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## DANCE

### **Purification, Protection, Emotional Support and Axes**

*Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble  
Dia Center for the Arts*

Judy Dworin called her program "She Speaks Her Peace." And peace did prevail when the Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble danced on Thursday night in SoHo. But first came savage wit and righteous anger.

The troupe, from Hartford, Conn., emphasized works about personal and social problems. Women brandishing axes spoke of unhappy love affairs in "Axe Dance." When a man ventured among them, they drove him off with cackling laughter. In "Tub," a solo, Sarah Franklin portrayed a vulnerable-looking woman who sank into a bathtub in what appeared to be a purification rite.

"My Body, My Body" depicted women struggling to escape the sheets in which they were bound. Their rebellion also parodied Martha Graham's "Lamentation," in which Graham shrouded herself in fabric.

Dancers huddled beneath umbrellas for protection in "When the Rains Came," a premiere to a recorded text about the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Although the choreography, which Ms. Dworin created in collaboration with the cast, was never inappropriate, it was less poignant than the words.

Movement spoke more eloquently, in another collaboratively devised premiere, "Ascending," which showed women turning to one another for emotional support. "Becoming," a dance of aspiration, concluded the evening peacefully, but not complacently.

Throughout her program, Ms. Dworin introduced strong choreographic images and then kept repeating them with a few variations. Fortunately, her pieces were brief enough to keep the repetitions from becoming excessive. Ms. Dworin both castigated folly and comforted the afflicted.

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