



Tom Brazil

Ze'Eva Cohen, right, and Jill Sigman in "If Eve Had a Daughter."

DANCE REVIEW

Inspired by Anna Sokolow

By JENNIFER DUNNING

The one great problem of "Female Mythologies," presented by Ze'Eva Cohen on Sunday night at the Dance Project at St. Mark's Church, was that Ms. Cohen was not in every dance.

Ms. Cohen dedicated these portraits of women to the memory of Anna Sokolow, who died last month and with whom Ms. Cohen danced for eight years. Now in her late 50's, Ms. Cohen does not move with the fluidity of a young dancer. But her commitment to the moment and her gutsy approach to physical acting reflect Sokolow's inspiration. And her radiant face is a marvel, a map of tumultuous yet readable emotions.

Her dramatic instincts, perhaps more those of a director and actor than a choreographer, are in evidence in "Negotiations" and "Eve Had a Daughter: Mother's Tongue/I Love You," both created in 1996. A great many serious and funny things go on simultaneously in these depictions of the complex relationships of familiar characters.

"Negotiations," set to faintly Middle Eastern-sounding music by Peter Jones, was inspired by tales of the biblical matriarchs Sarah and Hagar. But Ms. Cohen and the powerful Aleta Hayes might be mother and daughter, lovers or even a woman and her servant in the push and pull of Ms. Cohen's anxiety and Ms.

Hayes's amusing imperturbability.

The women in "If Eve Had a Daughter," danced to traditional Yiddish songs and klezmer music, could only be mother and daughter. Jill Sigman, a choreographer herself and a 15-year student of Ms. Cohen's, is terrific in a subtle portrait of the bobby, resistant adolescent of every mother's nightmare. The two are not so different, of course, discovering one common bond in a hilarious final kitchen scene in which each revels in the unsuspected sensuous core of her personality.

Caryn Heilman looked like a statue from Greek antiquity in "Ariadne," a solo created in 1985 to music by Vangelis with vocals by Irene Papas. But this was a statue — of some minor goddess, perhaps — that had broken loose from its architectural perch and flung itself into flight, all-seeing eyes fixed firmly on the horizon.

"Jephtha's Daughter," a 1998 duet, is set in part to Ms. Cohen's taped reading of a poem by Alicia Ostriker that is sharply emotional in a way the dance is not, unbalancing the choreography somewhat despite strong performances by Regina Neiman and Angharad Davies. In "Women and Veils II," a new group work set to music by Michael Keck and Zakir Hussein, Ms. Cohen delicately withdraws one dancer and then another for solos and duets in a long, handsomely plotted but rather even-paced ritual for a community.