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## Dance Review: 3 works, 1 terrific dancer

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DANCE WRITER

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the heart moves

★★★

Peggy Baker Dance  
Projects. Until Sunday at  
Betty Oliphant Theatre,  
404 Jarvis St.  
**416-504-7529**

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Peggy Baker's legendary long arms make a good metaphor for her range as a dancer: there's nothing that exceeds her grasp. The parts she so thoroughly commands in her show, *the heart moves*, are so divergent in their demands she might be three different women.

In a new solo she created for herself, *Krishna's Mouth*, Baker narrates the story of Lord Krishna as a baby crawling in the garden, grabbing a "clot of earth" and stuffing it into his mouth. When his mother comes to remove the dirt she looks into the infant's mouth and sees the entire universe. Speaking as she dances, Baker expands the meaning of the story with sweeping movements and hints of Indian dance in her deep pliés and extended hand gestures. It's a dance of revelation, where the soloist, performing to Karen Tanaka's love-filled *Song of Songs*, seems to be pushing away the darkness, embedding the story in our minds in a kinetic form.

*Non Coupable* — meaning not guilty — is a dance requiring incredible guts. Courtney Love might balk at something like this. Paul-André Fortier made it for Susan Macpherson in 1983 and Baker has been doing it since 1990. The blindfolded dancer, wrapped in a tattered garment, drags two large rocks by thick cords coiled around her arms. The rocks are the weight of her guilt, all that represses her. She grabs at herself, she pushes a rock between her legs, she suckles one boulder and finally frees herself of them, awkwardly achieving freedom of sexual expression. Baker's performance is scarily raw and self-exposing.

Partnered with New York dancer Larry Hahn, Baker dances Doug Varone's *In Thine Eyes* in yet another guise. Accompanied by the voices of a man and a woman singing Michael Nyman's *Noise, Sounds and Sweet Airs*, the dancers begin in separate circles of light. The man at first appears to be imagining or overhearing his partner, who performs upstage, gesticulating as if speaking.

Their movements are quite mechanistic, their bodies moving together to discover how the parts fit together. They seem to be running through the history of their relationship, a conversation that takes on different moods as the lighting shifts. When finally they dance together, overlapping their hands, or tenderly grasping each other, they arrive at a moment of complete harmony that is joyous to behold.