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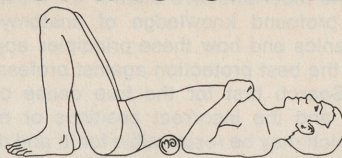
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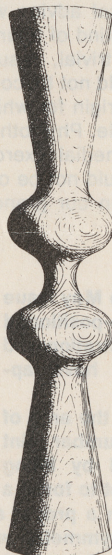
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REVIEWS (Cont'd from page 87)

scrubbed faces and that look of dedicated joy. And *Pursuit* had a perfect look of ironic, tongue-in-cheek innocence.

O'Donnell's eye for symmetry and measured contrast was less in evidence in *Pursuit* than in *Suspension* or her satisfying *Dance Sonata No. 1*, choreographed in 1952. The highlights of the new work were its solos and duet, all of which recall such 1940s prototypes as the vamp, suddenly unsophisticated lovers and the recruiting-poster pin-up. But each section called for dance capabilities that are very much a part of the 1970s.

While Alice Gill was seducing the audience in her vamp solo, danced to "Sunrise Sere-nade"—in black net stockings, red rose and not much else—she performed feats of balancing on one leg that required a good deal of control. Each new trick was accomplished with the minx-eyed aplomb of a stripper shedding her costume bit by bit.

Much of "Moonglow," a duet for Patricia Payne and Thomas Bain, was performed on the floor. The two bodies' contact with the floor and physical attachment to each other had a soft, lazy sensuousness to it. The little kinetic jokes and muted athleticisms added a touch of youthful high spir-its.

O'Donnell has a nice way of pointing up what seems to be the innate personality of each of her dancers. Donna Tchapraste's "Bugle Call Rag" was all bubbling light-headedness. You'd noticed her eager face before and so her high-kicking, shimmying sailor-girl solo here, danced at jitter-bug pace, seemed deliciously in character. After an ensemble number of amusingly witless gyrations, shy-looking Dale Andree slipped out to center stage, alone, to do "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You." Rooted in place, with her upper body slowly stretching and curling through the gestures of the old romantic ballroom numbers, Andree looked like half of the dancing couple in any movie musical extravaganza of the period. *Pursuit* ended with a razzle-dazzle chorus line and, unsurprisingly enough, received a cheering reception from the standing-room only audience.

There was certainly nothing razzle-dazzle about the two dances by David Gordon which he and Valda Setterfield performed in early May in a SoHo loft. Coolly elegant, witty and beautiful just as a set of visual patterns, *Wordsworth* and *Times Four* had the same tonic effect as the O'Donnell concert. You entered a shimmering white loft divided in two by a jointed plywood screen on each side of which sat an audience. "How will we see what happens on the other side?" an anxious newcomer asked the young ticket seller as he pointed to seats beyond the screen. "Well, things just sort of happen," he murmured. And they did. The evening was one of those concerts that just seem to unfold, getting better and better as they go along.

The dance began with two taped voices reading, just slightly out of unison, a long textbook description of changes in physical energy. Two men unjointed the screen panels methodically and stacked them against one wall, revealing expectant faces on the other side. Then out came Gordon and Setterfield in their almost matching legwarmer-and-sweater uniforms. Stationed at opposite ends of the room, but not far apart, they began to perform a kind of catalogue of simple movement and gesture, speaking a contemplative litany that went something like: circle, bend, jump, leg, kneebend, hi where did I put that, that's wrong, hum, not up there (bending down) down here (straightening up), stop, think, circle. Sometimes words and gestures coincided in both dancers. Then each recited a Shake-

spearean soliloquy with flowing gesture, little of it related to the words. It was as if someone were giving a demonstration of sign language or a kinetic system like Effort-Shape.

Then began a long series of quarter-time movement phrases of growing complexity, performed in unison and side-by-side in a small center space. Repeated four times in a clockwise direction, the phrases varied from a simple knee lift to a crawl-backwards-flatten on the floor-drag forward sequence, or syncopated prances and tilts that made slooping, even lines of the upper body. The vocabulary was a spare one but there was an amazing richness to the whole. The gestures of the first section then began to flow together like tai chi sequences and there was a circular, lyrical look to the lines of the two bodies.

After matter-of-factly pulling up their legwarmers, the two separated again and repeated whole sequences of the first section to a taped drone that sounded like a low-flying airplane, and sporadic monotonous humming by the two dancers. The men reappeared and unobtrusively began to set up the wooden panels, blotting out one dancer from each audience. Occasionally an arcing arm or foot would be seen as it crossed a crack in the screen and sometimes that foot would turn out to belong to a shifting audience member. The two solitary dances seemed to coincide once or twice, judging from the scraping sounds of both sets of feet and crack-views. What is the sound of that one hand clapping? Is a dancer really dancing if he is dancing unseen?

"It was like watching two strands of hair when the comb goes through," one young woman said admiringly on the way to the subway later. Set-terfield stony-faced and sleek, Gordon scruffy and a little ironic. And a dance of clear, architectural beauty.

Virginia Laidlaw has an intriguing way of defining a place, a mood or a physical quality with just a few simple, discrete movements. At times the choreography had the almost painterly look of thick body masses delineated in a few deft brush strokes, at the **Virginia Laidlaw Dance Theatre** concert in mid-April at the Theatre of the Riverside Church. A series of circling walks and runs, abstracted or assertive, established an enclave in empty space in her solo *Place*, set to a reverberating sound-score of city noises by Web Terhune.

Laidlaw shows her Nikolais background in the clean, direct traversing of space and isolation of body parts. But in her very funny *Sweetheart Suite* she looked as if she'd been bitten by a James Waring bug, or maybe Elizabeth Keen in a flouncy mood. The dance, performed to perfect corny vintage songs of the Victor Herbert era sung live by Irin Peollot, is basically a flowing series of gags involving a dopey pink-cheeked debutante (Jill Feinberg), a tough flapper (Laidlaw) and a debonair dancing lad (Gale Ormiston). If *Sweetheart* wasn't the most original of dance ideas, it was a funny and touching look at an old subject.

The two new dances on the program at the **Richard Biles Dance Company** in mid-April at the Theatre of the Riverside Church, although very different, had a pleasing—and infectious—sense of the physicality of movement. It was as if, no matter the subject, Biles reveled in movement's sensual qualities.

Black and White Dances is a civilized piece, with each part tied to the others by the sleek black-and-white motifs of its four sets of costumes. The first section, set to Mozart, is a luminous duet for Biles and Jane Durbin, full of gentle furbelows like a trellis effect made from

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