

Burton show tiresome

# Solomons company pioneers in confusion

By AGNES KRUCHIO

Anyone who has seen Gus Solomons dance will attest to his magnificent physical skills.

Looselimbbed and muscular, of cedarlike proportions, he is a slim, tall tight-bodied dancer. In his recent appearance at Burton Auditorium, he impressed the audience with his piece, cat. #CCS70-10/13N SSR-GSJ9m, in which with the greatest of ease he took a leg and wrapped it around his neck, revolving like a grotesque giant spider.

His dancing style was eminently suited to the kind of athletic, angular motion required in that piece, but as the evening progressed, one realized that it was his brand of agility which determined his dancing style.

Dance has a popular, cornball definition as "harmony in motion"; if Solomons cannot/will not adjust to the norm, he will bend the norm to adjust to him. The product is dance with a lot of speech replacing music and other media graphics thrown in.

The results are mixed; the style works excellently in pieces like the

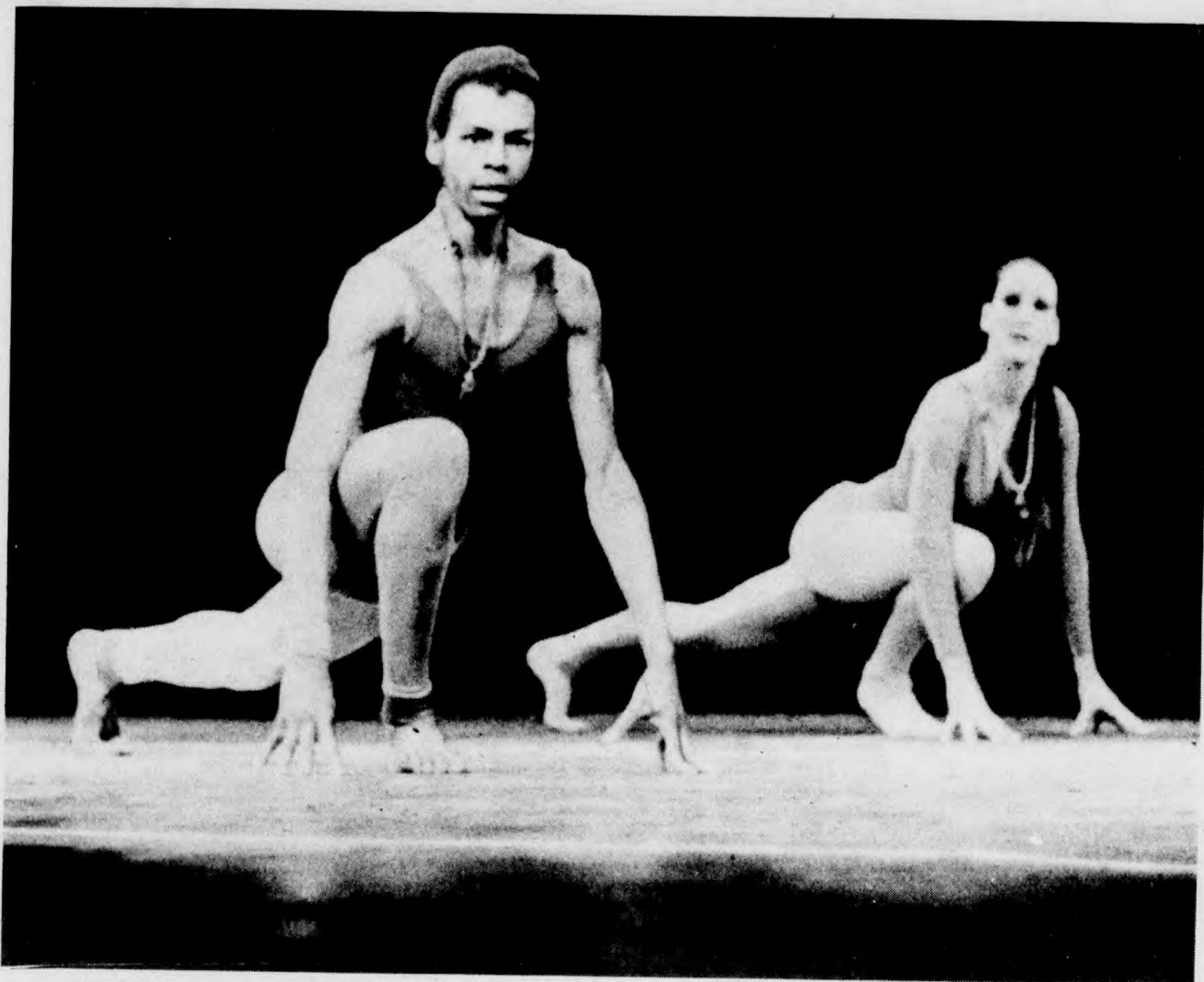
Gut-Stomp Lottery Kill, where the dancers have to choose their sequences from a stack of cards, and create a fun-filled crazy cacophony of sounds, movements and zany costumes, but an entire evening of it becomes extremely tiresome.

