

## Counterpoints (excerpt)

By Deborah Jowitt  
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...It's not often that audience members get to dunk the choreographer into a tank of sharks. Cathy Weis, perched above a large screen tank showing sharks cruising around her projected, patently unreal legs, tries to provoke us enough to get us out of our seats; to accept the balls urged on us by Scott Heron and his sidekick, fifth-grader Zane Frazer; and to hurl them at a target. Hit the target and Weis disappears from her perch, while her image appears on another screen that fills the Kitchen's back wall, swimming amid a froth of bubbles and ripples and her own filmy garment (no sharks in sight).



Weis's show last week featured, typically, technology mixed with funky wit, as if she wanted to belie the complexities of telecommunications and video. Much of the video equipment is on wheelable carts. In the 1996 *Face the Face*, Jennifer Monson not only dances near a camera that throws distorted and rainbow-streaked images of parts of her body on the backdrop; she detaches a monitor and rolls beneath its glow. In Weis's engaging new duet, *A Bad Spot Hurts Like Mad*, the choreographer, onstage in a ruffled blue dress, also appears on the screen, via some magic of feedback, in a series of five diminishing selves. When Heron, in lace cuffs and ruffle-fronted shirt, says, "Helen left me. She has gone back to the '30s," you want to call out, "Farther than that, Buster!" Heron and Weis dance onstage together in deranged ballroom style. He also moves within her giant projected hand or segmented arm, and as she wheels the media cart away, her face is captured on a translucent disk he carries: a cameo for the 21st century.

In Weis's ambitious new piece, *Not So Fast, Kid!*, the media don't blend cohesively. The program tells us that the on-screen dancers shown in jerky computer motion via the Internet are actually performing live in Skopje, Macedonia (at what is, for them, three in the morning). We gather that this "family" has some relation to a cartoon family on the screen (animation design by Phil Marden), and to a "family" before us (Erin Cornell, Frazer, Patricia Hoffbauer, and Ishmael Houston-Jones), and that the strange little tale about a necessary, goading pebble in a shoe has some bearing on what we see (Marden shows us a foot and an aggressive pebble). Various intriguing images materialize, but the work never emerges full-blown from its magical means.