

PERFORMERS AND PERSONAE

I am a **Grand Union** fan. Flashes of "meaning" have always come out of their performances. I used to feel that if I could just get to every performance, I would understand one whole process of living—at least among one group of people. I'm not so sure now, and the five members of the Grand Union this time seem less fervent about meanings. What we glimpsed at the Kitchen on Monday, May 27, was almost a situation comedy. It was very funny, but the comedy happened through talk: David Gordon invited Barbara Dilley to go for a "walkie-walkie" as they squatted side by side; Nancy Lewis diddled in place, announcing her "frenzy," Gordon swam over Douglas Dunn, on a blue cushion, then offered a stream of verbal analyses of the action. The actions were silly, too: Dilley and Lewis cavorted ballet-assorted props to Lewis's stomach, set her into the box, then later balanced Trisha Brown on top of the pile.

The evening did emerge in one piece, with this possible theme: How silly can people get with each other, before someone needs or dares to be serious? When all of them had finished tying up Nancy Lewis, Dunn started a lyrical dance to a Dylan song all by himself in front of her box. Later he unbound her when the weight of the box with Brown on top got risky—and that was the end.

I heard that the next night was a serious performance and was sorry to have missed it. Each time I see a performance I add to my knowledge of each person's stage persona. The improvising always works somewhere, because the Grand Union people bring their private explorations to the group stage: what does it mean to be a dancer and how do you use yourself to make the dance?

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