

The Noise of Music

By Deborah Jowitz

NEW YORK CITY BALLET. At the New York State Theater (to February 21). Premiere of Jerome Robbins's *Gershwin Concerto*.

TON SIMONS AND DANCERS. At the Kitchen (January 28 to 30). *Tally and Spread*.

BUCKET DANCE THEATER. At Theater of the Riverside Church (February 3 to 6). Garth Fagan's *Salon for Fashionable Five-Toed Dragons; Oatka Trail; Of Night, Light, and Melanin; From Before*.

RISA JAROSLOW AND DANCERS. At DTW's Bessie Schonberg Theater (February 4 to 8). Premiere of *Conspiracy*, also *Rites of Passing*.

Dutch-born Ton Simons is clearly a Cunninghamhammer in his predilection for nicely placed, elongated movement—delivered with cool intensity, and set out in clever structures. He has some very bright quirks of his own though. *Tally* happens on and around a big table. There's a chair too, and a Campbell's soup can that Simons—a strong, brusque, well set-up man—plunks down and retrieves in an obsessive hard-edged pattern that involves sliding back in his chair, thrusting one leg onto the table, holding out the can, and so on. He's joined by Ellen van Schuylenburch, and thereafter material that you see/have seen as solos can be put into duets (e.g. he passes the can across to her; she gives it back). On the table, off the table, slicing the air with her legs, wriggling her fingers greedily around her mouth, van Schuylenburch is a marvel. She seizes on every movement with a kind of zest, knows just where to pull it out and when to let it fly. There's nothing unfinished about her performing, but it's human and sensual, as luxuriant as the silky black hair she swings around. I always think she looks like someone who's just swallowed a mouthful of blackberries.

Simon's group dance, *Spread*, is performed by nine dancers on a nine-square grid, accompanied by Andrew Lord's tape of Mexican children shouting winning lottery numbers. The dance combines numerical precision with gleeful adventurousness. A lot of people spread out over the grid—sometimes resting, sometimes testing the boundaries of their squares with great stretches of leg, sometimes hurtling into each other's vicinity for duets, sometimes watching from the sidelines. Simons

combines pleasantly idiosyncratic human gestures and gusts of emotion with big, clever dancing. Fine dancing too, sometimes *very* fine from Simons, van Schuylenburch, Susan Alexander, Anne Bryan, Pat Cremins, David Dorfman, Karen Fink, and Rick Merrill, including a knockout solo by Merrill, whose long legs eat space in a wonderfully hushed and resilient way.