

The magazine that tells you what's on and where to go in London.
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Time Out

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The blackest market. As prices are slashed

Moving On

Jan Murray surveys the pleasures and puzzles to be seen beneath the Dance Umbrella.

Nearing its mid-way point, the Dance Umbrella has sheltered a handful of stunningly original talents, a few bores and mediocrities, and has inspired some remarkably puerile comments from members of the dance press.

The public has proved to be more perceptive than those who sit in professional judgement however: the strongest performances have almost invariably been packed out, while audiences voted with their feet and departed in alarming numbers during the interval at certain programmes.

A check list would show American visitors to be leading the pack, both in terms of technical prowess and in artistic invention. Fair enough, for guests are invited on the basis of established reputations and, generally, are far more experienced than their British counterparts. To date, only the soloist Maedee Dupres has represented the local scene with any real distinction, but there are some interesting UK entries yet to appear, and the imbalance may eventually be redressed.

The Festival's two major venues, Riverside Studios and the ICA, rejoiced

in gratifyingly controversial openings for their respective seasons. On the Mall, Steve Paxton and his percussionist partner David Moss held audiences rapt, and long queues for returns belied the idiotic headline 'Kung Fu Flop' which introduced an ill-informed review in an evening paper. That a performance of such concentrated intensity can at the same time produce feelings of blissful serenity is a sign of great art. The sounds were fascinating, too, and the rapport and mutual respect between the two men deeply touching. If Paxton's impending performances with Lisa Nelson meet the standards set by these initial appearances, his impact will dwarf all competitors.

Up river, Valda Setterfield and David Gordon amused and charmed the majority, confused and irritated the narrow-minded. Their evening of oblique, witty sketches moved into the performance art area, constantly surprising and delighting with their reversal of standard perceptions, the zany use of text and props. They are possibly the most stylish duo in the business. It would be marvellous if

the next Umbrella could bring over Gordon's entire 'permanently temporary' Pick Up Company, because the amplification of his sharp humour might encourage the laugh-resistant dance public to unwind and go with the work. 'Transcendental tedium', opined the critic of the *Financial Times*; 'Bliss', enthused the *Guardian*. Meanwhile, audiences grew for the pair via word-of-mouth, with their short run culminating in a sell-out.

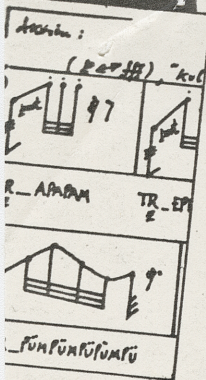
For sheer beauty and control of movement another, very different American couple, Elisa Monte and David Brown, won many admirers, albeit their mixed programme lacked weight and substance. Only Monte's 'Treading', to a hypnotic score by Steve Reich, stretched their obvious abilities as well as challenging the spectators' minds. Equally exciting dancers, in a looser technical idiom, were choreographer Rosalind Newman and her Manhattan colleagues Ellen Bogart and Judith Moss. Newman's first work, accompanied in short and mellow bursts by a Bach Cello Suite, was weakened structurally by the reduction in numbers of its original cast, but the premiere of her 'Necessary Adventures' was a triumph. The trio interacted with each other and three long poles, creating some wonderfully subtle images interspersed with a soft-shoe sequence, loping runs that defined the space, unisex lifts and balances that never failed to intrigue. Newman is a relative newcomer to the crowded New York dance circuit, and her numerous choreographic awards confirm the fresh and cerebral talent that was displayed at Riverside.

Highlights among the British contingent were, for me, Ingegerd Lonnroth's feline 'Tiger Soul', finely interpreted by stalwarts of the LCDT, although hampered by the ICA's restricted stage area; the poise and grace of Maedee Dupres in Ian Spink's solo 'Standing Swing'—her costume, which ingeniously changed shape as she danced, was great fun but this fast maturing artist doesn't have to rely on tricks to keep her audience spellbound. The thoughtful if low-key programme by Dancework (Christine Juffs and Tony Thatcher) which contained some genuine felicities, required only more projection and zing to enable this duo to take off.

