

Downstairs at P.S. 122 for two weekends in October, Mimi Goese turned what was probably once a kindergarten playroom into a chamber of exquisitely wrought terror. Upstairs, for one overlapping weekend, Scott Heron and his Homosexuals on Parade Dance Company frolicked and musicked like some funky angels.

Neither of these performing artists fits the bill a cranky but witty friend of my uses to define many self-styled performance artists: the unattractive, the untrained, and the untalented. Both Goese and Heron are handsome and theatrical individuals. Goese is willowy and supple, statuesque to a fine degree, with a gently colorful voice, a disarmingly direct rapport with an audience, and a prettily featured big, open face. Heron is taut and lean; his unselfconscious elegance and innate showmanship are concentrated in a clearly defined head and face of long planes, soft angles and finely drawn features that make one think of a masterfully carved marionette.

Still, whatever interest these two artists might bring to any performance by their mere presence, they cannot create theater pieces simply by showing up. Both recently devised works of rich complexity. However succinctly each might be seen—Goese's a kind of hell, Heron's a kind of nirvana—neither remained one-dimensional.

Heron's *An Evening of Hope and Other Dances* was divided into three segments: "Lecture: The Dance of Positions," "Hope: A dance in 9 Parts," and "Magic & Rope." The H.O.P. dancers included John Jasperse (replacing Jenny Bass), Cathay Che, and Keith Godbout. The event took the form of a variety show, with Heron himself dominating the proceedings.

Wearing different hats or wigs, the

**NATIVE
NIGHT
OUT**

Dance Review

BY ROBERT GRESKOVIC

Upstairs, Downstairs, and in My Lady's Chamber

- **SEE MORE EVIL** by Mimi Goese at P.S. 122, Oct. 1–11.
- **AN EVENING OF HOPE AND OTHER DANCES** by Scott Heron/Homosexuals on Parade Dance Company at P.S. 122, Oct. 8–11.

grave and slight young man played, by turns, the very vertical dancer—especially when balancing a log-like hat—the testy, argumentative performer—sometimes snarling at an alter-ego on video—and the wry cross-dresser—matter of factly describing the subtle scheme of his drag, all the while daringly and expertly balancing, in and out of his heeled pumps, on a tight rope.

The journey taken by this show was easily dominated by Heron's presence and magically and mysteriously decorated by his wonderfully nonsensical use of props: seltzer empties falling like moths from inside some dresses, a shower of tin cans, and a flower pot spilling green aspic. Less compelling were the moments when Heron was less in charge. Neither the presence nor the performance of his dancers managed to rise above the function of diversion while the maestro changed for his next entrance.

Goese didn't use another soul in *See More Evil* and she dominated it with breathtaking force. Her first title had been "Rollercoaster," and the thrills, terror, and giddiness associated with such

an image were constantly applicable to her newly named venture. From her first sinister appearance to her final, friendly epilogue, Goese held the audience in her thrall by way of a time circuit that had pungent immediacy, startling happenings and ideal proportions.

Ever since *Tin Foil Sandwich* (1987), Goese has shown herself expert at literally and figuratively peeling away layers of appearances and finding amazing depths of mystery and meaning in the process. This time her signature combination of pretty and horrifying ingredients was so keenly arranged, so perfectly choreographed, the forces of light and dark bled into one another mercurially, leaving a brilliantly polished mirror of life.

Goese's rollercoaster sight-seeing tour of "more evil" starts with her as a kind of creepy young man who addresses us while little worms seems to crawl from his mouth. Further episodes, all plainly separated but inherently interconnected, follow. The lithe young woman is a mad, machete-wielding scientist whose experiments emit various iridescences. A sexi-

ly clad cave woman bites off a Barbie's head, gets spewed with green bile, pierces her own skin with bamboo skewers, and sprinkles herself with the contents of a vase of live bugs, as if with talcum powder.

After an intensely nervous-making black-out (during which I was hit by a clump of clammy, wormy stuff), the high priestess of frisson returned as a tottering opera diva who gets reduced to a disheveled pajama party gal whose nervous toying with her hair seems to expose her raw brains.

A collage of word and music plays all along and the eerily beautiful setting Goese herself designed out of a shower curtain, some rat traps, a pile of earth, some broken mirrors and a bouquet of heather adds to the marvels of these mysteries. Jan-Bell Newman's inspired lighting is in happy phase with Goese's aesthetics. I might also mention the lip-sticked kisses, the consuming of simulated rat innards, the smoking of a cigarette, and the diabolically apt portrayal of cocktail chit-chat that take place when Goese is not doing some tango stuff while brandishing a pair of butcher knives or lunging about both artfully and aimless to Massenet.

For a denouement, Goese comes in after a premature exit to the schoolyard, where she plays with a ball, and comes clean, so to speak. Here she's down to multi-pants, T-shirt and baseball cap. She talks to us, at first from a niche in the space that reads like a kid's tree house. Then she's on the floor, reading scraps of paper we've all thrown at her in answer to her questions. I won't say what she asked or what we answered. That, like Mimi Goese's theater, remains intensely and privately between the artist and her public.