

## DANCE

DAVID GORDON / PICK UP  
PERFORMANCE COMPANY  
THE PLACE  
LONDON

WHERE WAS everybody? Clearly not at the first of David Gordon's two Dance Umbrella evenings, where they could have watched a true master, more grizzled and paunchy these days, but as fresh and daring as the newest trailblazer around. It was more than 30 years ago that he was one of the legendary founders of New York postmodern dance, whose revolutionary tenets – that pedestrian movement can be dance, that you don't need theatrical illusion – are now common currency, and he has been active ever since.

True, he and his British wife, Valda Setterfield, no longer dance on and around chairs. But they still perform with whichever dancers make up their Pick Up Performance Company at a given time. *FAMILY\$-DEATH@ART.COMedy* bears all the distinctive Gordon trademarks, a seamless succession of movement and speech, with the printed running order taped on the walls. But first comes *For the Love of Rehearsal*, a formal dance to Bach in an informal setting that shows Gordon's love of arithmetical structures. Dancers accumulate one by one, the others sitting on the sides, watching, drinking water, putting on shoes. The excellent Tadej Brdnik's duet with Scott Cunningham has an interesting twist, his postures seemingly choreographed for a woman.

Contrasting movement themes differentiate the dances of *FAMILY\$-DEATH@ART.COMedy*, set to music by Conlon Nancarrow and Wim Mertens. Dance number three ends in a female trio, the scattered movements glancing off each other to form a continuum of gleaming facets. Number four has Maria de Lourdes Davila and Cunningham linked in canon, the precedence constantly shifting so you're never sure who initiates and who echoes. Number nine confronts couples in jagged contrapuntal phrases that explode in angry splutters.

In between is dialogue, wryly humorous evocations of the homely squabbles we all know, the phrases swopped and repeated until they assume an almost visual patterning. Best of all, though, are three domestic duets for Gordon and Setterfield, the first a silent row, all black looks and huffy pacing. Then the mood shifts for a dance of gentle poses, so affecting I thought I was going to cry. Arms freeze in evocative, lonely gestures or fold in familiarly tender embraces. You see a couple who have worked, loved and grown old together, their progress



# THE INDEPENDENT

8 November 2001

through life encapsulated in the "Long Walk" that concludes the evening: slow, almost imperceptible, mesmerising. No, you don't have to be young to be radical. No, you don't have to be an athlete to be a dancer. And yes, minimalism lives.

NADINE MEISNER

*Dance Umbrella continues to 10 November (020-7387 0031)*

# REVIEW