

Dance in Review | Jack Anderson

Lisa Nelson and Cathy Weis

Performance Space 122

Just about anything can dance. Lisa Nelson and Cathy Weis demonstrated that on Thursday night at Performance Space 122. They made television sets dance in their mixed-media work, "An Abondanza In the Air."

Two small sets glowed at the start of the 50-minute piece. There were no images on their screens. The sets simply cast light on an otherwise pitch-dark stage bordered by black curtains.

Then the sets began to dance. They tilted from side to side. They moved in circular patterns and ascended into the air. Common sense may have insisted that someone was holding and manipulating the sets. It soon became apparent that Ms. Nelson and Ms. Weis were doing so. Yet, for the moment, it was pleasant to imagine that the sets had come alive.

Images appeared on their screens, images that occasionally were related to the accompanying taped collage of music and sound effects. Thus, when one heard footsteps, one saw feet walking, and a bird was shown pecking at a tree to rhythmic tap-

pings.

The bodies of Ms. Nelson and Ms. Weis sporadically grew visible, only to recede into darkness. The piece certainly had a dreamlike quality, although it was hard to determine whether the televised images represented the human dancers' dreams or whether the television sets were dreaming of Ms. Nelson and Ms. Weis.

Gradually, movements for human beings became as important as the choreography for the television sets. Ms. Nelson and Ms. Weis stretched out on the floor, then rolled over and embraced. Later, they struggled with the sets as if those objects were contested treasures. A production that initially appeared to involve nothing but multi-media wizardry began to acquire emotional implications. The work might have even greater impact if its creators heightened its dramatic qualities.

But there was no doubt that "An Abondanza in the Air" was an ingenious creation. In its concluding moments, Ms. Nelson and Ms. Weis slowly lowered the television sets face down upon the floor. The gradually fading light suggested the closing of two books of technological adventure stories.