

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2009

⇒ [Alexandra Beller/Dances at Abrons](#)

The word "overwhelm" comes to mind. At one point in [Alexandra Beller's](#) new *egg*--an imaginatively metaphoric fantasia on her experience of being a new mom--the dancer-choreographer shares the stage with dozens of eggs. Let that stand in for much of what happens in this solo with assistance: It's an impossible, absurd, delicate, dangerous and exhilarating situation. And Beller's performance is just that, too: impossible, absurd, delicate, dangerous and exhilarating. It's also a performance that, for anyone seeing Beller for the first time, will tilt the mind towards the impossible, absurd and so forth. Beller is famously lush, pillowy, curvaceous of physique, quite unlike the stereotypical dancer--especially the female of the species--and I bring this up because this largeness informs so much of what makes her dance theater gracious and distinctive.

There is, simply, *a lot* on offer and of the kind that's rare in contemporary "downtown" dance. The other new piece on her [Abrons Arts Center](#) program--*what comes after happy*--not only takes on the complex topic of the American (and, as shown here, often self-involved and desperate) pursuit of happiness, but it takes it head on through spotlit vignettes and sharply-observed, often wickedly humorous character studies that could have been plucked out of a Broadway show and with performers with big auras, gutsy personalities and the skills that kill. Add to that Beller's free and freeing, lavish and explosive choreographic style. It's an outrageous and quite diverting dish and, although it runs a tad longer than it might, when it finally gets to where it's going, you find yourself in a sweet and gorgeous place. I won't spoil that moment for you--since I hope you'll go and take a look for yourself--but I will guess that Beller's motherly concern extends not just to her own child but to her dancers as well.

[Alexandra Beller/Dances](#) concludes its season with performances tonight and Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 5pm.

[Abrons Arts Center](#)

Henry Street Settlement
466 Grand Street (at Pitt Street)

Posted by Eva YaaAsantewaa at [10:57 AM](#)



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