

Amazons....

July 6, 2011 By [Deborah Jowitz](#)



Text from Deborah Jowitz's blog;
photo by Ryutaro Mishima
pictured: Natalie Green

Although I often think about chocolate, I don't think about it when I go to see a performance at the Chocolate Factory in Long Island City—unless, maybe, the dark, unsugared kind comes to mind. No scent of cacao clings to the building's whitewashed brick interior to hint at its former status, and sweetness is only occasionally an attribute of works presented there.

Whenever I ride the #7 train across the East River to the Vernon/Jackson and walk to the place, I'm prepared to be surprised. Will we spectators be guided down a few steps into the basement instead of up the short ladder-like staircase to the main performance space? How will this dance artist and his/her colleagues transform the long, narrow room with two windows at the far end? Anyone who saw RoseAnne Spradlin's *beginning of something* back in May will hardly forget entering to find most of the area taken up by a painted platform about 16 inches above the floor, with a naked woman sitting on the edge of it, quietly plucking a guitar. You had to pass very close to that woman (dancer Rebecca Serrell Cyr) to get to your seats: single rows of chairs surrounding three sides of the platform.

For Spradlin's rousing performances, the place became something akin to a runway for Amazons, or perhaps a site for Bacchantes preparing to pursue their victims. Serrell, Natalie Green, Molly Poerstal, and Rebecca Wender strode and stomped and galloped and leaped about the platform with enough well-organized fervor to turn it into a percussion instrument. I'd never seen anyone cover so much ground by skipping. Disrobing and re-appearing throughout the piece in various extravagantly ideosyncratic outfits by Jennifer Goggans, the women—sometimes coolly determined, sometimes creaturely—could have been dressing according to their dream images of themselves.

Because of the platform, the seating arrangement, and the several mirrors on the walls, You looked at the heroic women with a voyeur's gaze, yet when they came close to the lip of the platform and loomed above you, you could feel not just their power, but a curious, almost touching intimacy.