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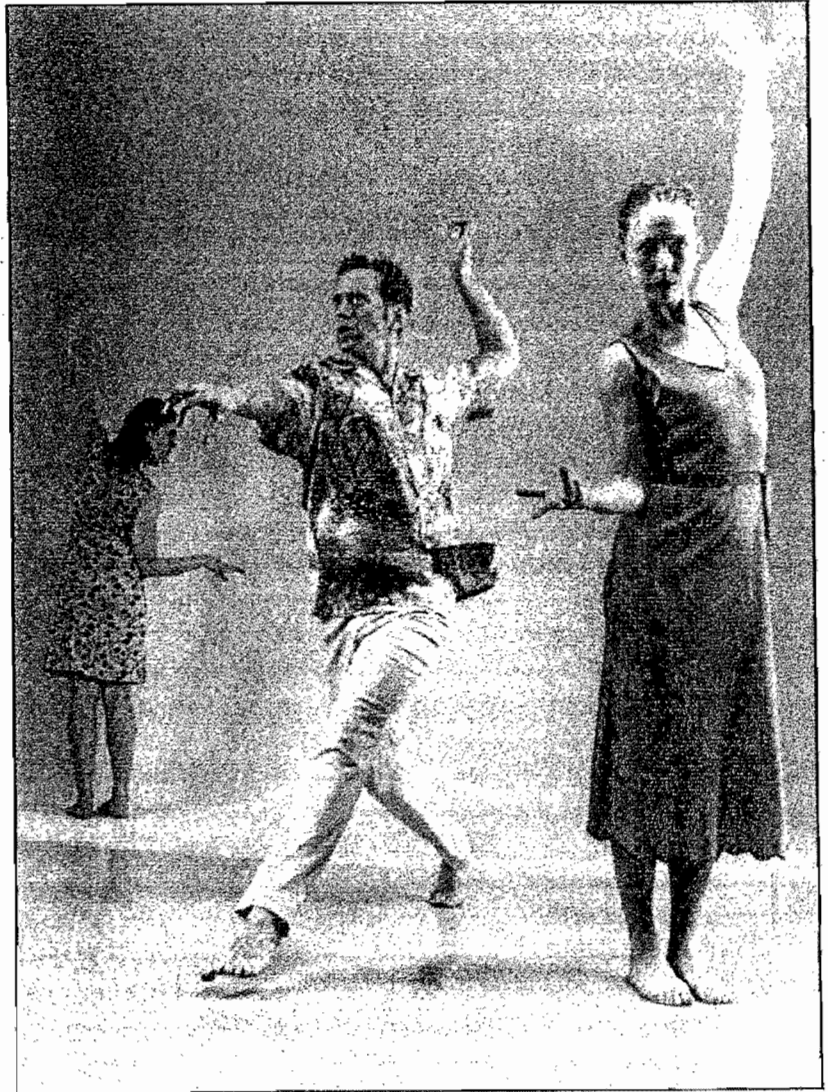
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A Life in Dance

Ilaan Egeland, Neil Greenberg and
Dance Kaleidoscope's memoirs in motion
BY SARA WOLF

HOW DIFFERENT THE EXPANSIVE SILENCES OF NEIL Greenberg, whose one-night gig at the Skirball Cultural Center June 22 proved how incredibly sublime textural and communicative movement, all by itself, can be. Despite unforeseen technical difficulties (i.e., bad weather) that prevented his New York-based company from performing at full tilt (at the risk of falling on a sopping wet stage), it was a delight to spend an evening with the finely honed wit and movement sensibility of Greenberg, whose trio *What Happened* and quartet *Sequel* employed, parodied and subverted the suspenseful and melodramatic trappings of Hitchcock movies. Greenberg finely hones his material, shaving off anything and everything extraneous until we're left with spare, tightly organized phrases that at first have the rhythmic evenness of a declarative sentence (one can almost hear the dancers trying to explain and defend themselves).

Although Greenberg skillfully uses a range of cinematic strategies (flashback, freeze-frame, stop action, slow pan) as well as two well-placed convex mirrors at the rear corners of the stage to play with our perceptions, his goal seems not to simply mimic filmic POV, but to embody the atmosphere of intrigue at the heart of any great mystery. He slowly builds narrative and character at the same time that he questions it, creating ambiguity with an added gesture, a costume change (Do we believe him, more or less, now that he's wearing that shirt?), a look askance, the interjection of a jagged, hair-raising violin chord, or the projection of text which, acting as another character, provides humorous asides such as "Don't listen to her. She's lying." The movement winds around and doubles back upon itself (it is a mystery after all), allowing us the space to marvel at its imagistic power, and the dancers' ability to imbue even the vaguest gesture with multiple textures and meanings.



(from left) Paige Martin, Neil Greenberg and Justin Lynch in
"This is What Happened." Photo: Johan Elbers