

Review/

Thompson debuts classy work

The Clive Thompson Dance Company's Spring Concert. Featuring the world premiere of David Gordon's "Four Corned Moon" with music by Claude Debussy, costumes by Charles Schoonmaker, props by Power Booth. At the College of Staten Island's Williamson Theater, Sunnyside.

BY TULLIA LIMARZI

Advance Dance Critic

Following up on their success at tackling post-modern choreography last fall, The Clive Thompson Dance Company brought a world premiere by one of the avant garde's most respected artists to the College of Staten Island's Williamson Theater on Saturday night.

Although not as technically demanding as Arnie Zane's "Freedom of Information (Third Section)," the new dance, David Gordon's "Four Corned Moon," is a classy work that adds an element of wry whimsy to the Thompson repertory.

Gordon is renowned for wit that's expressed not only in his juxtaposition of movement elements but his clever use of props and language. Although there's no speaking in "Moon," a rectangle made from painted strips of wood becomes a pivotal catalyst in the actions and interactions of three dancers (Thompson, Yvonne Erwin and Mindy Haywood).

This frame is used literally — as a physical obstacle — and metaphorically — as a bestower of privilege upon the dancer who is nearest to it. Most often the prop is held with its long end perpendicular to the floor, making it tall enough to outline the entire body. The quirky ways the dancers use this structure become a source of visual humor. The dancers poke legs and heads through it, swing it, run around it, lie inside it, hold onto it to-

gether in a circle game while taking turns at ducking under it and out again. It freezes the action of anyone caught within its outline.

Not the least bit camped up, this capriciousness is executed with an insouciance that's reinforced by the costumes (trendy, loose tops and abbreviated trousers), and the sweet Debussy piano pieces used as accompaniment.

The Dance Company's program also featured two new works that contrasted sharply with the sophistication of "Four Corned Moon." "Mama Rose" by Keith Lee is set to a score and poem of Archie Shepp, which the author explains (in the tape recording of his own voice and saxophone playing) was inspired by the turmoil of the black rights movement in the 1960s. Here the pain of black oppression is expressed through the slashing, torturous movements of a solo female dancer (Greta Martin) portraying a prototypical maternal figure.

Thompson himself arranged a number called "Echoes Journey" for four young martial arts experts — John, David, Robert and Susan Kim. Here Thompson artfully arranged traditional karate, tae kwon do and kung fu moves, added theatrical effects (costumes, music and fancy lighting) and presented sport as dance.



Mindy Haywood, who performed with Clive Thompson and Yvonne Erwin in the world premiere of "Four Corned Moon," dances "Untitled Solo," part of the Thompson repertoire.