

The Show (Achilles Heels)
By Richard Move
The Kitchen
512 West 19th Street
212-255-5793, ext. 11
Through Saturday

Greeks in Jeopardy

Death is serious, but Richard Move is always having fun

BY ELIZABETH ZIMMER

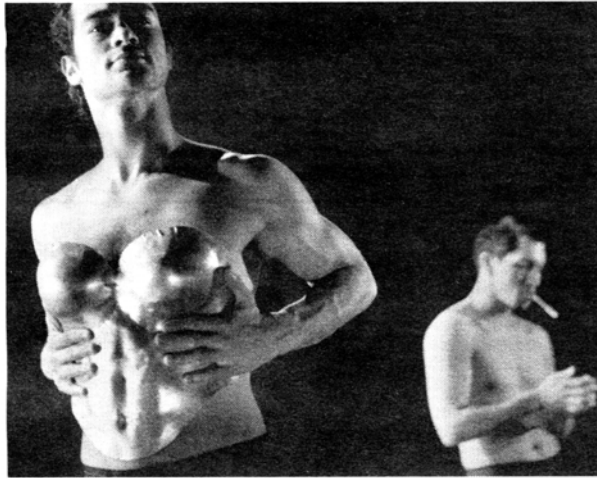
An A-list crowd of downtown glitterati—fashion designers, film actors, and Mikhail Baryshnikov—last Thursday celebrated the New York premiere of Richard Move's *The Show (Achilles Heels)*, a startling contemporary staging of the Greek legend of Achilles and Patroclus.

Move, who's about six foot four and majored in dance at Virginia Commonwealth University, made his reputation channeling Martha Graham in delicious vaudevilles at clubs and theaters worldwide; he's since committed her character to film (in the 2003 *Ghostlight*) and will launch his new ensemble, MoveOpolis,

overlays it with hip-hop, uncovering the gay subtext in Homer's *Iliad* and finding precisely the right gestures and props. He's had most of the uncredited text recorded so the dancers can lip-synch it, singly and in groups: The women channel the male warrior Menelaus and Rasta Thomas, a young ballet phenom who plays the title role, mouths Baryshnikov's voice. (Baryshnikov played Achilles in the original version of the piece, created for his White Oak Dance Project in 2002.) Only Harry is heard live onstage, both in five songs from her recent repertoire and as the Alex Trebek figure in a game show called *That's Greek to Me*. Arto Lindsay's sound score rumbles, chirps, and oscillates, evoking pinball machines and video games. Nicole Eisenman provides a pair of huge folding screens that back up the performance, painted on one side with transfigured warriors and on the other with a variety of grotesques.

Much of the action is proudly fake;

the dancers twist themselves into two-dimensional representations of Greek friezes. The women (Graham dancers Katherine Crockett and Blakeley White-McGuire, Catherine Cabeen of Bill T. Jones's troupe, and Heather Waldon of the Sean Curran Company) fling their legs and wave their arms, or butch up and "talk" as Menelaus, Helen's husband. The male figures (Thomas, Miguel



Julietta Cervantes

Thomas and Anaya as Achilles and Patroclus: Greek love

at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival this summer. His scholarship is always serious, but his presentations wink and camp; at the Graham company gala last month, he wore a different outfit every five minutes.

Perhaps it was his infatuation with Graham and her interpretations of classic Greek stories that led him to the steamy

The male figures seem to be synthesizing Greek sculpture and vintage gay porn.

material he manipulates here. He's off-stage this time—having merely created, directed, and choreographed—but singer Deborah Harry, playing the warrior goddess Athena, changes her clothes for every number, evolving from tatty slut through Pucci-styled soldier to dignified seer over the course of 70 minutes (Pilar Limosner designed the sexy costumes, which cross Grecian motifs with disco flash).

Move infuses a modernist dance environment with the seductive dazzle of the fashion world, sets it in clubland, and

Anaya, Corbin Popp, and Kevin Scarpin) seem to be synthesizing Greek sculpture and vintage gay porn. Crockett's Helen reads as a dissociated trollop, apparently unaware of the chaos she's unleashed in Troy. Achilles and Patroclus (Anaya) flounce and smoke, tango and waltz, and enact a sort of master-slave relationship that becomes all too poignant after Patroclus goes into battle wearing Achilles' red leather armor and is killed when mistaken for his beloved. The actual fighting is represented by startling capoeira and kung fu riffs. By the end, the stage is littered with corpses; the dead are laid out holding fluttering battery-powered doves.

If you're seeking compelling choreography, go someplace else; the dancing here proceeds in fits and starts, and relies for much of its appeal on the bare torsos of the very fit performers. Though *The Show* is not long, it occasionally bogs down in representations of war, carried out as wrestling matches in shadow (Les Dickert designed the lights). But for the apotheosis of over-the-top downtown style, you won't do better than this. Achilles' heels, by the way, are silver stiletto sandals.

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