

RUSSIAN BALLET INVADES  
AND CONQUERS AMERICA

Scenery, Dancing, Costumes and Music Combined in a Revelation of What the Arts Can Accomplish

WITH all the glory of its European triumphs shining brightly about its head, the Russian Ballet came to America last Monday night. Some time in March the same ballet, season by season, comes to Philadelphia for a week, which must be the grand climax of the year's artistic efforts. In Paris the Ballet Russe was more than a sensation; it was almost a scandal. Duels were fought, Auguste Rodin lost standing with the Government, the prices soared to 50 francs for a seat and the art of decoration was revolutionized. Here there will probably be no duels, except of wit, but the spectacle of three arts, magnificently conceived and combined, will create a tremendous impulse toward beauty, and every word which can be spoken in welcome should be said.

For another week the ballet will be visible at the Century and the Philadelphia who finds himself in New York of an evening need have no doubts as to where to go. But, unless one is warned beforehand, a disappointment surely awaits those in quest of the old ballet for it exists in the troupe of M. Serge de Diaghileff only by courtesy. In the dress rehearsal, which anticipated in every respect the first program, there was but one number which could be identified as pure ballet. The rest, and the important feature of the season, is really pantomime, with music, and gorgeously costumed and set. Movement, gesture, expression of emotions by attitude of limb, of body or of face predominate in the "Firebird" (L'Oiseau de Feu) and in "Scheherazade." In "The Midsummer Night's Dream" (Le Songe de Nuit) the combination of dancers are far more important than the dancing itself. And in no case, since Nijinsky is not of the company, is individual dancing to be compared with the total effect of groups.

It would be useless to attempt dodging the Nijinsky-Karsavina issue. The first thing that needs to be said is that there has been no breach of good faith. M. de Diaghileff is not an American, and the direction of the Metropolitan is not composed purely of business men. Moreover, the presumption is all in their favor, for these two artists were never expected the publicity department would not have wasted four months, and heaven knows how many columns of newspaper and magazine space, in advertising them. M. Nijinsky is held in Austria Poland. Should he be freed in time for the latter part of the season, that would be a miracle and a blessing. But it is rather good to get to have great individuals in a ballet where so much attention must be given to the whole.

## The Four Ballets

The four ballets exhibited in the first program, and seen by the writer at the dress rehearsal, introduced music by Igor Stravinsky, scenery and costumes by Bohuslav Balabala and Larionoff, and choreography by Fokine, as govties. The "Scheherazade" has been danced in America before; the style of dancing in "The Enchanted Princess" is more familiar. And it must be said that for individual dancing the fragile beauty of Anna Pavlova and the dash of Michael Mordkin are not exceeded by the stars of the present aggregation. What Pavlova has always lacked has been just such a director as Diaghileff and just such a feeling for the united trinity of the arts as is making the Ballet Russe

something more than an entertainment, actually a new art and a new sensation. The "Firebird" is the story of a Czar-vitch who captures a wonderful burning-bright bird and frees it because he cannot bear to crush its beauty. As a reward he is given a feather from her plumage and by the aid of this token can rescue himself and an enchanted princess from the grasp of a villainous crew of dwarfs, gnomes, little men and djinns. Here is all the material of a ballet, a story which can be expressed in gesture and a setting which can be fantastic and beautiful. M. Golovine's set is an astounding creation. The very sky is inlaid with arabesques, and against it is an incredible tower whose turrets, under the changing light, flash from dull pink to startling red. There is no flat for the eye to rest on, everything is movement and wonder. The costumes, too, are strange, unreal, captivating, and Stravinsky's music, full of odd dissonance, of tricks and queer sounds, exhausts the full vocabulary of grotesquerie.

## A Classic Interlude

Tchaikovsky's "pas de deux" called classic, was a slight thing in comparison with this. The fact that Mme. Maclezeva pirouetted even 31 times on one set of toes without touching ground with the other was hardly a thing for the alarmed imagination to dwell upon. Interest held over until the "Soleil de Nuit" began to shine, reduplicated in ten grinning pumpkin heads, red and almost obscene. The "Midnight Sun" is, in fact, a representation of Russian folk games and dances. It is full of bucolic humor, of awkwardness, of sport. Bobyl, the pumpkin with his hands tied together, and the "Midnight Sun" himself, with gilded disks like cymbals attached to his hands, are the characters, but the inspiring center of the dance and of the action is the human crowd. As in the preceding ballets color was everything but action. There was room for no other element, so that what was felt in the music was not rhythm, not melody, but color itself.