A fault common to all the pieces is the repetitive nature of many sequences, which, though used significantly in "catalogue" to indicate the dehumanized nature of athletics, frequently works against even so radiant a dancer as Santa Aloï.

In Yesterday, the high degree of verbalization continues. The entire dance is set to abstract poetry. Even in this age of sophisticated audiences, long stretches of poetry are hard to follow; Solomons must remember that he is a pioneer of sorts, and that in the beginning, at least, he should reduce the amount of poetry he includes in a dance piece — this notwithstanding the fact that Solomons is an excellent elocutor.

Brillo (sic) is a thoroughly New York piece, the only one that communicated to the audience something more than pain at the intense confusion on stage.

Its main theme, communications and the troubles dancers have in communicating what they want to say, is an appropriate conclusion to an evening where moments of brilliant technique mingled with others in which the company's energies did not quite reach the audience.



The Solomons dance company, who appeared Oct. 16 in the Performing Arts Series.

## Farce and Molière at Burton

The National Theatre School's bilingual touring company will present two evenings of farce and comedy this week in Burton Auditorium.

Tonight at 6 p.m., the Troupe will perform an English medieval farce, Gammer Gurton's Needle, involving rich but difficult language and a comic situation representing one of the origins of broad farce.

The double bill, An Absurd Revue, is a collage of sound, movement, speech and music played in both English and French. Needle and Revue take 75 and 40 minutes respectively.

Tomorrow at 6 p.m., the company will perform in French Eugene Labiche's delicate farce, L'affaire de la Rue Lourcine (30 minutes), and Molière's Le Mariage Forcé (45 minutes), played in Commedia dell'Arte style with masks.

Tickets are \$1 for the general public and 50 cents for students, available at the Burton Auditorium box office.

# Cruise down memory lane in Graffiti

By WARREN CLEMENTS

American Graffiti is a light-hearted time trip back to 1962, when the Beach Boys were singing Surfin' Safari, everything was "superfine" and "bitchin'", and the waitresses at the local burger drive-in raced from car to car on roller skates.

The story centres on a small pack of high school friends, the day before two of them, Curt and Steve, are due to fly east to college. Steve, a blonde-haired, freckle-faced student council president who looks as though he's been through a few Lassie films, is going steady with Laurie, a heart-breakingly cute cheerleader — but that romance is on the rocks.

John is the local greaser with a heart of gold, cruising for action in his spiffy yellow hot rod. Toad is a buck-toothed, bespectacled mouse who substitutes wise-cracks for confidence. And Curt is a high school kid who's matured too fast, and can't decide whether to leave for the university world or

stay with his friends in the small-town nest.

The story grows naturally from the characters. Laurie and Steve fight, make up, then fight again; Toad picks up a dizzy girl and has to prove himself by picking up some "hard stuff" at the local liquor store; John goes cruising and winds up with somebody's kid sister; and Curt gets picked on by a street gang.

All the while, through sock hops and lovers' lanes, we hear the guttural voice of disc jockey Wolfman Jack introducing the Big Bopper, Fats Domino, and every worthwhile pop hit of the late 50s and early 60s, coming through loud and clear on the indispensable car radio.

Most undergrads (myself included) weren't even in their teens in 1962, but we've been so inundated by oldies but goldies and the nostalgia trip in the papers that we too can feel sentimental about a period we never experienced, and laugh at scenes

which shouldn't be, but somehow are, achingly familiar.

American Graffiti was shot in colour on a California set, and every artifact from the early 60s has been painstakingly preserved or re-captured. It might be due to producer Francis Ford Coppola, who directed one of the best period pieces in recent memory. The Godfather. Or to visual consultant Haskell Wexler, who won an Academy Award for his lighting and photography of In the Heat of the Night, a fine small-town picture.

Ultimately Graffiti belongs to director George Lucas (THX-1138) who has proved himself a master at detailing those little incidents which were so embarrassing in 1962, but are so humorous 11 years later in the safety of the theatre.

The film is no more memorable than a solid gold weekend on CHUM, but it's a really enjoyable journey into the not-so-distant past, conducted with humour and compassion.

