

## JANA HAIMSOHN Review Excerpts

### Mabou Mines Blast- (not Kick-) Off!

Jana Haimsohn was the first...Resident Artist...and by god did she start us off right!... I saw her final performance...and was sufficiently blown away... Jana's body is like a jazz instrument, the way it moves, the sounds it makes, and the expressions it creates. It's a wonder to watch. What was really great about this piece in particular is that the material she exhibited is so incredibly personal, and yet she makes it broadly political. And not in a way that seems heavy-handed or out of nowhere... Who knew that a cute ol' cat's purr, Native American academics, and helping children in Iraq could all find their way into the same narrative thread? What an honor to be coming after her!  
(Blog: play rey play by Rey Pamatmat Feb. 2006)

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### Jana Haimsohn: Catch Her While You Can

The imprecise term singer describes only a fraction of what she does. She is not a soprano, a contralto, or a coloratura, but all three at once. She dances seductively; she is a poet, playing with syllables in the most complex way imaginable; she can out-scat Ella Fitzgerald; she plays drums... Actually, intelligible language is simply a springboard for her, and in no time at all she is flying high with some kind of Esperanto of her own making. If they can persuade Jana Haimsohn to come back, don't miss her.  
(Gazette; Montreal, Canada, Dec. '82)

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Haimsohn...became a Zulu warrior, a ritualistic mammon-worshipper, or simply an incredibly flexible, undulating body, writhing... as free flowing as had been her words. She has refined her vocal instrument to the very razor's edge of perfection. To describe her outpourings as uninhibited would be an understatement. Haimsohn's performances---vocally, poetically and in her primal dance movements is almost narcotic. Possibly dangerous for the faint of heart! (L.A. Times & The Movement; L.A. 1982)

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### A Woman "Flies" for Art

Cries, a firework of voice acrobatics, plus vibrating dance, pantomime, clowning, poetry and syllable. An hour and a half performance by the artist Jana Haimsohn from New York City... she gave such an intense guest performance at the Folkwang Museum there was nothing left to wish for. A volcano of expressive sound, gesture, rhythm. Secret formulas, crying in a high note, chanting bubbles out of her. She is possessed in a sheer trance... She grabs a native drum and gives out explosively powerful fireworks... she creates mime-poetic work of great power bursting forth. Jana Haimsohn does not come from a fantasy world. Self-analysis, Experience, Environment have made her develop into a social-critic Artist. Her themes revolve around AIDS, Homelessness, South Africa,

Prisons, Torture and much more. Life is where she finds her inspiration to create.  
(Zeitung fur Essen; W. Germany; '89)

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Jana Haimsohn's performance was the most impressive, powerful and enthusiastic for the audience... All by herself on an empty stage, she fascinated us for more than an hour and was absolutely virtuosic in dancing and vocalizing. With soft emotion, imaginative movements and the irony of a goblin, she told stories and showed us pictures, trying to make life more human. (Frankfurter Rundschau; W. Germany '87)

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Musically speaking, without a doubt the highpoint of the Marathon '79... a must for every Jazz club. Jana Haimsohn has a range and imagination with her voice and dancing that has never been seen in Holland.

(Jazz Nu Magazine; Groningen Jazz Marathon, Holland, 1979)

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The best was Jana Haimsohn from the United States... She is dissolving the limits of her body with stomping rhythms, culminating in a firework of voice acrobatics, theater-movements and mime, which is simply genius, basic, childlike, playful, clownish. Jana Haimsohn found her own inimitable expression beyond the categories...

(Kolnische Rundschau; Cologne, W. Germany)

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#### A Brilliant and Controversial Prelude

...even the most conservative music lover is thrilled by her own unique "music language"... she penetrates forward into new dimensions with her performance. From the inside, through movement, from the interplay of all the forces of the body, arises her understanding of music. (Unna, W. Germany; 1987)

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#### Living Empowerment

The germ of awareness of the intensity of the upcoming 90-minutes is already present. Physical, direct, complete, comprehensive, exciting, full of energy-----  
Jana Haimsohn is a living perpetual motion machine. The audience, more colorfully mixed than usual, was spellbound. (Sprengel Museum; Hannoversche Zeitung '91)

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Jana Haimsohn can do remarkable things with her voice. (New York Times; Dec. '82)

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Open and directly appealing. The hour-long performance of Jana Haimsohn seemed like 10 minutes because of the perfect control of energy, timing and raising of tension. (Holland Festival at de Appel; Vrij Nederlands; Amsterdam, Holland; 1979)

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Everybody was impressed by Jana Haimsohn... This very smart woman has an amazing amount of power while vocalizing, talking, transmitting fear, hysteria and power by dancing, an expenditure of energy in burning identity with herself. (International Composers' Festival; Kassel, Germany; Feuilleton; Feb. 1987)

The American performer Jana Haimsohn is a universally gifted artist. She is a poetess and actress, musician and dancer, a body and vocal artist who connects all these elements. (Theater-Zeitung; Kassel, W. Germany, 1987)

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She sings, and at once her entire body sounds like an improvised blues... (Hannoversches Wochenblatt; W. Germany; June 1987)

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...musical, skittish and virtuously playful. ...vocal/music/dance/language/performance as an energetic celebration of the free spirit slyly mourning its constraints. (The New York Times; Feb. 1982)

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Certainly the main attraction was Jana Haimsohn. The natural human being, moving from the outer and inner world and back. (Kultur; Kassel, Germany, 1987; International Composers' Festival)

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#### Artists Against Intervention

Of the performances, I was particularly moved by Jana Haimsohn, whose sputter of vocalization and convulsion gestures metamorphosed from images of animal sounds to speaking in tongues to a state of possession by the soul of a baby shot, along with other children and women, by soldiers. Haimsohn's control in rendering utter loss of control was impressive. (Village Voice; NYC, 1984)

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...singing, yeah, something which sounds very close to the very origin of the Blues. Jana Haimsohn, dancer, scat-virtuoso, lyric poet and acrobat in one person, uses almost nothing other than her own body in her performances. She has already won the admiration of her audience through her skill in holding together the physical balance of these disparate means of expression. From such a woman one may believe that she includes into her dedications, those who are furthest away from that happiness: children locked up in hospitals, infected by AIDS, and their contemporaries starving to death in

Ethiopia... guests of the music school were fascinated by a performance which combined an almost archaic sense of human closeness, with formal straight rhythmic precision in that special Haimsohn way. (Tubingen, Germany 1988)

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#### The Self Become An Artwork

A high degree of anticipation gripped the crowd for the second appearance in Bremen of the New Yorker Jana Haimsohn. Jana Haimsohn is an artist capable of combining elements of various kinds of art into a type of total artwork. At the same time she herself becomes that artwork. She dances the complete spectrum...flowing intuitively throughout. Another aspect is language and here too, the aspects of her work are marvelously varied...In the texts themselves, lines of verse are transformed into sounds, syllables or nonsense words of a determinate rhythm....the pieces are grounded in focused themes. These can be witty and capricious...but for the most part her subjects are serious, like homelessness, violence against women. Jana Haimsohn has worked with jazz musicians like Don Cherry, Ed Blackwell, Mal Waldron and Don Pullen. Jana Haimsohn has transformed these influences into something new and exciting.  
(Weser Kurier, March 1991; Katrin Rubus Gallery, Bremen, Germany)

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