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DANCE REVIEW

Making the Video Camera A Full Partner Onstage

By JENNIFER DUNNING

Cathy Weis's multimedia dances often appear to start with play. Some move on to grand themes, but those that don't tend to leave behind a potent memory of rough-edged magic. Two pieces in "Show Me," Ms. Weis's program on Saturday night at the Kitchen, had that magic.

The 1996 "Face to Face" was a duet of sorts performed by Jennifer Monson and a video camera in front of a large screen on a dark stage. Ms. Monson is at first a capering silhouette; then a block of brilliant shifting colors spreads out on the screen into her shadow-body.

Finally, she appropriates the source of that bit of fantasy in an eerily beautiful rolling, rocking duet with a monitor whose screen casts its light over her body and the space about her. Three levels of meaning have been created here, in a piece that suggests much about the ways technology and dance can merge.

Ms. Weis and Scott Heron are dream ballroom dancers of another time in a new new work, "A Bad Spot Hurts Like Mad," set to music by Zeena Parkins with lighting by David Herrigel and Pat Dignan. The camera creates layers of receding trapezoidal rooms on the screen through which Ms. Weis and Mr. Heron move as whole figures or in close-ups of their hands.

The beauty of the images is not that they exist but that they work with the live dancers to evoke a tale told with modern means in Dickensian tones with a comfortable hint or two of de Chirico. Some day, with luck, an enterprising ballet company will hire Ms. Weis to create a similarly rich interactive version of a classic.

Ms. Weis seems to have begun with ideas in her ambitious new "Not So Fast, Kid!," set to music by Frank London and John Todd. The first was to make a piece using dancers in Skopje, Macedonia, performing live with American dancers via



Rahav Segev for The New York Times

Scott Heron in "A Bad Spot Hurts Like Mad" in front of a video image of the hands of Cathy Weis, the work's choreographer.

the Internet. The second idea was to saddle the piece with the theme of growing up globally.

Three ill-fitting components were a result. Fuzzy-edged dancers who might as well have been from Hoboken did nothing much on the screen. Four New York dancers did little more on the stage. And Phil Marden provided a bright counterpart of animated cartoon characters. In another few years Ms. Weis, who has

been working with electronic multimedia dance longer than most, will make something of these techniques. But she hasn't yet.

The evening also included the new "Dunkin' Booth," in which Mr. Heron and Zane Frazer helped audience members dunk Ms. Weis into a dreamy on-screen sea. The program will be repeated tonight through Saturday at the Kitchen, 512 West 19th Street, in Chelsea.