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The David Gordon Pick Up Company—performing "post-modern dance"

## Gordon's specialty: modern dance leftovers

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By ROBERT DOUGLASS  
Star-Telegram Music Critic

David Gordon is not a choreographer, he insists. Rather, he "constructs" dances. At first you think that he is simply trying to disassociate himself from the traditional choreographers of classical ballet, but before he is through, you see his point.

His stance: "There was classical ballet, then modern dance, and what I do is post-modern dance. We do the things left over from modern dance—modern dance leftovers."

Gordon's group, the David Gordon Pick Up Company, is appearing under the auspices of the Fort Worth Art Museum Friday and Saturday in Scott Theater. On Thursday, the four-person company will hold a 2 p.m. workshop at Texas Christian University's ballet building for the dance students. The session is open to the public.

GORDON DOES not like interviews

and happily has explained his approach on a film which was available at the museum, as well as written commentary on his works. I did manage to talk with him by phone and found him warm, gracious and gentle talking.

Gordon's style is reconciled with the limitations of physical forces, such as gravity, space and flexibility. He looks upon these conditions as allies, not adversaries. "These are things that all dancers deal with," he explained, "These are the practical aspects of creativity. I try to get the most out of my body."

Responding to a question about his position in the chain of creativity, a "creature creating," Gordon replied, "I see myself as part of the world, part of the dance world, a part of the universe. I try to never get myself out of context with this."

Gordon seeks a fusion of the arts, combining speech, theater and dance. Speech doesn't have to mean anything.

On the film a dancer will hold up four fingers while saying "for" (or two while saying "to"). Gordon engages in some imaginative essays of epistemology, such as in *An Audience With the Pope*, in which it is suggested that a stream of words has the same root as "Pope," such as "popcorn" and "potpourri."

The words "chance" and "aleatoric" appear in some published reviews of his works, which implies some random selection of movement. Asked about this, Gordon replied "NO!" (The only sound from him that was like a bark).

"I DO NOT give the dancers freedom in performance. It is all worked out and rehearsed carefully." Gordon went on to explain that he may rework numbers and rearrange order for a particular concert. "The program is decided so that it can be rehearsed... I persist in re-examination and re-shuffling of materials."

Gordon's approach is described (not by him) as "simple, technically

ungroomed." I find it not so. Classical ballet training is obviously a tool, but not an end. The flow, each dancer at times in his or her own orbit, bounces from dancer to dancer, and to watch it is like trying to follow the lines of a six-part fugue. I don't know how well it would wear, but it seems to demand attention.

The program collage lists works as *Untitled*, *What Happened*, *The Matter*, *Wordsworth and the Motor*, *Dorothy and Eileen*, as well as *An Audience With the Pope* (or *This Is Where I Came In*). Gordon describes his approach as "Repertory without predictable format. A new puzzle to be solved for each show."

The dancers in the Fort Worth appearance, besides Gordon, will be Susan Eschelbach, Margaret Hoeffel and Keith Marshall. Performance time each evening is 8:15. Tickets are \$5 but only \$3 for museum members. They may be secured through the Scott Theater box office, 738-6509.