

DANCE REVIEW

DANCE REVIEW; Of Infidelity and the Original Sin

By JACK ANDERSON

Mark Godden's especially fascinating "Conversation Piece" took its title from a type of 18th-century painting that depicted fashionable people. Paul Daigle's costumes were chic, and Gail Skrela and Sylvain Senez looked stylish in them when they entered. Almost immediately, however, they stripped to their underwear for a passionate duet, only to be interrupted by a distraught Simone Orlando.

Mr. Senez represented an errant husband, Ms. Skrela portrayed his mistress and Ms. Orlando was his abandoned wife. Spasms of grief seized Ms. Orlando. Mr. Senez had attacks of remorse and Ms. Skrela at one point crumpled up in shame. The wife vainly tried to reunite with her husband, and the husband and mistress felt degraded yet, for a moment, launched heedlessly back into another duet.

They were not the only characters. Their erotic outbursts and guilty worryings were observed by four people, who appeared to be busybodies taking prurient delight in their neighbors' scandals. Nevertheless, there were moments when they, too, moved nervously, as if realizing they had scandals of their own waiting to be exposed. "Conversation Piece" became a ballet about hypocrisy as well as sullied relationships.

It was danced to a recording of Beethoven's stirring Piano Concerto No. 5, the "Emperor" Concerto. Mr. Godden matched its grandiloquence. And he ended his ballet audaciously. The concerto's first two movements accompanied the story's unfolding. Then, as the man started returning to his wife, the

introduction to the third movement was played. But the curtain fell. The rest of the concerto was never heard. This lack of musical resolution suggested that the characters were perpetually imprisoned within their romantic triangle.