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New York dance troupe doesn't do much of anything qualifying for the title "Dance with a capital D"; by another set of standards, they may have been dancing the whole two weeks, even while they slept. Between those extremes, there may be as many opinions as there are people who saw them; there are certainly different opinions among the nine dancers involved.

Though some members have gotten more publicity—Yvonne Rainer, choreographer with some prior fame who used to be considered the group's leader and Barbara Lloyd, who danced with the Merce Cunningham Company until 1968—they work as and consider themselves to be equals, leaderless except by spontaneous combustion.

Sue Weil of the Walker Art Center, after arranging to bring them here, found herself faced with the task of collecting 150 people and numerous (for dance, at least) props for an all-day performance to be done in the Center and nearby Loring Park.

In addition to the rehearsals leading up to the marathon last Thursday, the Grand Union gave a lecture-demonstration in the Walker Auditorium last Wednesday (May 26) and a concert that Friday in the Walker-Guthrie Lobby Concourse using only the eight Union members (the ninth is in India). Rainer and Lloyd gave additional workshops this week.

The lecture-demonstration was quite unlike any other dance lecture-demo I've ever seen. It began very slowly, with the dancers wandering slowly around the stage, speaking to each other or humming softly into the individual microphones they carried. They gave each other questions and answers about dance and invited audience members to take part.

The talking was very informative—people had expectations about the dancing that weren't being met—"Why don't you all do something together?", one woman asked; "When are you going to begin?" asked another—and the performers became a little defensive. "This is what we do; we're doing it already!" Yvonne Rainer replied: "I guess we had made certain unwarranted assumptions about what you people know," said another dancer.

Gradually, as they began to talk less and move more, the desires of the audience members and performers came closer together and the distinctions between them melted under the warmth of enjoying what was actually happening.

The audience was willing, it seemed, to allow their preconceptions about art to be redefined. But it took the Grand Union to do it, and it took action that involved the normally passive person in the process.

It is possible to describe their dancing in a gross narrative sense but it would take too much space to give any adequate idea of the variety of movement used. It might involve a long section of "ordinary" (non-stylized) actions followed by an allusion to classical ballet or Martha Graham; it might center around a prop or a person or have no focus at all; any of it might be carefully choreographed before presentation or improvised right on the spot. Very often, the dancers speak lines, tell stories, make their own music.

It required not even the weak cement of plot that an Andy Warhol film or Living Theatre performance use to justify it or support it; whatever was happening, on either side of the perceiving eye, seemed to be sufficient.

This feeling was less true in their concert that Friday night. There were many moments that I could enjoy or appreciate or that I found stimulating—and many moments when I couldn't even pay attention, except to my boredom. They had announced that audience members were not to take part; accepted at face value, this eliminated much of the involvement I felt before and allowed me to slip passively back into old definitions.

But this process, as Barbara Lloyd described it, of redefining yourself through dance, is done better by the Grand Union than by any other dance company I have seen. They issue a challenge to the spectator that forces him to redefine himself, a challenge that works long after the performance is over. In this way, it might be called "conceptual art"—it shows the perceiver how dependent he may be on his concepts, and stimulates him to examine those concepts carefully. Walker Art Center scores again.

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The Grand Union was in Minneapolis for two weeks, and they danced a lot of that time—but no one is sure just how much of the time.

By some standards, this radical