



SHAWON HENNIGAR

MUSICAL MYSTERY TOUR: HESS, CAINES, AND RACHEL COHEN (FOREGROUND)

The postmodern world often overreaches itself dreaming up new mixtures, and ends up with, say, artichoke ice cream. Christopher Caines tries a more genial combination: a musicale with dancers. The atmosphere in the Construction Company studio suggests an evening of parlor music performed by an excellent pianist, Marija Ilic, and accomplished singers Alexandra Montano and Sarah Gibson. The composers, however, range from 17th- and 18th-century Italians through Schoenberg and Gershwin. And the choreography, sensitively keyed to the ambience of the songs and to the different performers, is intense and edgily eccentric.

To Antonio Caldara's "*Sebben, crudele*," Luciano Lazzarotto becomes a yearning Pierrot. To Fauré's "*Le Papillon et la Fleur*" (dedicated to the late Edward Gorey), Ariane Anthony, swathed in black and hobbled by her draperies, is circled by the masked Caines, who induces a dark orgy of fluttering. Sally Hess plies her long legs but also licks her fingers over Giulio Caccini's melting "*Delizie contente*." Hess is elegant even when loopy, while Nicole Berger, especially in Alessandro Parisotti's "*Se tu m'ami*," is often at odds with herself—feet turned in, arms tightly folding, doing *arabesques sautées* one minute, tripping over her feet the next—and playful with Montano. (I admire Berger's honest

response to the songs; the others sometimes dramatize them in a generalized way.)

Caines enjoys small mysteries. To no music, Rika Burnham enters, wearing a dowdy dress and hat and carrying a suitcase. With Caines, this visitor enacts a detailed memory of a car trip and the burial of jewelry. When Hess touches Caines with a finger during a Schoenberg song, he shivers. Gershwin's "Someone to Watch Over Me" and Handel's "Oh Sleep, why dost thou leave me?" (sung eloquently by Gibson) merge in an enigmatic scenario; Burnham is not simply awakened but restored to life. The evening is less about dancing to music than about dancing through music.

the village

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DANCE

Does Leather Go With Lace? Why Not?

MIX IT UP

BY DEBORAH JOWITT