

Moments to Remember (or Not)

The best, worst, most and least of 1992: Times critics sort through memories pleasant and painful.

DANCE/2

Russian flair vies with domestic diamonds.

THEATER/5

Most happy musicals, new and revived, meet dazzling urban monologues.

FILM/9

New directors thrive; what are the old hands up to? (Don't ask about Woody.)

VIDEO & AUDIO/21

Get a McMovie to go, and play it on a new, sharper picture tube.

CLASSICAL MUSIC/29

Was there musical life after Mozart? Very little for poor Rossini.

POP & JAZZ/30

Madonna takes the Year of the Woman to heart (and bosom).

TELEVISION/33

Exit Johnny Carson, enter Larry King.

ART/35

Even in a rich year, Matisse is the master.

ARTS & ARTIFACTS/37

Lincoln shows up at Sotheby's. Huck Finn ducks out.

ARCHITECTURE/37

Post-Modern is out. Post-Industrial is in.



POISON PEN Zany politics abounded, but editorial cartoonists found time for the culture wars. Page 32.



Dance/1992



ANNA KINSELLOFF

The Graham Genius Still Soars But Too Bad About That Mangled 'Swan'

The Eternal Flame More than a year after her death, the genius of Martha Graham was reborn in "Panorama," an especially intense drama for 20 women in red who seemingly stride off into the future, created in 1955 and never seen before in New York, that season by the Graham company was the season's answer.

Dancer of the Year Indescribable Ethan Stiefel, a byzantine Mercury whose energetic party-vibed the New York City Ballet's Balanchine repertory and the Institute's gauzy charming rags workshop, the Diamond Project.

Other Dancers of the Year The women were no slouchers, but especially memorable moments came from the men: Eric Chau's charisma in Paul Taylor's "Epic," Robert La

Foucault's embalming in Twyla Tharp's "Sex, Lies," Dennis Gibson's loaded lesson in Eliot Feld's "Evoe," the distilled elegance of Michael Barrymore (aka a City Ballet guru) in Balanchine's "Two-Corona," all the exultant even in American Ballet Theatre's "Giselle" and super-high exuberance from young Horacio Belenguer, a future star in the Palma Opera Ballet School.

Primes That Restored Faith in Art George Balanchine's "Cradle of Adonis," a resounding call to the gods with sumptuous shapes; Alvin Nikolai's "Autumn," a delicate, dreamlike meditation on night and day; and Mr. Feld's "Endless," an elegant swirling image of death as part of life.

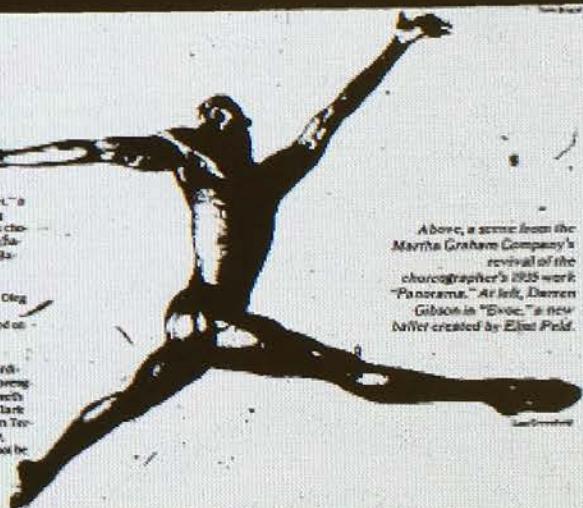
Primes That Restored Faith in Twyla Tharp "Oasis," a neo-classical sur-

pise of playful complexity, and "Scenes," a tropical-flavored delight, were dazzling dances from one of America's sharpest choreographers; the early grandeur of imagination was absent from a tour led by Mr. Balanchine and herself.

First Prize for Mangling a Classic Ole Vagrova's "Swan Lake," in which a chorus line and Odette abandon Siegfried on the floor.

Sad Burden In 1992, death took an unusually large number of dancers and choreographers — including Hanya Holm, Kenneth MacMillan, Charles (Kew) Coles and Clark Taylor — as well as the designer Rudolf Tepavcic and the composer John Cage, without whom American dance wouldn't be the same.

