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The Arts

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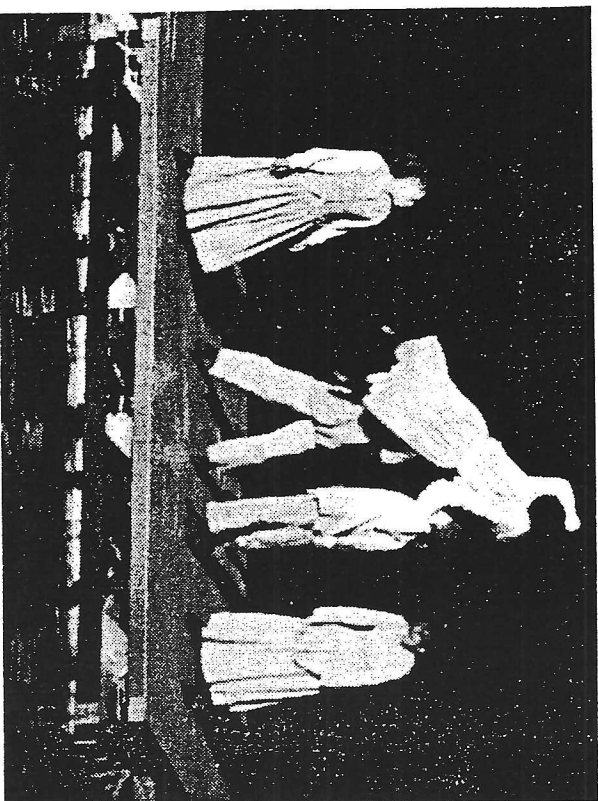
## PERFORMANCE ART

### Dancing, Chatting, Singing On Brooklyn's Waterfront

BY JENNIFER DUNNING

Martha Bowers fell in love with the raw beauty of the Pier 41 area on the Brooklyn waterfront in Red Hook and responded by creating outdoor dance spectacles there. "Safe Harbor," seen on Saturday night, is about immigration. But the actual theme is the area itself, a deserted-looking dream landscape of squat industrial buildings that blend into a wash of pale, muted colors dotted with fantastic structures like a conical silver sugar factory and hand-some red-brick Civil War depots.

The other star of "Safe Harbor" is Antonio (Sunny) Balzano, a natural performer and artist who is the proprietor of John's Rest and Bar on Conoyer Street, a stop along the winding performance route. Mr. Balzano's family has lived in Red Hook since the 1890's, part of a wave of immigrants who settled in the once-bustling waterfront area. He talks of that history as he stands, surrounded by dining friends and family, in front of his bar, a small, comforting beacon on the empty cobblestone block. A slender, long-haired man with a haunted face and a manner filled with quietly baroque flourishes, Mr. Balzano tells of neighborhood children squirting into doorways as waves of workers swept by into the longshoremen's bars that once crammed the street. A feisty performer artist named Annie Lanzillotto draws him out, encouraging the audience to sing along with him and his mother, Josephine, in a favorite



Julie Lemberger

Dancers on Pier 41 in Red Hook, Brooklyn, were part of "Safe Harbor," which presented staged sideshows along a winding performance route.

popular song of the 1940's.

"Safe Harbor" is otherwise a series of imaginatively staged sideshows set to a vivid score written and arranged by Tye Giraud with Cooper Moore. Hank Smith and Josephine McNamara perform charming tap and step-dance routines in the Waterfront Museum on a Lehigh Valley Railroad barge. David, Dalia and Sophie Sharps are seen as a merman and his retinue of minnows. The appealing dancers, saddled with weak choreography, are Allison Easter, Shannon Hummel, David Matiano, Noah Weiss, Scott Willingham and Kym Woodford.

There are strong visual images, atmospherically lighted by Tony Giannetti. Among them are still women overseeing Ethiopians of other centuries wading into the river in crimson cotton, and a jety that suddenly sprouts eager arrivals to America. Two long rowboats from the Floating the Apple group approach, depart and hover in the twinkling night harbor.

The musical ensemble was completed by Marlene Rice, Bob Goldberg and the Safe Harbor Community Chorus. The sets were by Ed King and the costumes by Liz Prince, with banners by students from the Brooklyn International High School. Presented by Dancing in the Streets and Ms. Bowers's Dance/Theater/Electrica company, "Safe Harbor" will be performed again Friday through Sunday at Pier 41 (204-207 Van Dyke Street).