

Robert J. Pierce

Mary Overlie
The Kitchen
484 Broome St.

Somehow I've ended up missing all of Mary Overlie's concerts until this past weekend. I'm not likely to miss any in the future. A good concert? I think so. I asked a friend who had gone on Thursday how it was. "Subtle," he said, enigmatically. Now that I've seen it, I agree.

The dance, "*Painter's Dream*," began at sunset. It was darkish when the lights at the Kitchen went out so Overlie could enter the space. And they didn't go on for a long time. Overlie danced in the dark. I liked that, even if I couldn't see clearly as she kept a loose, relaxed, flicking dynamic going, primarily in her arms. The lights did come up, eventually, slowly. And then, after a while, Overlie was joined by four others — all dressed comfortably except David Warrilow, who wore tie, red vest, yellow shirt, pink pants and white shoes. Peculiar? Not half as peculiar as his just standing there, in the middle of the space, doing nothing, looking morose as all hell. Meanwhile, the other four performers walk around kind of aimless like, looking at the ceiling, the walls, anything at all, but as if they were considering buying the place maybe, without much enthusiasm. Just wandering, languidly. For a long time: I mean a *long* time. Not real elapsed time, but perceived time. The second is endless. And riveting.

I was about to say *oduly* riveting, although I didn't mean it. My description, probably doesn't make what is happening — or not happening — sound riveting. But

dell Beavers stands on one leg, in a manner that makes me think of dive bombing planes, and takes little hops as everyone gathers around to watch with "Eh? What's *he* doing" attitudes. Later, he does a solo, a jumping one, I think, while sweeping the air with an arm. Langland and Martin do a unison, mirror-like, loping duet full of quick umphing up and down side jumps.

Later still, Warrilow returns with his white shoes over his shoulder and mumbles some more. And before long, the dance ends.

I thought it was wonderful. "*Painter's*

many choreographers have been developing different approaches to time and action than those we've been traditionally used to. After a while, you learn how to see differently, how to give up the old expectations. In my case, how to give up a need for constant, busy stimulation and give in to being mesmerized and fascinated by small details, by stillness and by quiet movement. I confess someone like Overlie can excite me as much as a Twyla Tharp or a Viola Farber, but in very different ways, obviously.

But back to the action, or lack of it: After a while, Warrilow starts to speak. His tale must be dreadful. It reminds me of an emotionally overwrought witness to an inquest of some kind. I can't be sure, though, since I'm not able to hear a single word. Warrilow mumbles. A trickle of impatient audience members leaves. A couple of hundred stay on. Eventually, Warrilow leaves.

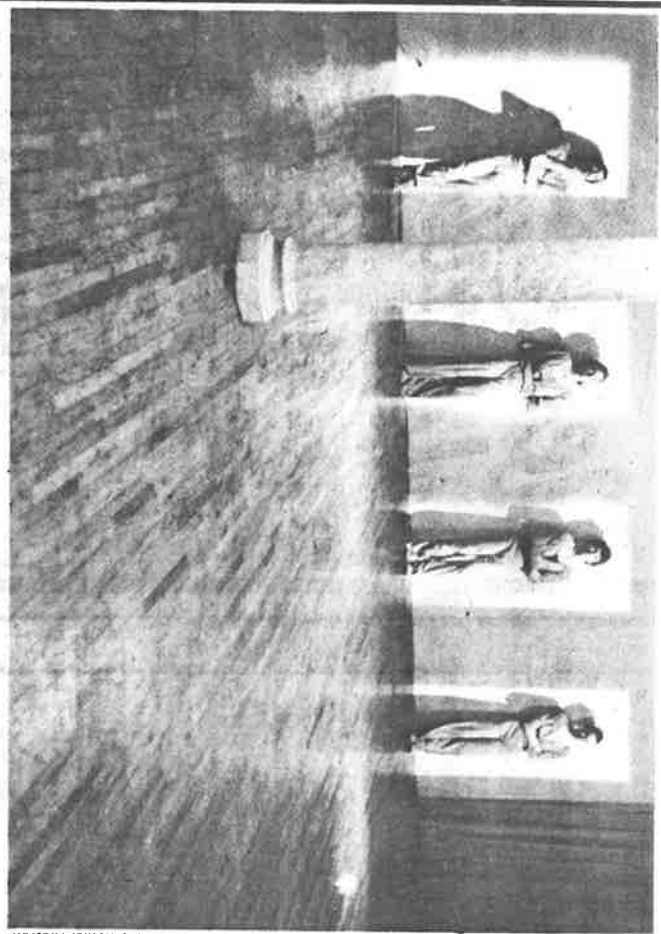
At a point shortly after, the four dancers line up against a wall, each encased in a box of projected white light. They wait. Arms crossed or hands clasped or bodies snuggling against the unresilient wall, they wait, patiently, pensively, wearily. After another long time, Paul Reamy Langland slowly inches into Nina Martin's demarcated space and she seems embarrassed sympathetic, expectant. Nothing is said. No one is touched. In fact, except later, when the four dancers are lined up making wonderful, sometimes overlapping spiky shapes with their arms, I don't remember anyone touching anyone else.

Pretty soon there's lots of activity (relatively speaking). The dancers travel in walking and loping formations, they gesture with their arms, all in a row. Wen-

Dream" is more or less minimal. More more than less, I guess. And very formal. The structure is solid. After a short while, everything fits, everything relates to everything else. Development, at first slow and later faster, is continuous. And the movement — and the lack of movement — is unusual and interesting.

What was it about? I don't know, except that it was about itself. It's about waiting and watching. It's about the contrast between stillness and locomotion. It's about speaking and gesturing without literal content. It's about dancing. What more could anyone want?

Mary Overlie's *Painter's Dream*



Nathaniel Tillion

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music