

## DANCE

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# COUNTERPOINTS

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» Once, David Gordon was intrigued by the dancing possibilities of objects. This fit with a pedestrian sensibility honed during the heyday of Judson Dance Theater in the '60s. As he and his company walked and talked, they moved frames or doors or pieces of fabric in fluent, un-stopping patterns. The repetitions and variations matched those in Gordon's witty word-play. In Gordon's latest work, at Danspace St. Mark's last week, the dancers alone reshape the space, their bodies forming swinging doors and

windows for others to slip through (although pieces of paper containing spoken text do get passed about in a highly musical manner).

The atmosphere is casual; people watch one another from the sidelines and enter when ready, peeling off shirts or putting new ones on. The dancers are warming up as the audience enters, and when Bach music drops into the space, and Tadej Brdnik slides into *For the Love of Rehearsal*, the houselights are still on. As is usual with Gordon, material from earlier pieces is recycled and renewed. Gordon and his wife, Valda Setterfield, echo a beautiful earlier duet about slipping quietly out of and back into embraces. Dialogues they originally performed here become choral extravaganzas. The in-hand scripts further formalize the very personal conversations—one of which is an old-married exchange about farting, its concomitant odor, and the polite hypocrisy of allusions to it.

In *For the Love of Rehearsal*, Brdnik's solo segues into a duet with Scott Cunningham. The movement is variegated and engrossing, blending quotidian ease with dancerly flow. Brdnik is as velvety as a lion, Cunningham tauter and less impulsive. They make a good momentary Fred and Ginger. Karen Graham has a fine, assertive solo—Spanisly, almost.

Gordon's ensuing *FAMILY\$DEATH@ART. COMedy* alternates dancing and talking. There are some lovely parts, like a trio for Graham,

Brdnik, and Cunningham, in which one is always watching two; and a square dance that runs away from its formation. Most of the music, especially that by Conlon Nancarrow, underscores the feeling of a current that diverts but never halts. In the funny, tender pull and catch and duck-under of the dance, the performers—including Tricia Brouk, Krista Miller, and Christopher Morgan—are warmly themselves. But this family of dancers also stands in some way for the Gordon-Setterfield family. And when the two we know as Valda and David sway in baby steps toward us, his arm around her shoulders, it's as if all the gorgeously organized confusion falls away, leaving us with these two people, this one journey through life.