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DANCE IN REVIEW

K2 Dance and Arts Company Merce Cunningham Studio

K2 Dance and Arts Company celebrated its 10th anniversary with a mixed-media program on Friday night. But the media never mixed harmoniously. Kay Nishikawa, the troupe's choreographer, kept allowing dancers to be consistently overshadowed by other aspects of the productions.

Films by Kishi Ui upstaged everyone in two offerings. The cinematic images in "Rodin's Shoulder," a premiere, included views of rustling trees, city streets, rehearsing dancers and some sculptures by Rodin. Taped orchestral arrangements of operatic arias by Puccini, Verdi, Mascagni and Leoncavallo served as the accompaniment.

On stage, Laurie Bulman, Pam Levy, Robert Mohr, Kathryn E. Walsh and Ms. Nishikawa did little more than roll gently on the floor and, once they rose to their feet, waft about. As a sculptor, Rodin is known for his sense of weight and mass and for his ability to make emotions seem locked into stone. The dancing, in contrast, was wispy -- for no apparent reason. And the hot-blooded music made it all too painfully evident that "Rodin's Shoulder" suffered from choreographic anemia.

The same dancers (with the exception of Ms. Nishikawa and the addition of Rick Guimond) wandered vaguely through "L'Abbe C's Daydreams." A score for saxophone and percussion by Rob Brown and Whit Dicky occasionally perked them up, but never enough to make them more compelling than the films of rooftops, smoking chimneys, swimming fish and a tongue licking a doorknob.

Three actors -- Danny Carlton, Diane Cortiella and Bronwyn Rucker -- dominated "Catastrophe," a work in progress. They recited texts by Lee Ellickson about such problems as urban violence, getting out of town, doing magic tricks and changing from a human being into a nightingale. Although their diction was not always exemplary, they commanded attention with their quirky comments. Unfortunately, there were no choreographic idiosyncrasies. Once again, Ms. Nishikawa remained content to have dancers just drift hither and thither. Mr. Mohr did so wearing a dress. The work was so bland that one never wondered why.