

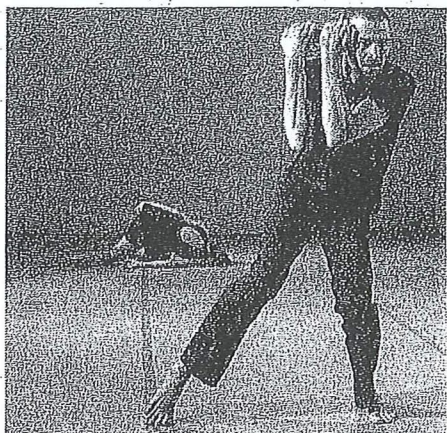
FEBRUARY 12-18, 2003

Downtown Experiments

ALL IN THE FEET

BY DEBORAH JOWITT

» The Construction Company studio on East 18th Street is small, holding 60 in folding chairs. Dancers rush past the audience to enter, or pour through the door from the gallery up front. All the more bold, then, that Pat Catterson

CURTIS AND REKOERT IN *CROWD PLEASER*

son used 28 dancers in her intriguing new *Crowd Pleaser*. They're rarely all out there at the same time, but 16 of them do form a horde—rushing, staggering, staring, falling—both spectators of and participants in a dangerous, unstable climate. At one point, they jump the rhythm proper of “The Star Spangled Banner” while humming it under their breaths. This echoes a duet in which Spela Sterle keeps trying to sing our national anthem; Dusan Tynek clamps a hand over her mouth every time, even throws his whole body on top of her.

Catterson has drawn gestures from newspaper photographs. These recur: an index finger to the mouth, a crumpled posture on the floor, and so on, in finely articulated solos for Helen Hansen, Nicole Corea, and Bianca Johnson; in small scenes; and in the crowd action that frames them. Catterson's subject is the injustice, arrogance, and political corruption that oozes from today's papers, but accomplished artist that she is, she avoids propagandizing and specific references. Katie Piggott, laughing hysterically, harangues three women who pay no attention, then quietly recounts to us something very terrible—all in a Slavic gibberish.

A tap dancer as well as a choreographer, Catterson saves the taps until the end here. After an alarming duet in which Michele Curtis poses like a fashion model, oblivious to danger, while tall, lean Pascal Rekoert has a love affair with a pistol (and then has to shoot Curtis), the group piles up against the back wall. Maya Krishnasastri, Dylan Smith, and Robin Tribble, dressed as police, menace the fallen with machine-gun tapping and barked commands, while the heap slowly inches along the wall. It's as if we are the camera, panning over the bodies from some genocidal atrocity. ▣