Above, a scene from the Martha Graham Company's revival of the choreographer's 1955 work "Panorama." At left, Dennis Gibson in "Evoe," a new ballet created by Eliot Feld.



ERIC ANDERSON

Russian Flair, Danish Dazzle, Domestic Diamonds

Big Gold Revival The Kirov Ballet presents Moscow's Leonid Lavrovsky's "Romeo and Juliet," and this version from 1960 — the first Russian staging of the Prokofiev ballet — remains unsurpassed for its dramatic power and musical tenderness.

They Just Tarnish When it was restaged this fall, "Evoe," Paul Taylor's 1987 solo made up of ordinary gestures in recorded time signature, proved as unconvincing study in quiet desperation.

Transatlantic Fireworks The Royal Danish Ballet's spring Bournonville Festival in Copenhagen dazzled the eye with August Bournonville's buoyant 19th-century choreography and prompted scholarly discussions about preservation and revivals.

Talking Points Despite some unevenness, the New York City Ballet's Diamond Project brought together several illuminating new works in various idioms of the balletic language.

Continuity Ambitions Dances — serious and comic, crisp and quirky — presented on New York stages by such choreographers as David Alcott, Nicholas Obrestad, Steven O'Rourke, Alvin Ailey, Mark Morris and Ed Wubben made one long to see more of their output.

Continuity Ambitions With its dull choreography and pallid dances, the Pomeranian Dance Theater of Italy made a decidedly premature New York debut.

Domestic Diamond Carmen de Lavallade revealed her peerless artistic range

when she performed Geoffrey Holder's up-lifting "Crescent" with the Traylor Dance Company and John Butler's harsh "Portrait of Billie" at Jacob's Pillow.

Reason for Worry Charming our dance audience, as he did this year, Mark Morris can do no bad things with movement.

Reasons to Believe Although many companies are Marlowed with debts, managerial failings and lack of audiences, the Pioneer Dance Theater of Italy made a decidedly promising New York debut.

A New Year's Wish That all images everywhere will solve their dramatic problems and give rise to new artistic achievement.



The gay activist and performer Patrick Scully in his "Queer Nation."

TENNILLE KINNEDY

A Year of Schubert for Snoozing And Saxophones for Sighing

New Kid on the Block John Selby, a young dancer with vivid dramatic presence, proved that he could not only choreograph but could make fresh use of an old technique in "Moon-dance" and "Jack and Jill"; new pieces presented by American Ballet Theater.

Skating Chickie Patrick Scully, a young gay activist and performer from Minneapolis, put on a rhythmic and learned pants less and wryly introduced us to reverberating art in "Queer Nation" at Dance Theater Workshop.

Unlikely Curios Soloist violinist and pianist in a small coal shed, Sangita Wagner made a rare New York appearance and Judson Church (but confirmed that less is an ideal move) — and that she is one of the most modest dance artists of her time.

Will the Choreographer Please Stand Up? Who were the choreographers who do most of what a year's best dances off the circuit, in the dressing rooms, in Gary Churchill's drama "Maid Family" and the twanging, ditties, moans and groans in Spike Lee's film "Malcolm X"? See Appeal. Pat Gray's proved dance car-

