

Marcia B. Siegel reports on Fico Balet, Kinodance, and Elaine Summers.

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Team works

Fico Balet, Kinodance, and Elaine Summers

BY MARCIA B. SIEGEL

Two long duets at Green Street Studios last weekend went in different directions on the sliding scale that determines how many ideas a dance can hold. In the case of Kinodance's *Secret Streams*, very few; Fico Balet's *Conf-Dance* drew from what seemed like an inexhaustible supply. Both pieces applied contemporary spicing to older performance-making strategies. The results were totally different from each other, but both pieces left the audience room for thinking and dreaming.

The Green Street performances were part of the Boston Cyberarts Festival, and *Secret Streams* was a true multi-media synthesis of dancing (Alissa Cardone and Ingrid Schatz), projections (Alla Kovgan), sets (Dedalus Wainwright), lighting (Kathy Couch), costumes (Jodi Buonanno), and sound score (Seth Barger). For about 45 minutes, the women inhabited an environmental mirage: moving bars of light, a curtain of thin lucite tubes, films of dancers in a studio glimpsed through a half-closed door, an invisible hand drawing a line that lengthened and tangled itself into a huge nestlike shape on the back wall.

The dancers moved through these spaces like forest animals on errands of their own, stepping slowly and deliberately or flinging themselves into wild displays and falls, against a fluctuating soundscape of whirring, humming, chirps, thunder, distant bells, and, on Saturday night, real rain. Sometimes they'd be camouflaged among the projected shadows; sometimes they'd be suddenly exposed in patches of bright light.

Aside from providing a creature component to this technosphere, the women's perambulations yielded few clues to the nature of their journey. I thought there was a certain tropism in play between them. Moving independently, at long intervals they marked what might have been the phases in a relationship: side-by-side unison, a foot touching a hand, a series of imperceptibly engineered lifts, and finally a curled-up embryonic shape on the floor. Having achieved this fusion, they got up and walked away in opposite directions.

Cardone and Schatz stretched out time in a way that seems unfamiliar today. Their slow, developmental movement process reminded me of the 1970s, when we all explored ways of releasing mind and body from everyday tensions. In the theater, it makes me antsy now.

The Slovenian duo Goran D. Bogdanovski and Dejan Srhoj are both ballet-trained, but their piece seemed like a postmodern mix of theater games and stand-up comedy, with possibly some Grotowski in the background. For nearly an hour, they enacted a series of skits based on the intimate partnership of two male egos committed to putting on a show. Working out this existential challenge, they let their physical wit take them into outermost absurdity.

They began with a challenge dance. Bogdanovski, the smaller and more agile guy, rapidly twisted himself into pretzel shapes. Srhoj, tall and seemingly gawky, offered semaphore arms and ramrod pivot turns. A face-off over which music to play



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escalated into a series of aggressive poses: Bogdanovski plops into Srhoj's arms in one move. They both turn to the audience with fake grins. They change positions, scramble around, do it all again, faster.

In most of the encounters that followed, the men displayed a macho one-upmanship together with a matter-of-fact dependency and a subtext of sexual attraction. They didn't develop any movement beyond a phrase or two; then they'd stop and start something new. What changed was the length of time between moves. For more than five minutes, they lay on the floor "resting," staring at the audience, changing positions

together and staring, while the audience held still, paralyzed under their gaze.

Srhoj lay on the floor next to a tiny music box. As he slowly cranked out a tune, Bogdanovski stood in place and did a tiny dance that seemed to involve only the sides of his feet. Once in a while, without looking at each other, they'd hold monosyllabic discussions about what to do next. In one inspired burst of lunacy, they put on the music to *Star Wars* and launched into a heroic production number, just the two of them, charging through thick and thin across the cyber frontier.

Sunday night at the Cyclorama, Alissa Cardone directed a reconstruction of Elaine Summers's big early-media production, *Crow's News/Solitary Geography* (1979). Summers, who discussed her work before the performance, pioneered the integration of dance and media, and she's influenced Cardone and many others with her technique of Kinetic Awareness, which she still teaches in New York. *Crow's Nest* was an improvisation for seven dancers moving through a luminous square structure made of six panels, with projected films of trees, rocks, water — a magical latter-day evocation of the Cyclorama's heyday as a spectacular exhibition hall.