

Baker's full artistry on display

BY SUSAN WALKER
ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

An evening of dance from Peggy Baker is anything but a solo act.

Many talents have been orchestrated in the performance Baker gives through Saturday evening at the Betty Oliphant Theatre on Jarvis St.

A superb director of her own artistry, Baker has built a show that displays the breadth of her talent. In *Inner Enchantments*, a dance created for her by New York choreographer/dancer Molissa Fenley, set to music by Philip Glass, Baker spans the wide, empty stage in an animated work expressing the pure joy of dance. Sometimes allegro, sometimes almost poised in stillness, she traces balletic lines so vivid they seem to follow her like the lights caught in time-lapse photography.

Molissa Fenley's latest work for Baker, *Savanna*, takes her onto a quieter plane, enhanced by the lighting of Marc Parent. Just as the rapid changes of *Inner Enchantments* plays against the subtle variations of Glass' music, the steadier patterns of *Savanna* are heightened by Peter Garland's lively piano piece *Walk In Beauty*. Fenley's choreography and Angela Wendt's simple athletic costume emphasize Baker's strength and animalistic qualities.

Baker performs two of her own pieces with pianist Andrew Burashko. In *A Landscape*, like the John Cage composition it is named for, is a minimalist work.

ALMOST PURE FORM

Costumed in Jane Townsend's intricately webbed leotard, Baker dances in a circle of light, side by side with the piano, as if she and Burashko were performing a duet. The circle is formed by sculptures by Kurt Swinghammer, suggesting a sacred place. Scarcely moving from one spot, Baker does a gestural dance of organic growth, casting a huge shadow against the backdrop. From almost pure form, Baker steps into the character of Ophelia in *Why The Brook Wept*. Cage composed the music for a 1946 dance by Jean Erdman, but Baker has made it her own, as much acted as danced. She passes through a full spectrum of moods, from languor to frenzy. When Burashko closes the piano and leaves her fallen figure on the stage, it is the spirit leaving the body.