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A Special Reprt

Ballet in Scandinavia

By WALTER TERRY

"What of our ballet future?" asked the Danes. "I don't suppose our ballet is quite yet as good as the Danish," murmured the Swedes sadly. "How long will it take us to build a national ballet?" wondered the Norwegians.

During my recent journey to Scandinavia to attend the annual festivals in the fascinating and vital kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, these questions and related ones were either asked outright or were implicit in both conversations and situations. In four earlier columns I reported on the actual dance festivals themselves and described in some detail the productions and the performers.

The many thousands of visitors who attended these Scandinavian festivals certainly come upon ballet presentations which stirred them and, conversely, other which bored them. Perhaps, wondered why the Danish productions were so glittering and the Norwegian so meek, why the Danish festivals gave starring status to ballet while the Swedish festival put its ballet subservient to the opera. A journey behind the scenes, I think, will help to explain the strengths and the weaknesses, the dreams and the futures of ballet in three lands.

And since it is likely that the Royal Danish Ballet, which enjoyed tremendous success during its first American tour a few seasons back, will return before very long and since negotiations are already under way to bring the Royal Swedish Opera Ballet to this country, a backstage view of stirrings and strivings, of battles between traditionalists and modernists, of plots and plans has special point at this time.

I. Denmark

The Royal Danish Ballet Festival in Copenhagen was, as I reported, an event characterized by beauty, charged with excitement and distinguished by technical excellence. A few of the masterpieces, in whole or in extract, by the great Danish choreographer of a century ago, August Bournonville, were presented along with several first-rate ballets by non-Danish contemporary choreographers.

All of the works, with the possible exception of Frederick Ashton's glorious "Romeo and Juliet" (which seemed to need Mr. Ashton's disciplinary hand in spots), were superbly danced. Missing from the festival, however, were all but one of the several new Scandinavian ballets originally scheduled.

When I asked why all but "The Moonreindeer," a work on a Lapland theme by Sweden's Birgit Cullberg had been dropped, I was told that the new ballets by Danish choreographers had received such scathing reviews from Danish critics that pressure had been brought to bear on Frank Schaufuss, the director of the Royal Ballet, to eliminate them. One of the youthful Mr.



NORWAY—Aloysius Valente and Edith Roger in "The Holberg Costume, or The Poetic Tailor," based on characters of an eighteenth-century playwright.

Schaufuss' most cherished projects has been the building of a repertoire of new Danish ballets but he understood full well that choreographers are not made over night. Thus, he had presented the new pieces before the festival period in what might be called a glorified workshop series. He knew, I think, that he was presiding over a "stunt" and not a fulfillment and he had wanted festival audiences to see the efforts in just that light. Unfortunately, he was overruled.

Ballet Workshop

Perhaps a weakness of his workshop plan was that, in the main, he allotted choreographic opportunities to the principal dancers (including himself) of the company. Now it is true that the senior artists are presumably more experienced than some of their juniors but it does not necessarily follow that great performers are also gifted choreographers. It is to be hoped that in the future, Mr. Schaufuss will permit the workshop plan to encompass all members of the company who have choreographic leanings. Thus, if a boy or girl in the corps de ballet has a valid creative project, he should be given dancers (including the stars themselves) with whom to work. In our own Ballet Theatre Workshop, for example, Nora Kaye or Erik Bruhn will (and have) work as enthusiastically for a newcomer as for a Robbins or a Balanchine.

But the tempest over the new Danish ballets was only a part

of the storm which has been raging behind the scenes. Perhaps because of national pride, many of the Danes associated with the Royal Theater, in addition to members of the press, are determined to find a contemporary Danish choreographer of distinction. They are all enormously and justifiably proud of Bournonville and they appreciate the new works by guest choreographers but they want their own masters. Thus, the affable Harald Lander took over the front pages of the Copenhagen newspapers as a large number of Royal Dancers threatened to resign if Lander returned.

Controversy

Mr. Lander had once been the ballet director and had left his homeland to work elsewhere, mainly in Paris. One Danish group believes that the future of ballet in Denmark depends on Lander. Another, equally vociferous, points out that his "Etude," a highly successful ballet to which his adherents look with pride, is hardly proof of his choreographic stature since one popular work out of many lesser tries does not mark the genius.

The decision on Mr. Lander, however, must rest with the Danish ballet authorities who must determine whether he will come back as a guest choreographer (the suggestion which raised the storm) or as ballet director (a prevalent rumor) or not at all. Meanwhile, Mr. Schaufuss pulled off his own

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SWEDEN—Blonde and beautiful Elsa Marianne von Rosen is shown here as "Miss Julie" in the ballet based on the Strindberg play.



DENMARK—Henning Kronstam and Mona Vangsa in "The Moonreindeer," based on Lapland legend and created for the Royal Danish Ballet.

Eye, Imagination, Truth, Memory

The Strong Seducers

By ERICH MARIA REMARQUE

Author of the novel "A Time to Love and a Time to Die," whose movie version opens Wednesday in a dual premiere at the Mayfair and Little Carnegie Theaters.

The last person able to judge a film made from a novel is probably the author of the book. It has fused the actors with the people I remembered, and my memory often comes out for the first time twenty-eight years ago, it left me with mixed feelings. I admired the direction of the battle scenes; but the actors seemed to me strangers whom I couldn't identify with the people of my memory. They were different; they had different faces, and they acted differently.

When I saw the film "All Quiet on the Western Front" for the first time twenty-eight years ago, it left me with mixed feelings. I admired the direction of the battle scenes; but the actors seemed to me strangers whom I couldn't identify with the people of my memory. They were different; they had different faces, and they acted differently.

