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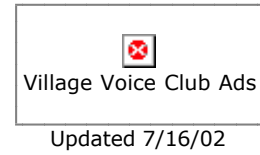
# Whirled Dance

July 3 - 9, 2002

Two squares of light on the floor were the subtle focal point for *It's All About Love* (Cunningham Studio, May), an evening-length work inspired by choreographer Guido Taveri's post-9-11 re-evaluations. In the hands of his Sanza Nemo Collective—a nimble, vivid ensemble of 40 dancers from Italy to Denmark—it became a 21st-century *Canterbury Tales*. A high-speed dating game led into a mad peasant wedding. A mother hectored her daughter ("It's my only job, your happiness!"). One Japanese woman in a teeming throng had several dozen hilarious fainting spells, while a gentle lady in a yellow gown watched over the whole brood. In the end, as a satire of machismo turned ominously from throwing fists to flying planes, the dancers crowded into the squares of light. A tense moment passed, then a few stretched their hands into the sky, with others dancing slow and close. Skilled in both mayhem and meditation, the Collective shared the tenderness still to be found in the midst of life's terrors. —Alicia Mosier

Two legends depicting women as passionate, jealous animals underlaid new works choreographed and deftly performed by mature contemporary Japanese dancer Midori Kashiwagi (Florence Gould, June 6). With a small white fox mask and lavender umbrella, Kashiwagi poignantly embodied slyness in *Matsuri Fantasy*, partnering three hot, bare-chested male dynamos (Slam, Billy Angell, and Francisco Graciano) to driving Japanese drumming. The tantalizing men, whose credits range from Broadway to MTV, physically towered over but never shaded the slight Kashiwagi, who smoothly seduced and ensnared them one by one. As Princess Kiyohime, Kashiwagi entered the forbidden domain of a monk in training (Takayuki Kojima), and made eye contact; both were briefly smitten. The monk's desperate prayers were futile. The rejected princess transformed into a slithering snake, and in their ensuing battle climbed his body and bound him with his prayer book. Like the fox, eventually the snake prevailed; both monk and snake collapsed dramatically amid stage thunder and lightning. —Bonnie Sue Stein

The Paris Opera Ballet School is the oldest of its kind in the world, and it shows: Almost 300 years after its creation by Louis XIV in 1713, its most advanced students, who performed five pieces at John Jay Theater in May, still carry the



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