salute, the evening skips across Brenner's influences and accomplishments.

The program opens with a new work by Brenner and Lindsey Dietz Marchant "Lake." Dancers magically seem to step out of a projected film of lakeside calm onto the stage. Movements unfold with the languid peace of the watery images.

Two solos, one for Kun-Yang Lin in Shun-Woa (1994) and Katherine Fisher in "Contents May Have Shifted" (2002) challenge the dancers' concentration and dramatic intensity. Both are commanding, with Kun-Yang Lin manipulating swaths of material like a warrior and Fisher charging her movements with seductive power.

And although Brenner's "A 'Peace; For Women" flows and swirls with feminine gusto, "Solo For Janis" by Richard Siegal brings the house down. The solo makes maximum use of Brenner's considerable vocal and comedic abilities exuding a universal quality that captures the psyche of women aging and still cranking it out.

Every night during the season, Brenner invites a different guest. On Friday, juggler, performance artist extraordinaire Michael Moschen sat quietly in the middle of the space demonstrating his juggling discoveries.

Finally, in a bold move, Brenner offers a gorgeous reconstruction of Murray Louis "Porcelain Dialogues" (2nd Movement) with former Louis/Nikolais company members all in the later half of their lives. The unity and camaraderie of this ensemble was rare to behold.