

Concert: Pop and Dance

By JACK ANDERSON

THAT old question, "What is dance?" will probably remain forever unanswerable to anyone's complete satisfaction. Yet it keeps being asked and the Kitchen is now asking it in programs called "Almost Dance." Each concert in the series, which concludes Sunday, is different and each features performers who try to use movement in unusual ways. On Sunday night, a dance company and two pop music groups shared the bill and the dance company was the liveliest of the attractions.

Kinematic was no ordinary dance troupe. It specialized in manic, jittery movement performed at a breakneck pace. If this movement could talk, it would squeak.

"For Those Less Fortunate Than Myself," choreographed and danced

by Maria Lakis and Robin Klingsmith, showed well-bred women at a social gathering. However, manners gave way to mayhem as they quarreled for no discernible reason, but with ever mounting violence.

Chaos also triumphed in "Unilateral Neglect," choreographed and performed by Mary Richter and Tamar Kotoske. Frantic gestures were accompanied by dialogue and, although the statements remained grammatically correct, they were filled with preposterous non sequiturs. Meaning kept being invaded by nonsense and the dance, like a theater-of-the-absurd comedy, made one feel queasy even as it made one smile.

The pop groups were less striking. While desert images were projected on screens in "Big Cactus," members of Thick Pigeon, led by Miranda, parodied cowgirls, desperados in Western movies, television talk shows and Las Vegas nightclubs. Presumably, Thick Pigeon was implying that all these things were corny. But who in the audience didn't know that already?

Offering excerpts from "No Local Stops," the musicians of T-Venus clattered away on amplified instruments, thereby drowning out their own lyrics. Julia Heyward wore what resembled a space explorer's uniform and her songs contained cryptic references to war and religion. Lights attached to her costume occasionally blinked on and off in changing patterns. Yet, despite these fancy trappings, her swinging and swaying gestures were not all that different from the swingings and swayings that cabaret singers have always employed to emphasize musical points.