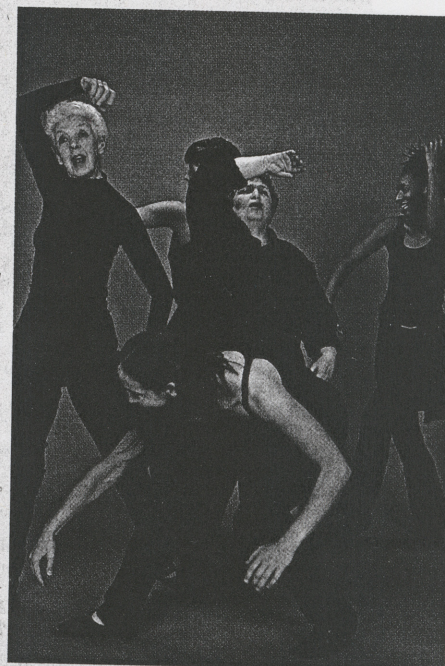


Previews Truth or Dare

Cued by the title of David Gordon's new dance-theater piece *Autobiography of a Liar*, you can believe in its portrait of a young-through-middle-aged artist and family man to the extent you choose. For instance, the "wife and muse" character, played by Valda Setterfield (pictured, left), Gordon's wife and muse, declares, "I love you." The David character (*not* played by Gordon) responds, "Easy for you to say it when I write it." Still, even in the flux of an early rehearsal, the work seems a credible answer to the question "*Then* what happened?"—a refrain in one of its segments. Gordon, who was in at the birth of postmodern dance in the sixties, is an original who has been persistently true to himself. His trademarks are a meltdown of the boundary between the theater of movement and the theater of words, an ironic wit, an unexpected romantic streak, and, above all, an ingenious subversiveness. For instance, despite the lazy allure of Gordon's movement and speech in real life, the David character is played by a chunky, feisty woman. Gordon has rejected playing by the rules because he hates them, even if the failure to institutionalize his maverick talent has cost him his fair share of fame and fortune. (His nods of recognition, however, include two Obies and a Bessie.) Instead of maintaining a traditional company, Gordon functions on a pickup basis, with "old friends" and new recruits whom, as he puts it, he can learn to love. Instead of juggling repertory around on tour and inevitably recasting it with players who don't quite fit the roles, he recycles and refashions old material, infiltrating it into new productions. Each of these, *Liar* most overtly, embodies "the truth and consequences of what happened yesterday." (See "Dance.")

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David Gordon—*Autobiography of a Liar* blends life, dance, and half-truths, 12/9–12/12 at 8:30. Through 12/19. St. Mark's Church, Second Ave. at 10th St. (212-674-8194); \$20.