

—and the company could do worse.

The Ailey company was dancing with sleekness and speed this season, but I'd like to see less Broadway pizzazz and more contrasting moments of inner, quiet depth, as in *Icarus*. Those are in the black tradition, too. I'll never believe that, say, "Fix Me Jesus" in Ailey's signature-piece *Revelations*, is really a tour de force about high extensions and the deepest, slowest possible backbend.

IV

AMANDA SMITH

The works performed by the **David Gordon/Pick Up Co.** under the title *Not Necessarily Recognizable Objectives (or Wordsworth Rides Again)* on April 27-29 and May 4-6 at a loft at 541 Broadway, provided a delightful evening of dance. A member of the Grand Union, Gordon has one of the most fertile and zany imaginations around; the flyer for this concert showed him, cross-eyed, in a King Kong outfit, towering over the Manhattan skyline, grasping in his paws the four dancers who aided and abetted him in his efforts—Valda Setterfield, James McConnell, Martha Roth, and Stephanie Woodard.

Gordon strikes me as an uncommonly intelligent manipulator of theme and movement, as well as a skilled wordsmith. Three of his dances were built on circles which were interrupted by other movement motifs. *Interrupted Circle #1* began with Gordon and Setterfield, wearing shiny blue jogging pants and blue jogging shoes (the blues clash, Setterfield remarked later with dismay), loping in a sort of slow-motion run, side by side in a circle. *Interrupted Circle #2* and *#3* would begin the same way with other combinations of performers, but none of the circles was more intriguing than Gordon and Setterfield's. Both are authoritative performers, and particularly complementary on stage. Setterfield, formerly a member of the Merce Cunningham company, has the lean, honed look commonly associated with dancers, but Gordon is heavier, bulkier, and shaggy-bearded, rather like a hefty but graceful teddy bear. It was fascinating to see their very different bodies simultaneously articulating the same movement.

Their circling was interrupted by diagonal runs and naturalistic movement phrases, one of which ended with their facing a side wall. They began what sounded like a spontaneous discussion of which direction to use for a phrase, but it clearly wasn't spontaneous at all, because hand-lettered placards on the wall displayed their dialogue, word for word—a neat theatrical play on the theme of illusion vs. reality and one of several tricks with words Gordon employed during the course of the evening. Like the beginning of the dance, the conversation, too, was circular, and the second time through it, Gordon and Setterfield exchanged roles. Their dialogue completed, they began a close little duet, side by side, arms about each other's shoulders or waists; they edged sideways, changing directions carefully, always remaining linked together.

These four motifs—the circle, the diagonal phrases, the dialogue, the side-by-side linked duet—occurred throughout the hour-long piece with shifting personnel. At one point, all five dancers engaged in a

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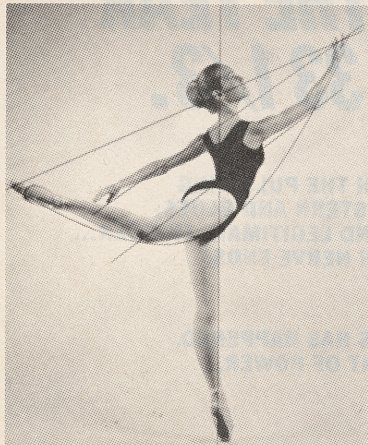


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About the Author

The author is a teacher of considerable experience in training dancers and the development of young students, having made a scientific study in anatomy for the training of dancers.

Her lectures on anatomy at Michigan State University in relation to the physical development and normal growth of the student were received with great enthusiasm.

A graduate, she was accorded the honor of fellow in classical ballet, Cecchetti method, by the Cecchetti Society of London, England.

Mrs. Hamer has served twenty years as Artistic Director and Choreographer for Ann Arbor Civic Ballet.

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REVIEWS (Cont'd)

seemingly confused dialogue about a walking phrase; "Oh, *now* I've got it!" they said over and over, inexplicably but humorously holding their noses. In *Women's Trio*, the three women performed a variant on the linked duet, their heads turning in precisely the same direction at precisely the same time; suddenly, from the speakers behind the audience, came the Tchaikovsky music for the cygnet quartet from *Swan Lake*. Gordon played with words again when he used a tape of a man and a woman (himself and Setterfield, I think, who is his wife) in a typical marital dialogue along the lines of "What's wrong?" "Nothing." "Yes, there is." "No, there isn't." Etc.

But Gordon's ultimate verbal manipulation and his fullest manipulation of the audience formed the dance's conclusion. As Gordon moved to the center of the space, his taped voice explained that he would now do a solo, which is by definition an egocentric act of "apparent vanity." To counteract the appearance of vanity, his voice tells us as he grins boyishly (as the tape refers to his boyish grin), he has arranged for the other dancers as well as the ticket taker and stage managers to stand in a group criticizing and praising him as he dances his solo, made up of movement from the previous phrases.

When Gordon was done dancing, he slipped behind a sliding door. The other four dancers then performed his solo at their own varying speeds; three of them slipped one by one through the door, and in the end, only Setterfield was left. What Gordon did not tell us, did not admit on the tape, was that he had thus indulged in the ultimate egocentrism and vanity having someone *else* dance your dance.

Douglas Dunn is another member of the Grand Union and a former member of the Merce Cunningham company. His debt to Cunningham was considerable in his demanding and unrelentingly intense new work, *Rille*, performed during the run of **Douglas Dunn & Dancers**, April 20-23, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music Opera House. The two sections of the full-evening work were done without music and overall there was the suggestion of a sort of domain, occupied and defined by the first dancers in the space, which others pass through but do not substantially alter.

Although the word "rille" actually means a long, narrow trench or valley on the moon's surface, I can't quite match that definition to the dance. The set—a four-foot-high construction of red walls sloping inward, ringing the sides and back—suggested an incomplete square. And indeed the dance began with four dancers—Dunn, Deborah Riley, Diane Frank, and Graham Conley—dressed in black and white, working about the perimeters and in the corners of the performing space, essentially delineating a square. Their combinations began with bouncy walks, opened up into leaps, became a mad little to-ing and fro-ing and then a long-lined, open-legged skipping combination. From the outset, Dunn himself was noticeable for his idiosyncratic dancing, his stiff-armed port de bras, his hands splayed open more than the other dancers'. Dunn slipped offstage before the others and when they left, he returned to dance alone barefoot (through-

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