

or weighs up the evidence of the inquiry he should remember that while tower blocks for housing have been often abandoned by their occupants, there are many tall office

door to the 'Ben Giant' has just been sold, and developers own land to the south. The much hated tower block era may be over; but a skyscraper age must not be allowed to begin.

## Under the Umbrella

STARTING modestly just over a year ago, the festival of modern dance going under the name of Dance Umbrella has mushroomed amazingly.

That first event included 19 small groups or soloists; this year there are 27 of them, performing not only in five separate centres in London, but also in Bristol, Cardiff and Plymouth, with artists coming from America, Canada and Holland to join in the fun. It has already become a capacious affair, covering, as you might say, a multitude of shins.

Not all of those I have seen are equally compelling, skilled or indeed pointing in the same direction. Comparison is a strong component of this kind of operation and it is interesting to watch the wide stretch of the still immature idiom. The five performances I have seen so far illustrate the variety very clearly.

Two of them were from New York, and the first, by Steve Paxton and David Moss, who opened the batting at the ICA, turned out to be the best so far. He is an experienced and intelligent dancer (he worked for a long time with Merce Cunningham), whose act is perfect to the smallest detail, with a finely-adjusted range of movement veering from the intensely studied to the casually improvised. This is done to an equally inventive and original accompaniment, which varies from oriental-type percussion to glottal warblings by Moss. Intimate, expert, serious but never solemn, this was an impressive sample of chamber-dance.

Equally skilled were David Gordon and Valda Letterfield (another Old Cunninghamian)

### Dance

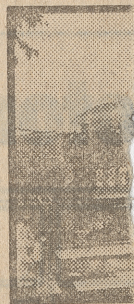
by ALEXANDER BLAND

at the Riverside Studios. They have carried dance to the very edge of the art-performance area, presenting a light entertainment in which movement is dissected, frozen, offered up in quotation marks and generally re-assembled as freely as a Cubist painter deals with form. They pose and entwine, roll about on chairs, sing and occasionally dance to the accompaniment of closely-relevant sound tracks and—significantly—still, not moving, pictures. High camp, maybe; but wonderfully professional. Aply, there's a show of conceptual art in the foyer.

The British contributions have been far more conventional. At the ICA we have had two groups, each offering the traditional pleasure of athletic and graceful movement done to music. Ingegerd Lonroth's programme was rather nebulous; a short series of solos for Jayne Lee contributed by Jane Dudley (another American) made the sharpest impact. A group from the London Contemporary Dance Company also produced some agreeable but unmemorable numbers, the best defined being conventional, the charming little 'Picnic' by Patrick Harding-Irmer, danced to guitar music.

Finally, Janet Smith, in a solo performance at the Riverside, gently demonstrated her fluid style and elegant figure; but this is really going back to Isadora.

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