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Paradox

Plays Outlive Indelible Films

By WALTER KERR

What does a drama critic do on his vacation? Naturally, he goes to the movies.

Or at least he goes to those movies he has been hearing about for months past but which he has never quite been able to catch up with, owing to prior obligations to a variety of loft theaters below 14th St. specializing in dramatizations of Joyce, Dostoevsky, Dylan Thomas and, any minute now, the Rosetta stone.

Anyway, I'd just come back from a visit to "The Bridge on the River Kwai" and was carrying on not about the marvels I'd expected—the panoramic, and brilliantly meaningful, camera positions—but about the quite unexpected intellectual complexity of its narrative: the business of locking men of principle, but men of contradictory principles, in a great battle of antlers.

Great Images

The man I was chatting with, a fellow who'd done some writing for the theater and perhaps may do more, was in a still more lyrical mood. He not only granted the film's virtues but doubled them. Then he sighed, wistfully. "That's what I'd really like to do," he said. "Get a great idea, translate it into great images, and then stamp them all down where they'd stay, where they'd be so perfect and permanent in their own form that my work could forever be seen just as I made it, always the same, always getting the same response."

This was where I reneged. I felt immediately alarmed, not because I feared a working playwright was going to go galloping off to that medium that has for so long swallowed working playwrights, but because I knew that he was kidding himself, that his reason for going—if he went—was a booby-trap.

Film isn't a more permanent medium than the stage; the stage is more permanent than film. The very durability of film is what kills it.

Barrymore's "Hamlet"

I'm not thinking at all of literary values, of the fact that a manuscript by Shakespeare does outlive a screenplay by John Emerson and Anita Loos (and John Emerson and Anita Loos wrote some dandies, back in 1918 or thereabouts). I'm thinking exclusively of performance, of the far greater survival value of something that is wholly gone than of something that is half-gone.

This may sound like a verbal trick; let me explain. I never saw John Barrymore's "Hamlet." But John Barrymore's "Hamlet" is as firmly fastened in the indelible roster of theatrical memory as Joe Jefferson's "Rip Van Winkle," David Garrick's "Richard III," Charles Macklin's Shylock, or Will Kempe's clowns. Each performance is here to stay; it can never be challenged, and it can never be erased. We own it as an indestructible sovereign in the theatrical treasure-chest.

A few weeks ago I attended a screening of John Barrymore's film, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (made in the early 20s, I imagine). The performance isn't there any more, though the film is. The Barrymore face is been sold by my publishers

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Chaplin and Keaton

I am not saying that all old film is disenchanting; with a not very strenuous effort of the historical imagination it is possible to adjust quickly to, and take fresh delight in, some of the work of Chaplin and Keaton did thirty or forty years ago. (I hope it will hold out longer still.) Nor am I really trying to say anything new: when film was a brand new toy Sarah Bernhardt was eager to try her hand at it because it promised her immortality. We've all known for a very long time that her perfectly genuine immortality is not in the two terribly remote films she made but in the still tantalizing presence of the legends handed down to us. The issue was clear from the beginning, almost.

But here it is, cropping up again in all its longing and all its forgivable error.

Dear writer, actor, director: if you want to build a castle that will be remembered and loved forever, be sure to build it of sand.

Hal Prince's Perfect Stage Record: Even His Look-Alike Is a Big Hit

By DON ROSS

Hal Prince, who is sometimes called the boy producer of the Broadway stage, had a few thousand happy words to say the other day about "West Side Story" and a couple of dozen unhappy ones about Richard Bissell.

"I was thirty a couple of months ago," said Mr. Prince, "and Bissell is the first guy who ever made me wish I was forty." Mr. Prince was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania ten years ago and went right into the theater business. He is now sensitive about being called a boy producer.

Mr. Bissell is the author of "Say, Darling," the comedy about show business now at the ANTA Theater, in which one of the characters, a funny young producer called Ted Snow, bears a physical resemblance to Mr. Prince.

"West Side Story," the hit musical about New York teen age gang warfare that has passed its 325th performance at the Winter Garden, was produced by Mr. Prince and his partner, Bobby Griffith. It has paid back its original \$300,000 capitalization and is now turn-



Hal Prince, co-producer with Bobby Griffith of "West Side Story" and other musical hits.

ing out profits for its 200 backers. This gives Griffith and Prince a perfect record of four hits out of four tries since they entered the producing field in 1954 with "Pajama Game," following that up with

"Damn Yankees," "New Girl in Town" and their present show.

"It's a hell of a way for Bissell to make a living, and that's a direct quote," said Mr. Prince, still brooding about the boy producer sobriquet. "Sure, Ted Snow looks like me and has a few of my mannerisms and I must say he's pretty funny, but it's absurd and highly slanderous if he's supposed to be me."

Mr. Prince fiddled with the dial of the telephone on his desk as he spoke. (Ted Snow can't keep his hands still.) Mr. Prince wore an olive drab summer suit with an Ivy League look and brown loafers. (Ted Snow wears Ivy League clothes and white buckskin shoes.)

"Bissell and I still speak," said Mr. Prince. "It would be childish not to. I think his show would have been just as funny if he hadn't tried to make all his goofy characters resemble live people. His play was, by inference at least, publicized as being about 'Pajama Game' people."

Mr. Bissell wrote the novel on which "Pajama Game" was based. He was a collaborator in

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Remarque playing the role of a professor in the movie version of his own novel.

New 'Angel' Trio in Action



The three leading roles of father, son and mother in "Look Homeward Angel" are now being played by Ed Begley, Andrew Prine and Miriam Hopkins.