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'The Money Show' Takes a Wry Look at Dance Economics

By GIA KOURLAS

Dancing doesn't make you rich. Who knew? Well, probably everyone. But such a familiar premise is the focus of "The Money Show" by Dixie FunLee Shulman, a production inspired by a previous sold-out performance at the Joyce SoHo, which left Ms. Shulman \$1,500 in debt. In her new group work, presented Thursday at Dance New Amsterdam, she tries to temper her zeal for activism with shtick.

Of course, the economy of dance is a disgrace. But two and a half hours of banter and bidding doesn't aid the cause.

"The Money Show" is an interactive exercise. Audience members are given \$5 vouchers to bet on dancers' skills (for instance, who can hold an arabesque in relevé the longest?). Following the format of "Let's Make a Deal," there are more choices: keep the cash or select the dance behind a curtain for a monetary loss or gain. There is also an opportunity to bid for the chance to sit at a money tree, designed by Jodi Kaplan, which doubles as a bar with wine and snacks.

Wedge in between the fun and games are Ms. Shulman's dances, marked by swirling arms and sideway kicks, which do little to endear the uninitiated to the power of movement. Guest choreography included Martha Williams's derivative "Currency Break," as well as dances from "Flashdance" and [Michael Jackson's](#) "Thriller" video.

It's unfortunate that Ms. Shulman's excursion into moneyland followed "The Money Conversation" by Sara Juli, a gutsier look at self-worth, in which real cash was given away at P.S. 122 in February. Ms. Shulman's technique of treating her dancers as commodities is ultimately tiring. When it became time for yet another round of "Deal," an audience member exclaimed: "Take the money! Somebody had to say it." Creative begging under the guise of art doesn't make art.

Performances of "The Money Show" continue Saturday at 8 and Sunday at 2 p.m. at Dance New Amsterdam, 280 Broadway, at Chambers Street, Lower Manhattan; (212) 279-4200.