

# Rambert's Bruce and Morrice

BOTH as choreographer and dancer, Christopher Bruce is one of Ballet Rambert's greatest assets. Last week he was seen in both aspects of his talent, firstly as choreographer of "Duets" and later as dancer *par excellence* in Glen Tetley's "Pierrot Lunaire."

"Duets," which opened on September 21, is an extraordinarily peaceful work, something along the lines of a latter-day "Lilac Garden" with elements of Robbins' "Dances at a Gathering," but with a marked originality of its own. To the sound of gently muffled gongs (a fascinating electronic score specially commissioned from Brian Hodgson) the three couples dance in a basically classical style, but their generally soft movement has an essentially "modern" feel, with the couples engrossed in each other and melting their movement together.

An immediately attractive work which will undoubtedly grow in audiences' affections with increased familiarity, and danced with gentle smoothness by Julia Blaikie, Sally Owen, Marilyn Williams, Joseph Scoglio, Leigh Warren and Jon Benoit, who all look rather romantic in Nadine Baylis's turquoise costumes.

Norman Morrice's "Blindsight" was in the same programme, a powerful and disturbing work which is among this choreographer's best. But it is not easy to feel the same enthusiasm for his new piece "Isolde," given its first performance on September 27, for its obscurities make it a difficult work to absorb.

A programme note mentions that the ballet, "rather than re-telling the story of Tristan and Isolde, presents a mirror through which Isolde can see reflected herself and the characters and events which led to her becoming a legend." In effect this means that all the characters (familiar from Wagner's opera) are seen in duplicate. At first sight it puzzles, but Morrice is too good a choreographer to deliberately introduce complex obscurities for his own satisfaction, and so it remains to be seen how his rather striking ideas will present themselves on further viewings.

**Douglas Blake**