

Stanley Love Performance Group

Three New Works

May 31 - June 6, 2000



dance

MIX IT UP

BY DEBORAH JOWITT

While an enthusiastic audience watches Stanley Love's dancers live at the Soho gallery Location 1, the performance is being "streamed" at www.location1.org. How "now" can you get? Also up to the postmodern minute is Love's work. He mines clichés of show dancing and soulful ballads, whips them into shape with chops learned at Juilliard, and ends up with a hybrid in which irony only partially mocks his affection for popular styles.

Sometimes almost all 11 dancers occupy a wide, shallow strip of floor. Love keeps them evenly spaced, and they aim their energetic dancing, gestures, and facial takes at us. Especially in *Supremes Sweet*, they give the impression of being in a nightclub number that's running amok. Men and women alike wear black gloves and blue evening gowns dripping with sequins. And, yes, they hug themselves in an access of "Ooh, I'm so sexy!" and throw up their arms to indicate "Here I am, Miss Marvelous!" They underscore the Supremes' words (in a duet to "Stop in the Name of Love," A. Apostol and Lauri Hogan not only play traffic cop, they shape hearts with their fingers). Matthew Mohr as the DJ gives the illusion of stopping numbers in the middle. In the final reprise of "I Hear a Symphony," Apostol, Hogan, and Love endeavor 10 times to get past "You're giving me a chill now." Love himself subverts both costume and club style with a freakout of cartwheels and frantic failed virtuosity.

In the more varied *20*, the musical selections range from a snippet of Mozart's *Requiem* to Junior Vasquez, with lashings of Bette Midler and Judy Garland. Here Love plays with counterpoint and different facings; stillness dialogues

with almost aerobic motion. A trio whips itself into abandon. A quintet bursts into a fine arrangement of strenuous jumps and turns.

Love aims to reveal the private feelings the songs induce, but the three works he shows also evoke the life of the performer, or performance as life. In *Proud Mary*, a powerful solo to Ike and Tina Turner songs, Alan Eto, wearing a dress, repeatedly applies lipstick, looks around expectantly, and cringes. Whether he's mincing on tiptoe, clutching the wall, removing garments, confronting the audience, or walking toward a spotlight while lying on his side, his actions are bravely, pathetically, askew.

Love often goes over the top or succumbs to camp, but he's definitely a craftsman groping his way to art—whatever that now is.

The Village Voice

Listed in Issue:

Location One

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