

# the village VOICE

VOL. XXXIIII No. 12 •

MARCH 21, 1989 • \$1.00

**DONETSK BALLET OF THE USSR.** At City Center, February 22 to 26.

**STEVE KRIECKHAUS.** *The Weatherfields.* At Dance Theater Workshop, March 2 to 6.

**POETS AND DANCERS.** Carla Blank/Ishmael Reed, Ishmael Houston-Jones/Dennis Cooper, Almon Grinstead/Kenwood Elmslie, Lisa Kraus/Anne Waldman. At St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, February 24 to 26.

**SARA PEARSON AND PATRICK WIDRIG.** *Partners Who Touch, Partners Who Don't Touch* and other dances. At the Ethnic Folk Arts Center, February 18 to 20.

BY DEBORAH JOWITT

I think of onstage Sara Pearson as a vivid little gypsy—tough with a fey streak, maybe gifted with strange powers. It's not just her looks or style, but her choices and the way she puts dances together. Patrik Widrig lies limp on the floor in *Interview Duet*, and she measures and probes him with fierce concentration, makes us imagine she's open-

## DANCE

ing his chest and pulling out his numb heart. In *You're Sounding Like My Mother*, she squats over a washtub, hanging clothes out on a tiny line attached to the tub, the ancient activity accompanied by the frantic contemporary words she's saying: a litany of unsuccessful phone calls, then an escalating report of clichés that have been dumped on her in the guise of maternal advice. Her performing is endearingly matter-of-fact, but she burns the clothes, and I imagine her casting runes.

*Partners Who Touch, Who Don't Touch*, the new, long duet on the joint Pearson-Widrig program, is like a bundle of bright scraps of this and that she un-

ties and spreads out like a peddler. All have to do with compatibility and difference and compatible differences. Widrig stands in a tub, while Pearson outlines him in shaving cream. He speaks in German of his family, and she, straining to be accurate, translates for us. (Yet later, he has to batter her with a word before she will translate.) They stand on a ladder and collaborate on an art project—ritualistically spilling uncooked pasta, gobs of jello, and other items into a mound.

They dance too—to Mozart et al. She crosses the stage to juicy gospel music as if she were coming apart and gluing herself together simultaneously. Widrig, a compelling dancer too, does a brief solo reminiscent of his own fine *Letter Home*—a dance in which he seems to be constantly ducking into new confined spaces, like water seeking its level. They dance together—often on the floor, as if all dances began and ended in bed.

I can't always fit the many pieces together in my mind, but the performing never strikes a false note. Although I saw this concert in rehearsal and had to imagine columns of orange light and whatnot, it still cast a spell. ■