

SOVIET CRITICIZES 'LAZY' COMPOSERS

Paper Says Song Writers
Let Arrangers Do Work,
Pay Them 'By the Yard'

By MAX FRANKEL
Special to The New York Times.

MOSCOW, Nov. 21.—While the world still buzzed about the achievements of Soviet science, one newspaper here said today that technology had gone far enough. It issued a stinging exposé of the "music by the yard" industry along the Soviet Tin Pan Alley.

So perfect is this production process, according to Literaturnaya Gazeta, that Soviet music is now being composed long-distance. It knows one composer, the paper charged, who when rushed by a movie studio for a score, got on the telephone in Leningrad and whistled a few bars to his assembly-line musical workers in Moscow, who wrote an orchestration and not long afterward completed the movie.

The literary newspaper said the striking similarity in popular music here probably resulted from the fact that different composers always enlisted the assistance of the same arrangers.

"There are not many of them, but they are certainly sought after," the newspaper said.

"This is not the usual selfless help of one creative worker to another," the newspaper added. "The case is much more complicated. Orchestration is not simple 'painting' of music with the colors of the orchestra."

It is rather as if a famous artist were to plead laziness or urgent administrative "business," the paper wrote, and merely make a charcoal sketch, ordering his assistants to add colors and promising to pay them by the square inch.

Literaturnaya Gazeta named three composers from its list of lackadaisical tunesmiths: M. Fradkin, M. Tabachnikov and L. Lyadova.

The song writers, the paper declared, are probably unsure of themselves in matters of technique and some even go around citing the example of the "lazy" Rossini, the Italian composer.

And the hitherto unknown apprentices, it said, are only too glad to work. "For a certain fee, say sod much a yard of a symphony, they write long and complicated scores and bring them to the masses of listeners," the paper wrote.

Literaturnaya Gazeta's investigator swore that he actually met a composer at a recording session who was unable to tell the conductor whether a certain note in his score was D or D Major in the arrangement.

And at one point the composer, for fear of being exposed, tried to assert his knowledge of music.

"Hey, you, that thing is playing too loud," he shouted.

"What thing?" asked the conductor.

"That one, the long red mahogany one."

"Oh, the bassoon," said the conductor, looking strangely at the composer.

And in the wings, doing the composer's work over a score, was a young man with long, unkempt black hair, the paper reported.

"Ingeniously simple," it said, shaking a menacing baton.

Theatre: 'Rope Dancers'

Play by Wishengrad
on Stage at Cort

By BROOKS ATKINSON

ALTHOUGH "The Rope Dancers" is small, it is all gold, and it is beautifully acted at the Cort Theatre, where it opened Wednesday evening.

It represents the first Broadway play by Morton Wishengrad, a radio and television writer. Taking as his subject a man, a woman and their daughter at the turn of the century in a New York tenement, Mr. Wishengrad has written a dark idyl that explores the labyrinth of the human heart and perhaps illustrates a Nietzschean view of life.

When the curtain rises, Mrs. Margaret Hyland and her little daughter are just moving into a fifth-floor tenement. As soon as the moving man has gone, Mrs. Hyland locks the door and hopes to keep the rest of the world away. Literally, the story is little in scope and plain in character. Mrs. Hyland is trying to escape her shiftless husband, whom she blames for the deformity that keeps her daughter a pariah. For her daughter has a sixth finger. They both regard it as such a monstrous symbol of shame that they conspire to conceal it.

That is the situation. Ultimately it is resolved, tragically. But Mr. Wishengrad is really interested in the torments, the fears and the denials of human beings caught in a cosmic fury they can neither resist nor understand. If "The Rope Dancers" had a contemporary setting, the author could hardly avoid the psychiatrist's method. We have terms for these terrors today.

But Mr. Wishengrad's method is that of a poet who is emotionally involved in the agony of his characters. The distinction of "The Rope Dancers" is the vividness of the portraits of the people and the environment—the implacably cold mother, the surface charm of the ineffectual husband, the desperate daughter, the warmhearted slattern who lives downstairs; the bored and irritable truant officer; the weary but conscientious neighborhood physician.

Since Mr. Wishengrad is not a fluent writer, his play is bare and rigid. He cannot pull away from it far enough to look at it objectively. But his method of personal involvement results in glimpses of the human heart so direct and lucid that some of them

The Cast

THE ROPE DANCERS, a play in three acts and five scenes by Morton Wishengrad. Staged by Peter Hall; scenery and lighting by Boris Aronson; costumes by Patricia Zipprodt; production associate, George Banyal; production stage manager, Lucia Victor; presented by the Playwrights Company (Maxwell Anderson, Robert Anderson, Elmer Rice, Roger L. Stevens and John F. Wharton) and Gilbert Miller, At the Cort Theatre.

Lizelle Hyland.....	Beverly Lunsford
Margaret Hyland.....	Siobhan McKenna
Moving Man.....	William Edmonson
Mrs. Farrow.....	Joan Blondell
Clementine.....	Barbara Ellen Myers
James Hyland.....	Art Carney
Lameshnik.....	Joseph Julian
Cop.....	Joseph Boland
Dr. Jacobson.....	Theodore Bikel

are almost unbearable. They are tempered by a compassion that goes beyond these few agonized people to the human race.

"The Rope Dancers" is eminently actable. In Peter Hall's meticulous, understated direction, it is magnificently played by admirable players. Boris Aronson has set it in a worn tenement that has already been seen too much suffering; and Patricia Zipprodt has provided costumes that portray character with remarkable insight.

In the part of the mother, Siobhan McKenna gives an inspired performance that makes all her previous appearances look like apprentice work. She is naturally a magnetic actress; there is always a cadence in her voice that is attractive. Everything she is and knows she has put at the service of this proud but wretched woman whose coldness is really passion, whose poise is really hysteria. It is a sensitive and understanding performance by an artist.

But all the actors have been stimulated by the clairvoyance of Mr. Wishengrad's play. In the part of the amiable father, Art Carney may not be speaking all his lines with the subtlety of phrasing that has been written into them. But his charm, tenderness and homeliness are winning. As the blowzy woman who lives downstairs, Joan Blondell gives a wonderfully exhilarating and at times affecting performance.

Theodore Bikel's lumbering, tired, modest, knowing physician is superb. And Beverly Lunsford gives a remarkable performance as the overwrought, eager, loving, panicky daughter. If there were time, a good word should also be said for the acting in other parts by William Edmonson, Barbara Ellen Myers, Joseph Julian and Joseph Boland.

For Mr. Wishengrad's compact play has stimulated everyone. There is not a false stroke or an empty space in the performance. "The Rope Dancers" makes the theatre look like a palace of truth again.

Moura Lympany's Piano Recital At Cut Rate a Carnegie Hall Hit

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

Moura Lympany's Carnegie Hall recital on Wednesday was in the nature of an experiment. It is well known that at the standard ticket scale only three or four living pianists can fill the 2,760 seats of the hall. So Miss Lympany and her enterprising manager, Herbert Barrett, came up with an idea. Why not scale the prices from 75 cents to \$1.50?

They did. They had some precedent in Alexander

her playing has been disfigured by adolescent exaggerations.

On Wednesday there were absolutely none of those. From Mozart's Adagio in B minor, Beethoven's C minor Variations, Schumann's F sharp minor Sonata, three Debussy Etudes, a pair of Bartók Bagatelles and Chopin's Nocturne in B and Scherzo in C sharp minor, Miss Lympany played in a manner that put her among the select.

As always, she had technique

BENSON'S REMOVAL