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DANCE | DANCE REVIEW

## Attuned in Rhythm, Whether Together or Apart

Raja Feather Kelly and Tzveta Kassabova Join Forces

By SIOBHAN BURKE FEB. 4, 2015

The split bill can feel like a tired format: One person shows work, then another does, and then we go home. But with “Super We,” the dancers [Raja Feather Kelly](#) and [Tzveta Kassabova](#) really made something of it. In this collaborative evening at St. Mark’s Church, part of Danspace Project’s Dance: Access series, Mr. Kelly and Ms. Kassabova presented four pieces they created on their own, together and with the more seasoned choreographer [Sara Pearson](#). And they put refreshing thought into how the night would unfurl, from simple flourishes, like programs folded into paper airplanes, to hypnotic musical interludes by the composer [Aleksei Stevens](#).

Last Thursday, that care was most evident in the dancing itself, humble yet hyper-aware. Each piece contained echoes of the others — have we seen that pathway, that lunge, that embrace before? — in a way that seemed more intentional than incidental.

Dancegoers may recognize Mr. Kelly from the work of choreographers like Reggie Wilson and David Dorfman. While he’s always striking, it was a pleasure to see him in something of his own design, looking even more acutely attuned to each moment.

The rambling title of his solo — “25 Cats Name SAM and one Blue Pussy, Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth or How Can You Dance When Every 7 Minutes Human Conversation Lapses Into Silence” — didn’t reflect his efficiency as he darted and skulked through a

thick mist of dry ice in blue face paint and a glow-in-the-dark wig. (The piece is the first in a series inspired by Andy Warhol.)

Ms. Kassabova, who rivals Mr. Kelly for length and lankiness of limbs, offered a scrawling meditation, perhaps on loss or letting go, with “Letter (to Ed),” set to Arvo Pärt. Her blue sweater, slipped off at the start and left spooled on the floor, became a kind of shrine that she saluted both directly and obliquely.

The dancers came together for Ms. Pearson’s affecting “Be Still, My Heart,” in which they manage to stay connected despite impulses thrusting them apart, and in the playful title piece, “Super We,” which Mr. Kelly and Ms. Kassabova choreographed together. Here, too, they made concerted efforts to achieve or maintain physical contact. Mr. Kelly composed the score, meshing birdsong and repetitive incantations, à la Laurie Anderson, to provide a rhythmic base for breathless running and flurries of locomotive invention.

Between dances, Mr. Stevens produced waves of electronic sound from the sanctuary’s altar, while Tuce Yasak’s lighting patterns — leafy vines, diamond grids — crawled across the arched ceiling. The evening was not without its awkward transitions and abrupt endings (“Super We,” the piece, could go on for longer), but those didn’t detract from the quiet triumph of friends making something to be shared, with each other and with us.