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DANCE REVIEW

Hits and misses at choreographers' showcase

In her attempts at "defining dance" — accompanied by requisite boundary-pushing — Arianne MacBean, producer of the third annual Dance Moving Forward Festival, presented an evening of seven emerging choreographers at Highways Performance Space on Friday.

What resulted tended to tip the scales more toward self-indulgence and pretentiousness than to a spate of awesome, breakthrough works.

Happily, however, the revelations of Banafsheh Sayyad, in her solo "Return," helped right things. Sayyad, a font of exquisite perpetual motion, is a temple frieze come to life, a one-

woman whirling dervish, trance spinning to a glorious percussive track as she beckons us into her exotic world.

Also mystically bent: Hanh Nguyen's "Study the Flow of Chi," a duet with the choreographer and Sarandon Cassidy set to a soundtrack of rain. Serene and graceful, Nguyen offered lunges and tumbling moves, as well as power in stillness. The piece would have fared better as a solo, however, and without Cassidy's spoken words.

Monica Favand's octet "Howl" bristled with primeval longings and intoxicating leaps, with Arlys Alford adding live vocals to an already breathy

soundtrack.

Eryn Schon's brave work "Moving On" featured a nearly immobile Erica Rebollar and Evaldas Kvaraciyus facing front, spoon-like, in Stanley and Blanche mode.

The evening's misses: Carmela Hermann's "Turning My Head to the Left," with vapid text and moves; Deborah Cohen's quasi-pantomimed museum riff "Philosophical Toys: The Docent"; and Ilaan Egeland's "What's in Between," a fluid quintet, lamentably saddled with unnecessary speaking.

Even envelope-pushing can benefit from smart editing.

— VICTORIA LOOSELEAF

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