An enlivening, if exhausting, season, with guaranteed goodies to come in the form of Richard Alston's evenings at The Place, experimental work at the Whitechapel; Dutch, Canadian and new British productions at Riverside. Perhaps most important will be united action to set up a national dance lobby, taken as a result of the Umbrella seminar on February 9. With a larger share of the financial cake, our own young dance artists must, in time, begin to reach the heights of Paxton, Setterfield/Gordon, Newman or the Monte displayed in 'Treading'. Talent, after all, can be starved and suffocated by lack of support—a failure that must be remedied soon.

Dance Umbrella 80 continues until March 2, with an extra week within the Camden Festival from March 17-22. See Dance listings for details.

DANCE	14 Feb
UMBRELLA 80	
	15/16 Feb
	17 Feb
	19 & 20 Feb
	7.30pm
	19/20 Feb
DANCE FILMS	14 Feb
	15 Feb
	16 Feb
	17 Feb
POETRY	20 Feb

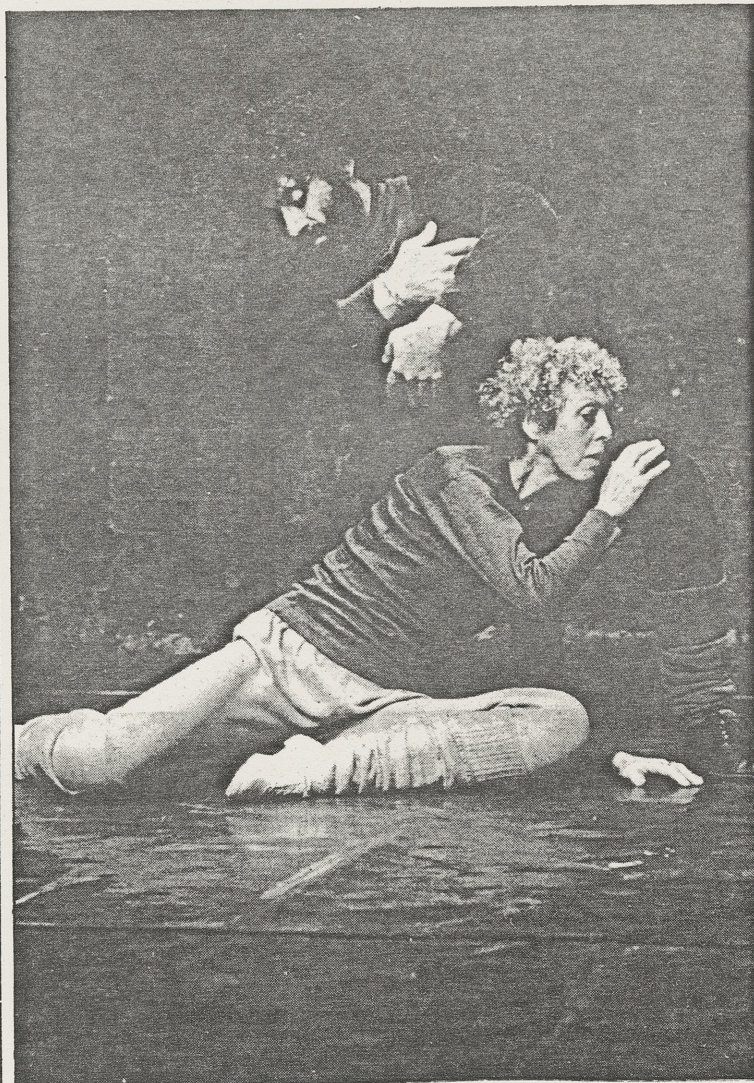


(Clockwise from top) Stockhausen, Boulez, section of the London Sinfonietta, Messiaen.

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eric of 'Vingt regards out with 'Oiseaux the exuberant dawn followed to drown the mini-retrospective to al and evocative short ges of his career. acceptance, some o look their ancestors 'Ensemble' is part of ce ('Staatstheater') poses and grimaces of ut pretending to have ne started to approach l and Brahms almost s. Berio's 'Air' is also e piece—called 'Opera' as to use constel- gestic of 'real' music. eat—as new music gets artist's own vanity: and-image. This may nfonietta itself, but, ave set an admirable g that 20th century to contribute to our standing as any other nce 1945' should be a i to that project.

i: a series of five every Tuesday at 7.45 in Square, starts this sical Music listings).



'Surprising and delighting'—Valda Setterfield and David Gordon.

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