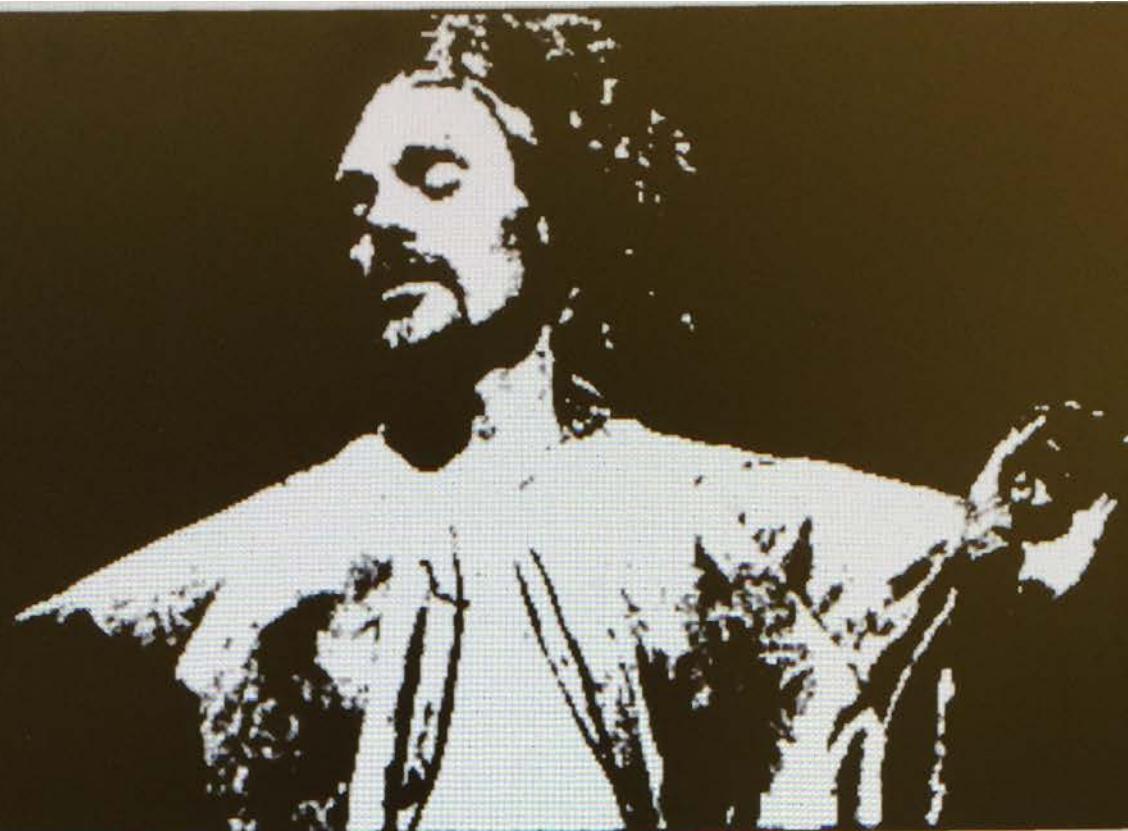
be insanely sexy without an explicit gesture or her witty, cryptic persona. "Sex House," a great for interacting ranks of sake phantasms and dancers performed in New York by the Ohio State University Dance Company.

Fried Sleep On a nervous or revealing dinner in sight in Mark Morris's dark new "Bedtime," performed at the Jacob's Pillow — just simple sleep and love and death in Schubert's lucid and rich merging of the choreographer's narrative and sympathetic styles.

Time Slap Guy-style playwriting, choreography, visual art and performance are much in evidence, but a festive little festival called Tom Don, devoted to lassos in the air, went under after only a few performances at the Plymouth. Time for party, from me!



The Kirov Ballet production of Leonid Lavrovsky's "Romeo and Juliet," with Alexander Galyshev and Larisa Leshchenko.



TOM BRAUN

The gay activist and performer Patrick Scully in his "Queer Nations."

JENNIFER DUNNING

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New Kid on the Block John Selya, a young dancer with vivid dramatic presence, proved that he could not only choreograph but could make fresh use of an old technique in "Mondance" and "Jack and Jill," new pieces presented by American Ballet Theater.

Skirting Clichés Patrick Scully, a rangy young gay activist and performer from Minneapolis, put on a miniskirt and turned pain, loss and wry misadventures into revivifying art in "Queer Nations" at Dance Theater Workshop.

Unsalty Caviar Soft as velvet and as private as a small coiled shell, Sanghi Wagner made a rare New York appearance at the

be intensely sexy without an explicit gesture or word in her witty, crisply sensuous "Sax House," a piece for interacting ranks of saxophonists and dancers performed in New York by the Ohio State University Dance Company.

Pass the Brandy Or smelling salts at least, to those who ran the gauntlet of disembodied dancers' arms and the maze of dark dead-end passageways that Yvonne Meier constructed out of refrigerator boxes to terrify her audiences in "The Shining."

Freud Sleeps Not a neurosis or revealing dream in sight in Mark Morris's dark new "Rodtische" performed at the Jacob's Pillow