

far farther than is common even in his late works. A clear link was then established in the second movement *Andante* to the song-cycle, *Winterreise*, and the poet's pained progress.

Even more strikingly the Beethoven found both taut strength (speeds steadier than in Schubert) and rarefied visionary intensity. Strictly the Archduke lies in the hinterland of the last period, but here the closeness was firmly established to the late works in such passages as the strange, spare close of the first movement development,

SADLER'S WELLS

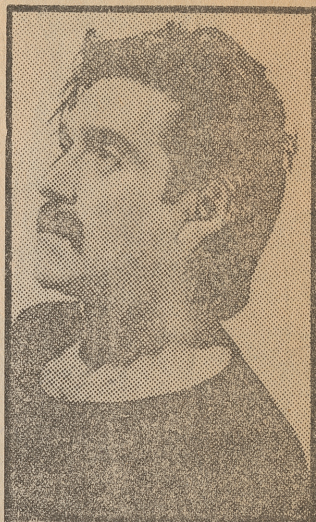
Mary Clarke

David Gordon

DANCE Umbrella '85 has begun splendidly with David Gordon, Valda Setterfield and the Pick Up Company from New York in a programme of three of his works (at Sadler's Wells until Saturday only). The company is brilliant, brilliantly rehearsed and perfected in his very individual style that demands prodigies of timing, is brimful of invention and wit but never for one moment gets pretentious or loses the ability to laugh at itself. The Wells should be packed for the remaining performances and already we must be grateful to Dance Umbrella for just this first offering.

The three "dance constructions," as Gordon prefers to describe them, are all recent compositions, sharing some characteristics and materials from earlier pieces but using them in every case in an entirely fresh and original way. In the opening *Nine Lives*, for instance, he uses chairs again as part of the construction but never merely as chairs. The dancers move over, across or through them, alone or in pairs, and to the Western swing accompaniment they transform their chairs (as Gordon transformed frames in Beethoven and Boothe) into horses or any impedimenta of the West until at the end there's shoot, bang, fire as they rap the stage and everyone hits the dust except for three languidly seated women.

At the centre of *Nine Lives* there is a gentle, caring duet



GORDON: *sense of humour*

for Gordon and Setterfield and there is another one in *Offenbach Suite* danced to *Offenbach Suite* for Violin Cellos (played by Cristian Florea and Lionel Handy). This piece explores Gordon's ability to create from very simple movement, almost casual dance that conceals very real technique, lovely balances and counter-balances of bodies. His dancers wonderfully enhance each other all the time.

The final piece, *My Folks*, to folksy music by Klezmer, uses for visual device (by Power Boothe), lengths of fabric, black and red striped, in an extraordinary variety of ways as the black clad dancers wind themselves or each other up in them, use them as sleighs to carry each other across the stage, and finally drape them around and across Gordon and Setterfield until they stand at the centre of the last tableau like the bridal couple in *Firebird*, crowned leaders of the company—but leaders with a sense of humour.

WIGMORE HALL

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