

No Yodeling: This Lonely Goatherd Likes Hip-Hop.

"When you know the notes to sing, you can sing most anything." Most everybody knows the timeless lesson meted out by Julie Andrews in "The Sound of Music." It's a phrase

DANCE REVIEW

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worth keeping in mind during many endeavors, including dance making, as proven by Doug Elkins on Wednesday night in "Fräulein Maria," his delightful, wink-filled ode to that classic Rodgers and Hammerstein musical.

The ridiculously tiny stage in Joe's Pub, which welcomed back the slightly expanded show as part of the Dancemopolitan Holiday Series after its premiere there last year, seems hardly the place to showcase choreographic ingenuity. But the space never felt cramped or busy, even when Mr. Elkins set an ensemble of six to "Do-Re-Mi." In place of notes he offered movement phrases, then spliced and rearranged them; it was one of the shortest, best composition classes I've seen.

Mr. Elkins is relentlessly inventive — who knew "The Lonely Goatherd" was made to serve as a hip-hop dance number? — and appears to have an encyclopedic knowledge of dance. References to José Limón and Paul

"Fräulein Maria" is repeated Friday night, Saturday and Jan. 12 at Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette Street, at Astor Place, East Village; (212) 967-7555; joespub.com.



MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Doug Elkins & Friends gives "The Sound of Music" some twists in "Fräulein Maria," at Joe's Pub.

Taylor rub elbows with breaking and Balanchine, as well as a host of club moves, vaudeville gags and syncopated rhythms. (This mix was topped off by gestures like the split-fingered Vulcan salute.) There is even locker-room humor, albeit of the kind most likely to be found in Christopher Street locker rooms.

But "Fräulein Maria" is no insidery toss-off, cobbled in an effort to garner knowing smiles from those in the know. Fluid and musical, Mr. Elkins's style, which won him great acclaim in the 1990s, is its own creature. It's heavenly to watch, and probably

Doug Elkins & Friends Joe's Pub

more delicious to perform. This may explain how he has assembled such a stellar cast.

It is hard to make dancers like Arthur Aviles, Carolyn Cryer and Jen Nugent look bad, but I can't remember the last time they looked so good. David Parker is a hoot as the young, ahem, maiden in "Sixteen Going on Seventeen," and his seducer, the irrepressible Archie Burnett . . . well, let's just say you'd put down your book and follow him too. And three

cheers for Nicole Wolcott, one of today's finest dance comedians and a knockout dancer.

But most astonishing was the choreographer himself, in a liquid solo to "Climb Ev'ry Mountain." Mixing heavy machismo with satiny club moves, Mr. Elkins somehow managed to make something gorgeous and touching out of the sentimental lyrics. The depths hinted at here and in other strange pockets of "Fräulein Maria" point to a smart, sensitive mind. Forget mountains: get this man back to a bigger stage.