

Dance: Rudy Perez ‘Coverage II’

May 7, 1977, Page 35 The New York Times Archives

Choreographer's Powerful Solo Is Performed by Clive Thompson of Alvin Ailey Dance Theater

That most men and women as well—lead lives of quiet desperation is as true today as it was when Emerson made the observation a century ago. The only things that have changed are the specific roles. Some striking images of a contemporary one were offered Thursday evening by Clive Thompson, who danced the powerful solo “Coverage II” at the City Center 55th Street Theater, its first performance in the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater repertory.

The dance, by the choreographer Rudy Perez, depicts the plight of a man tightly buttoned up to his hard hat. To the outside world he is in immaculate white coveralls with a blue protective cap. In a series of tableaux he lays down a square of red tape on stage to erect a security zone for himself. In this patriotic color scheme he marches carefully around. He is like a boiler about to explode, yet keeps a superficially calm surface.

Within the confines of the taped square he feels free enough to slip out of the coveralls and jog around in black trunks. He lunges and leaps high in the air several times but brings himself up short, still within the imposed limits. Snatches of popular music, news broadcasts, a dramatic reading in Spanish, and even the distinctive sound of bagpipes are heard intermittently. They don't so much accompany the dance as provide bits of aural decor for the various episodes.

When he decides to return to the outside world he dons the coveralls and the hat and tears up the tape enclosure. With feet firmly planted, he

listens to a stirring patriotic song and carefully removes the cap to place it protectively over his lap. Mr. Thompson infuses the various incidents with determined passion and keeps his emotions carefully bottled up. He exercises control, but lets one feel the weight of the internal pressure. It's a striking performance, especially when one thinks of how difficult it is to stand still and "bear it" instead of tearing around in conventional anguish.
