

Review/Dance

# A Brendel And Baker Program

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By JENNIFER DUNNING

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The program of solos and duets presented by Peggy Baker and Janis Brendel on Saturday night at St. Mark's Church was a memorable one, not just for the skills of the two dancers but for the intelligence and taste with which the dances were chosen.

Ms. Baker and Ms. Brendel performed together in two of the evening's strongest dances. In "A Lost World," a premiere, Martita Goshen summoned up female figures in Greek art, possibly on ancient pottery. As depicted by the dancers, these figures were not at all decorative but had all the vigor and mystery of the chants by the Bulgarian State Radio and Television Female Vocal Choir, to which the dance was set. There was both the everyday and the exalted in Ms. Goshen's handsome choreography and the intense performance.

Ms. Baker was a gangling hulk of a child-woman, possibly retarded and certainly tormented, in "The Volpe Sisters," a new work by Doug Varone that was danced without accompaniment. Ms. Brendel was the silent, patient sister, in a portrait of two drab and hopeless lives illuminated — and haunted — by love. A piece that verged for a time on being a near tour de force of performing, the duet made sensitive use of its dancers' very different but complementary qualities.

Ms. Baker is a performer with a shining, expressive innocence and a body that is an astonishing collection of big bones and lithe muscles. Annabelle Gamson made inspired use of all that in "Accident," set to a dark score by Francis Poulenc, in which a life seems to be relived in the moments right after an accident. And "The Windows," an opening solo choreographed by Christopher House to churning music by Philip Glass, was a poetic introduction to Ms. Baker's gifts.