

Moonshine

By Elizabeth Zimmer

CLIVE THOMPSON DANCECOMPANY. At Williamson Theater, College of Staten Island, (April 13). David Gordon's *Four Cornered Moon*; *Freedom of Information* (third section), by Arnie Zane; Rael Lamb's *New Age Video Disc*; Keith Lee's *Mama Rose*; Thompson's *Echoes Journey*. Also: NYU's Second Avenue Dance Company in Gordon's *Eleven Women in Reduced Circumstances*.

The Staten Island audience for the Clive Thompson Dancecompany is your basic small-town audience full of adorable little girls who study at the Clive Thompson Dancenter, selling buttons and handing out flowers to the dancers, starry-eyed to see their teachers performing. Full of the parents of these little girls, and their brothers and sisters, and friends and family of the dancers, and a handful of college students.

That's part of the good news: the rest is that the Dancecompany is coming of age, an eclectic ensemble with a full touring schedule and a repertory of works both trendy and durable. Saturday's performance demonstrated that Thompson has learned the virtues of brevity and rigor. Gone is most of the saccharine, sleazy jazz dancing. This year's program opened with Arnie Zane's section of *Freedom of Information*, jazz dancing of a different hue, which looked smashing on the long-legged, chesty women.

David Gordon's new *Four Cornered Moon*, to Debussy, was a perfect vehicle for Thompson, who, like Gordon, is becoming a patriarch. Dressed in white, turning on a variety of internal axes, Thompson, Mindy Haywood, and Yvonne Erwin manipulated Power Booth's rectangular "visual device," a pale blue frame which served them as doorway, barre, pool, and yes, astonish-

the village

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ingly, moon: luminous, it gave shape to their circular meanderings. The work is a series of études, gracious encounters in a civilized environment where an adult gentleman squires two maidens through many social permutations.

This new work is a cousin of Gordon's *Eleven Women in Reduced Circumstances*, to a Mozart score, which also had its premiere the same weekend in performances by the Second Avenue Dance Company at NYU. Both works are costumed in cotton clothing of the sort our top designers have been showing (Charles Schoonmaker made the ones for *Moon*, Heidi Kaczinski for *Eleven Women*). Both are concerned with appearance and pose, with formal arrangements dissolving and re-forming. Perhaps the Second Avenue dancers, in gray, are the ones who stayed home while Thompson and his ladies went to the ball. Both dances reveal Gordon as a choreographer firmly in control of the physics and geometry of movement, and of the poetry, finding in familiar music, and carefully framed fragments of technique, the impetus for moving portraits.

Back on Staten Island, Keith Lee's solo *Mama Rose*, to music and poetry by Ar-

chie Shepp, revealed the mature end of Greta Martin's range. Clive Thompson's only choreographic contribution to this program was *Echoes Journey*, an oddly powerful arrangement of martial arts vocabulary for the Family Kim, guest artists who are champions at karate, taekwon do, and kung fu.

There was something for every member of a hypothetical family. Even Rael Lamb's *New Age Video Disc*, which appalled me when I saw it last year on another company, revealed, in a pruned version here, a certain charm. Robert Bisbee was in perfect feather as a Bird of Paradise, with turquoise chiffon wings, tossing glitter at Dimitri Costomiris' *Boy Learning to Fly*. The dancers give themselves so completely to this nonsense that it works, in much the same way that *Rocky* works.

Regional theater sends its best work to Broadway. The dance community works the other way, with New York shipping its bounty all over the country to regional ensembles, of which Thompson's must be counted the closest, and a fine one. The result may soon be a nation in which dancers can live and thrive anywhere, nourished by intelligent, beautiful work. ■