

the village

VOICE

Adiós, Columbus

By Eva Yaa Asantewaa

Ballet Hispanico

El Nuevo Mundo
and other works
At Joyce Theater

December 1 through 13

Having survived and thrived for over two tough decades, Tina Ramirez's famed repertory company, Ballet Hispanico, still fields young performers who can dance their butts off. Hooray! But despite all the body friction worked up in the opening-night gala—showcasing Broadway choreographer Graciela Daniele—the handsome troupe's

soul is not keeping up with its hot surface.

It certainly isn't for lack of trying that Ballet Hispanico cannot make Daniele's glamorous and confining numbers signify anything more than exercises in sentimentality, sexiness, and stereotyping. Featured dancers José Costas, Pedro Ruiz, and Nancy Turano, in particular, are not only superb technicians and delectable presences but also three-dimensional actors who deserve textured, meaningful roles. If you prefer dance to be more than show, Daniele's choreography, out of the supporting context of Broadway

musical theater, offers few rewards.

Of the three Daniele pieces performed in the gala, *El Nuevo Mundo*, given its New York premiere, was the least grounded in purpose. Maybe by the time you get to December of 1992, it's time for a brainless romp in which Cristobal Colón is alluded to in only the most trivial way. Danced to music by Paco de Lucia that invokes both an eternal Andalusia and a contemporary America, *El Nuevo Mundo* presents La Niña, La Pinta, and Maria—she's no *santa*—as three hussies in hot pants. Their Cristobal (Ruiz)

wears jeans and a puffy jacket revealing his bare chest. Isabel (Tur-