

'Fivephase Meltdown'

(Continued from Page 13)

the three Radon Daughters proceeded to read phrases from works on love, sex, and radiation that fused together to form a sort of ironic poem.

As the play progressed, the women talked individually, simultaneously, or in a well-orchestrated babble of various repeated phrases. There were amusing, touching monologues about looking for a job as a receptionist (and being asked the somewhat absurd question, "Why do you want to become a receptionist?"), about the need for a good friend to "hang out with," and about the memories and feelings evoked by the sight of a white bakery bag.

Not Too Serious

One of the more enjoyable things about "Meltdown" is the way in which the playwright and actors, while dealing with all the vagaries and abstractions of experimental theater, never take it too seriously. They make philosophical statements and speak in abstractions, and the next moment one will look wearily at the audience and groan, "Here she goes again!" Rucker seems to have discovered that experimental theater and strange dialogue will go down with audiences a lot better with a little humor.

Another pleasant surprise was the way in which the participants gave the impression of total professionalism while dealing with what was essentially an unfinished piece. "Meltdown" was such a flexible play that mishaps such as missing pianos and percussionists held up in

traffic, which would paralyze a more traditional work, were events to be incorporated into the play's form.

Russo's music was interesting, and fit in well with the play. Surprisingly, I had more trouble with the rather forced "pop" tunes that the Radon Daughters sang than with Russo's avant-garde melodies. There was also some problem with the percussion, and I had the strange feeling that Donohue occasionally entered his own world of sound, without reference to whether or not the audience could understand the words that he was accompanying.

The dancer, Margaret Hannigan, is a talented performer. During the first act, her movements commented on the descriptions of the mind-numbing, useless work that the actresses were presenting. I was disappointed to find that she was not really integrated into the second act; instead, she sat by Russo looking somewhat bored and then, near the end, gave a five-minute performance that was skilled but didn't seem related to the rest of the play.

The Sept. 15 performance was a highly interesting and involving piece of theater. Rucker is concerned that the category "experimental theater" will discourage Brooklyn audiences from attending. "There must be something in the title that scares them, but people who come have no problem with it.

"People underestimate themselves; they think it's something crazy." She smiles. "But it's no more crazy than trying to deal with everyday craziness.

"I really believe in entertainment. I believe in self-expression too, but I don't want to bore everybody with talking about myself. I want to be able to share that kind of communication."