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Life's Absurdities as Seen by Practitioners of Tap

By JENNIFER DUNNING

The engaging free spirit of New York tap dance, Jane Goldberg, presented an evening of tap on Nov. 4 at the New York Marxist School that was a model of its kind. Called "Topical Tap," the program was essentially 90 minutes of "rhythm and schmooze," as one number was called, expertly performed by Ms. Goldberg, Sarah Safford and Dorothy Wasserman.

The three complement one another well. All are practitioners of the low-slung, feet-into-the-ground style of tap. All are smart, amusing commen-

tators on the vagaries of life as a liberated woman, social activist and hard-working tapster. And Ms. Goldberg even ranged provocatively over the history of tap as she danced, speculating that Jewish women, waiting for their men to come down from the mountain with Moses, may have been the first foot-tappers. Another highlight was a teasing consciousness-raising paean in which Ms. Wasserman tapped to the Run-D.M.C. rap song "My Adidas," wittily rewritten for the occasion by Ms. Safford.

Ms. Goldberg is a natural on stage. Ms. Safford and Ms. Wasserman had a few stiff moments between numbers. But the pleasure of their com-

pany was considerable. The evening ended with a standout, spontaneous solo in new running shoes by Heather Cornell, a member of the audience, which also included Ms. Goldberg's tap mentor, Charles (Cookie) Cook.

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Brecht Forum

The Brecht Forum of the New York Marxist School, at 79 Leonard Street, is a newer and more specialized theater space that serves as an artistic home to Jane Goldberg, its resident "topical tapper." Ms. Goldberg, whose work with such tap legends as Charles (Cookie) Cook was responsible for one of New York's recurring tap renaissances, performs with friends at the Forum when the spirit moves her, in a witty program that mixes tap and talk or, as Ms. Goldberg puts it, "rhythm and schmooze."

It was the "Stradivarian floor" that drew Ms. Goldberg, who spotted it while taking a course at the school. But the homey, slightly disheveled space, with its battered upright piano and political posters, has just the right gemütlich quality for Ms. Goldberg's zany tap.

