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# Come Fly With Me

By DEBORAH JOWITT

**ALOFT IN SPACE.** Pat Graney's *Five/Uneven*, Art Bridgman, Myrna Packer, and Dave Feldman's *Lava Falls*, Sara Pearson's *FishFlyMonkeySwim*, and Susan Murphy and Robert Davidson's *Swing Suite—A Wild Patience and Other Dances*. At Serious Fun!, Alice Tully Hall

Dancers have found a new way to get high," said Elizabeth and her friend Mark, sitting behind me at Alice Tully Hall. Then they told me I could use the statement and there'd be no charge.

I admire its accuracy. The four dances shown on the Serious Fun! festival's "Aloft in Space" program did take place mostly in the air. The stage was at all times festooned with serious equipment: five sets of uneven parallel bars (for Pat Graney's *Five/Uneven*), four hanging knotted ropes with slings at the bottom (Sara Pearson's *FishFlyMonkeySwim*), two small pillars and two flying harnesses with counterweights and human handlers (*Lava Falls* – Art Bridgman/Myrna Packer/Dave Feldman), and an array of trapezes (*Swing Suite—A Wild Patience and Other Dances* by Susan Murphy and Robert Davidson).

Not only that, the metaphorical clout of the activities conjured up heady visions of human daring, winging imagination, love's elation, and stuff like that, while the simple fact of so many dancers so dazzlingly off the ground induced in spectators—and, evidently, in

choreographers and performers—a dizzy, "I'm flying!" rapture.

Pearson's work came closest to having the shape and substance of a real dance—and a wonderful one at that. At the beginning, four of the dancers (Pearson, Patrik Widrig, Mary Sonntag, Rocio Infante) are nestled at the top of their ropes like monkeys sleeping in trees. Bit by bit they descend, hanging out by one arm at times, surveying the ground and the space around them with serious curiosity. (If all the dancers performed as intently as Pearson herself, this opening would really be magical.) The dance builds steadily from small, tidy swinging and sliding to more voluptuous flights. Suddenly four more dancers (Eric Diamond, Susan Hefner, Alberto Del Saz, James Murphy) rush in and climb the ropes, while the first crew holds the ends. Had the dance finished right then, Pearson would have created a sly and enchanting image of a society's evolution and the birth of a new generation (but then, as someone pointed out, those dancers who rehearsed this for three months might have been disgruntled.) Anyway, she didn't stop there. The rest of the dance has lovely moments, but the idea of growing complexity and daring and resourcefulness becomes cloudy, as the mesmerizing swing of bodies, ropes, and music take over the world.