

Spectators, dance troupe collaborate

By PETER ALTMAN
Minneapolis Star Critic

The Grand Union, the association of ~~eight~~ ^{nine} dancers which has been in residence at and around Walker Art Center since Monday, balks attempts at categorization and critical pontification.

As observed working at various locations around the city Wednesday and Thursday, the Union is a loose collaboration of talented artists inclined to different styles and driven by different temperaments, bound together only by the conviction that dance is more than rehearsed exhibition for spectators to be judged according to fixed criteria.

The Union does "perform"; it will do so at 8 p.m. today in the concourse of the new Walker.

What the Union has been doing since it arrived in town Monday, however,

reveals a desire to do more than provide audiences with entertainment by beautiful, expressive or agile movement. The Union's activities have gone beyond putting on a show to involve outsiders in celebratory events, and to stimulate all manner of questions about the dynamics of all theatrical experiences.

The group consists of Trisha Brown, Douglas Dunn, Nancy Green, David Gordon, Yvonne Rainer, Barbara Lloyd, Becky Arnold, and a young man who calls himself simply Dong. All are obviously dancers with fine skills and have had substantial experience in major modern dance troupes.

Occasionally this week, the Union has worked as an ensemble, although always deliberately as an ensemble without a leader,

one in which any member is free at any time to suggest an initiative. Often, however, the Union has consisted of ~~eight~~ ^{nine} individuals creating their own events.

More than 50 volunteers from the Twin Cities, some trained dancers and some absolute amateurs, have put themselves at the service of the visiting New Yorkers. These Minnesotans have participated in Union-directed manifestations ranging from kite flying in the Armory Gardens to patterned walking in Loring Park.

Emphasis has been different depending on the directing artist. Miss Rainer's "Numerous Frames" consisted of out-of-context aphorisms and conversational fragments spoken as a large number of persons walked about and assumed various attitudes. "Meetings," arranged by Dunn, consisted of silent ambulations and encour-

ters in the horseshoe pit of Loring Park. Some events have stressed stillness; others have been festive; some have been like games; some have been quite specifically choreographed, others have left much to chance.

The best clues provided so far to the Union's ideas came Wednesday night at a "lecture-demonstration" in the Walker Auditorium. Here Miss Arnold said, "We're concerned about creating the work and making the work work and getting all of us into the work." Miss Rainer admitted, "I can never make up my mind about being entertaining." Gordon perhaps summed up the Union's philosophy by commenting, "If I can show you what a good time I'm having, that seems like a good way of giving you a good time, too."

After an hour filled

mostly with talk, the company began to "dance" Members performed pedestrian motions, and difficult, unusual ones. They performed in unison, and independently. Twenty or 30 persons felt free to come onstage, and they were made part of the Union's activities.

The sense of shared life was rare and delicious, and suggested powerfully that whether what the Union had been doing was "art" or "beautiful," the group had forged relationships here that most dance companies in residencies scarcely imagine.

**Books
and
Arts**

THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR
Fri., May 28, 1971 ★ 5B