

Arts & LEISURE

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THE WEEK AHEAD

MAY 3—MAY 9

New York Times critics and reporters preview the week's cultural happenings.

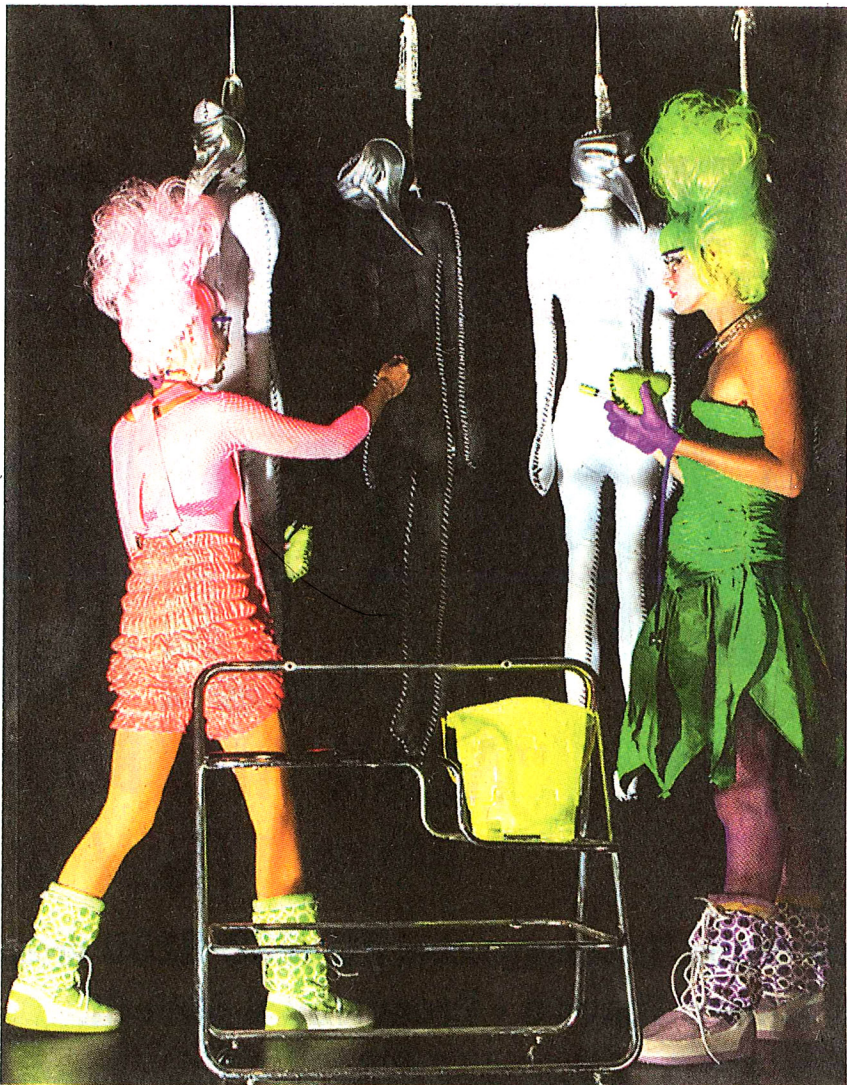
Dance

Roslyn Sulcas

The **LA MAMA MOVES!** festival has quietly been gathering momentum over the last three years, evolving from a somewhat ramshackle collection of work by assorted knowns and unknowns into a much larger ramshackle collection of work by assorted knowns and unknowns. And I mean that in a very good way. The festival has always had something of an improvisatory, seat-of-the-pants quality that seems perfectly in accord with the La MaMa spirit of intrepid artistic exploration. It offers a logistical headache, with multiple events taking place in different theaters on the same night. And the grab bag of choreographers featured on any one program can mean wild variations in quality.

But Nicky Paraiso and Mia Yoo, the founders and master planners of the festival, have an unerring feel for the quirky and the new, and they somehow manage to attract big names on a tiny budget. Most of all the festival is fun, with dance-lovers of all types crowding in to the creaky La MaMa theaters with the optimistic air of those ready to have a good time.

The festival opens on Tuesday with a gala in honor of Deborah Jowitz, the dance critic of *The Village Voice*, and Harvey Lichtenstein, the former long-time director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music and a stalwart champion of the new. A lineup of downtown royalty performs: Douglas Dunn, Molissa Fenley, Gus Solomons Jr., Doug Elkins, Vicky Shick and Jodi Melnick. Go and pay tribute. As for the rest of the festival, which continues until May 31, grab some aspirin and look at the Web site. *La MaMa E.T.C.*, 74A East Fourth Street, East Village, (212) 475-7710, lamama.org; \$15.



THOMAS MACKER

Lauren Brown, left, and Rachel Kolar will perform at La MaMa E.T.C.