

Food for Thought
Various Artists
Danspace Project
Review by Julia Holland

At last count, over two hundred dance-lovers crowded into Saint Mark's Church, bringing offerings of canned food to benefit food distribution programs. Mark Haim, well known throughout the dance community for his choreography and his teaching, curated Saturday evening's *Food for Thought* at Danspace Project: a line up of 18 choreographers performing works of three minutes or less. One hundred and eighty seconds is hardly enough time to say hello and introduce oneself, and yet these pieces were individual and succinct, providing a representative and entertaining glimpse of each choreographer.

The marathon of young and veteran choreographers was an important gathering for the downtown, modern dance community. It read like a chapter from the dance history books on the development of modern dance since the 1960's, with performances by the venerable Douglas Dunn, Sarah Rudner, and Wendell Beavers and the fresh faces of Brian Brooks and Charlotte Griffin.

Here is the evening in rapid succession: *Cock of the Walk*: The perky duo of Erin Cornell and Miguel Gutierrez shake those hips and cartwheel. The dancing brides in JoAnna Mendl Shaw's *Out of Breath* alternate between grace and clumsy confusion. Wendell Beavers jiggles to Spanish guitar in *freedom from place. i mutantas seras*: Chemecki/Lerner shout typical New York greetings "who the f*** you think you're talking to!" then diabolically kiss, push and choke each other. Male sexual drive leads a haughty elegant ballroom dance awry in Daniel Clifton's *George and Grace*. (Who wants to be humped in the middle of the tango?). Gus Solomons Jr., moving his feet not once, focuses on his sinewy torso, writhing and jerking in *Trunk. 100 Walks 3*: Douglas Dunn and Grazia Della-Terza shake maracas, beat their chests and do triplets. Nicholas Leichter grooves and pops his way through an Angie Stone tune, captivating the audience with his combination of hip-hop, B-boy and African dance. Blandly parodying ballerinas, Kraig Patterson-bopi dons a tutu and trips his way through his performance.

Charlotte Griffin woos the audience with her brilliant tipsy, comical, almost hyperactive rendition of Patsy Cline's "Foolin' Round." She sways back and forth, gives mechanically fast hand signals and finally passes out. The ever-enchanted Doug Varone dances like Benny Goodman's jazz musicians play in *Mr. Al* – pausing to breathe before scating exuberantly across a diagonal and breaking into long playful skips. The pace slows down with Brian Brooks' exquisitely crafted *Wavelength*. In the glow and the buzz of a neon light, Mr. Brooks jumps loosely, like the crests and valleys of a sound wave, his arms emulating the alternating patterns of wavelengths. Sarah Rudner and her look-alike partner Peggy Gould mutter onto stage then quietly swivel in place, tapping their feet in unison.

There you have it – the thrilling performances at *Food for Thought*. The evening had a very celebratory feel, almost like the happy reunion of an annual holiday party. Mark Haim wisely selected the diverse line up of choreographers, bringing several hundred people out to fete the dance community here in New York.