

Taggart School of Imperial Russian Ballet

Home of the Taggart
Ballet Theatre

Member of the Society
of Russian Style Ballet
London, England

Vestris
Bournonville
Johannsen
Kosloff

Maria Taggart
Ballet Principal

Contact school about auditions for
theatre and scholarships

Rosemary Taggart, Director

275 So. "C" Street
Tustin, California 92680
(714) 544-4304 (714) 539-8752



DANCEWEAR FOR STUDIO AND STAGE CUSTOM QUALITY SHOES

- BALLET AND POINTE
- CHARACTER
- JAZZ

SUPPLIES FOR DANCE COMPANIES—
STUDIOS, STUDENTS AND DEALERS

WRITE FOR PRICES AND CATALOG
Dept. B

STAGELINE
4915 Cordell Ave.
Bethesda MD 20814
(301) 652-2324

ody of the "Cachucha" originally created by the famous Viennese comic actor Wenzel Scholz, with dry humor and astonishing mastery of movement.

Equally successful was the scene from *La Muette de Portici*, one of Elssler's most famous roles, impressively staged by Jurgenson from Bournonville's notes, which had the American Evan Bortnick giving a beautiful portrayal of Masaniello singing his frightened sister to sleep. And, finally, Elssler's rivals were represented via Anton Dolin's reconstruction of *Pas de Quatre*, staged by Yvette Chauviré. Her curtain calls with the Viennese ballerinas, in itself a lesson in style, provided a fitting capstone.

GUNHILD SCHÜLLER

New York

Watching David Gordon's *Offenbach Suite*—the first of three new works Gordon and his Pick Up Co. performed in their first New York season in a conventional proscenium space (Joyce Theater, May 14–19)—I was struck by its veneer of gracious politeness and the way Gordon's dancers play with partnering. I wondered whether Gordon's recent first forays into the world of ballet might be subtly influencing new works for his own company. He repeatedly has dancers hold one another for balance or lift one another at incongruous moments, as if he were taken with lifting and balancing for its own sake, like a postmodernist who scrutinizes the mechanics of ballet for the first time.

This is not to suggest that *Offenbach Suite* is really balletic. It has none of ballet's rigid formality, but retains the look of offhanded ease and spontaneity that makes Gordon's style so special. When Offenbach's music becomes brisk, for instance, the dancers begin tossing one another around with weighty geniality. *Offenbach Suite* also contains a masterful duet in which Gordon cradles Valda Setterfield in his arms while slowly turning himself in a full circle over and over to produce a smooth floating and dreamlike quality distinctively Gordonesque.

Such images—freighted with rich multiple meanings deliberately enigmatic, which is part of the pleasure of watching a Gordon work—are even more prevalent in *A Plain Romance Explained*. The title alone is a Gordon witticism that works on several levels. There is romance, but it tends to be more metaphorical than plain: not only in John Field's nineteenth-century piano pieces but also in a trio for Setterfield and two suitors (Gordon and Keith Marshall) and in the pairing and shuffling of partners during a buoyant

group section suggestive of the machinations involved in seeking a mate.

The word "explained" in the titled refers less to the courtships than to the way the dancers verbally describe their movements. Even the principals, in the middle of an intense trio, rehash their respective steps. With all this talking, Gordon, master of irony, surely intends to undermine and demystify not only this dance but dance performance in general. He deromanticizes the proceedings further in his costuming (one of his men is in long underwear and another in a baggy draped dress that mocks the SoHo chic of the women's costumes) and especially in a repeated movement that looks like wiping the nose on the back of the hand.

Gordon's invention in *My Folks* is as sharp as in the other more cryptic dances, but he dispenses with brain games and juxtaposes movement with selections of recorded Klezmer music and multicolored striped banners to create a heartfelt tribute to his Jewish ancestors. The pieces of cloth designed by artist Power Boothe become vital symbols: ceremonial bunting, circus streamers, vast capes, kerchiefs, cloaks. The swatches the dancers ride are pulled by other dancers and become ships carrying immigrants to the New World. In Gordon's finale all the cloths are brought together, hung on himself and Setterfield. As a representation of the collective past of Gordon's forebearers, it is a grand tableau.

TULLIA LIMARZI

■ Anyone familiar with the tradition of the School of American Ballet Workshop would hardly have been surprised to learn that the twenty-first annual performances (May 18, 20) showed off a number of fresh and talented young dancers. But something more remarkable than youthful talent did in fact lend these performances a special quality. Each program showed that SAB had among its talented brood a "rare bird" in the form of Brian Reeder—a young dancer who is more than a mere technician. When he performed as the cavalier in Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco* or as the leading man in Balanchine's *Who Cares?*, Reeder proved not only that partnering was dancing and the dancing expressive but also that he was a poet. He became the workshop's hero; during its three programs, he partnered six dancers in eleven duets. Without upstaging his partners, Reeder used the craft of partnering to make his own rich musical statement while he attended his ballerina. He has the ability to make his private pleasure apparent, but not transparently public. The magic of his performing lies in its mystery.