

"During the past year -- only one crucial performance-event, in which all previous theatrical assumptions are transcended & totally new rules and modes of procedure are postulated and acted upon. As a result all hitherto "enjoyed" performances seem at least temporarily superfluous and beside the point.

"The GRAND UNION gave that one performance in November at N.Y.U. Like climbing a mountain -- an art against which one "tests" oneself with the exhilaration that follows a coming into a higher state of 'self-possession' which only the greatest art 'allows' to happen to those spectators willing to do the work of matching, moment by moment, their own internal on-going processes against the special processes of the performance.

"No other performance group has succeeded, as the GRAND UNION has, in refining the vocabulary of movement and activity down to a point at which the smallest bodily procedures (effort operating against the various resistances that define the condition of being), each tiny physical 'cell' of activity, reveals itself as a moment of identity between happening and mind. That is to say -- the GRAND UNION uses the body in order to, somehow, inexplicably, awaken in us the ecstatic roots of 'mentation.' (Invented word)

"To watch the GRAND UNION then, is to be present at the source -- and that experience shakes one and involves a complete questioning of previous performance modes in which the aim is to create a magical 'elsewhere' of special experience for the spectator. To be present at the GU performance is to be radically present at both the performer's AND the spectator's (self's) creative 'sources' -- and as the performance grows, structured about elusive nodules hidden in the center of the different activities that collide and overlap and interact -- one slowly begins to realize that here is a performance art in which the form of the artwork is defined not by the boundaries (outline, shape) as in previous art, but by the internal



energies of the NOW moment of disassociated creativity. And that moment of NOW -- which is both the only sure moment of being, and the totally elusive reality which instantaneously slips into the past or is just out of reach in the future -- that NOW moment in which the GU's art finds its formal inspiration does not SEDUCE the spectator (as previous art has programatically tried to seduce inside the traps of its calculated strategies and techniques) -- but rather gives the spectator his freedom, amidst which the spectator is challenged -- 'match our inventions with the continual awareness of your own on-going internal inventions.'

"And because the members of the GRAND UNION are collectively somehow wiser -- and more conscious than most of the 'trouble' they are in, the art they produce is part of that VERY small body of work which is genuinely capable of effecting a radical change inside those who expose themselves to its dangerous energies."

Richard Foreman, 1971