And finally the "Scheherazade," a sensual, terrible drama, ecstatic and awful and grand. For this performance the familiar yellow of Bakst's set was changed to green and the costumes, too, were altered. The story of the luckless and faithless Zobeide, snared by her Shah and discovered in the midst of her amour with the black slave is familiar, but no repetition can dull the keen edge of its sensuality nor spoil the terrible effect of its vengeful climax. The magical intensity of Mme. Revalles as Zobeide, the mad leaping of the odalisques and their lovers, the carnal riot of all at the end were all elements in the drunkenness of all sensations. And around and about them, weaving the men and women into mere lines or masses of color, was the decor into which all melted in a fury of lust. Such was the offering at the first performance. Later the dance strangled to Debussy's famous prelude to Mallarme's "Afternoon of a Faun" was danced. This is a more mannered, more individual ballet, and here, perhaps, the single star of his place. By all account the music and the setting of Bakst had all their old power to charm, to stifle and finally to outrage the senses. The other ballets in the repertoire of the company are too numerous to be mentioned separately. In this, as in all things, the total effect is what counts. By every sign, they should count here enormously. G. V. S.

'CHAS., BY JOVE,  
'OWS YER 'EART'It Takes England to Give Us the  
Chaplin News,  
Y'Know

From London Opinion.

Charlie Chaplin's daily working hours are from 9 a. m. to 5:30 p. m.

Every day 12,000,000 people see him on the screen at picture palaces throughout the world.

He is a Londoner, born at Walworth in 1889, and all his relations were in the theatrical profession.

All his comedies are now produced under his own direction at Los Angeles, California, mostly by British players.

America has Chaplin ties, shirts, collars, socks, cocktail, clubs, yachts and societies, and one of the thoroughfares is called Chaplin street.

Very fond of music, Charlie Chaplin can play almost any instrument, and is a clever composer.

Hundreds of those who read these lines have seen Charlie Chaplin in the flesh. He used to be one of the "Eight Lancashire Lads," and afterwards made a

**The Critic's Duty**

As I see it, it is a critic's duty, above everything else, to interest his audience whether the play he is reviewing interested its audience or not.—George Jean Nathan.

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## THE SPLENDOR AND VITALITY OF THE RUSSIAN BALLET SKETCHED IN ACTION AND REPOSE



Drawn at the Century Theatre, New York, by Samuel McCoy.

PHOTOPLAY THE  
GREATEST CRITICA Prominent Player of Stage  
and Screen Casts His Vote  
for the Movies

By EDWIN ARDEN

If the actor on the speaking stage who thinks he has reached perfection could go into the motion picture for half a year he would find that he possesses faults which he never dreamed. The motion picture actor, if he is serious, may always progress in his acting. His mistakes are constantly before him on the films in which he has appeared, and he can profit by them and see his own improvement in succeeding pictures.

Motion pictures require finer acting than the stage, for the eye of the camera is much quicker and much more exacting than the eye of the audience in a theatre. The human voice covers over many defects of pantomime. Make-up and colors effect many softening delusions on the speaking stage.

In the pictures it is different. Before one is a grim cyclone, which will not lie or palliate offenses. It records every gesture, every movement of the face or body with merciless truthfulness, and is therefore the most efficient critic there is.

The great tendency in acting is to overact, not to underact. The screen demands a more suppressed acting, a subtlety of facial expression and a poise

and control of bodily movement which is not so necessary on the stage.

There is not any great fundamental difference in acting for the stage and the motion picture. There is only a difference in tempo and degree. Quick and violent action seems disjointed on the screen. Exaggerated facial expression seems ridiculous. It is temperate acting, then, which the actor must always have in mind before the camera.

The motion pictures have entered into a new era: it is a subtle, involved plot, thoughtfully worked out and artistically produced, which the public wants, and which the producers are furnishing. The broad play of the past is gone and the refined, delicately handled photoplay has taken its place.

Pictures play the actor much more than the stage. It is not because the producers are philanthropists, although they are generous. It is because they consider the acting worth the money.

The pictures offer a fortune for the ambitious young man and woman. They also allow leeway for originality and individuality. The stage will die before very many years unless managers change their tactics.

Lo, where the stage, the poor, degraded stage, holds its warped mirror to a kingly age.—Charles Sprague, Curiosity.

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WALTER PRICHARD EATON SEES  
'THE WEAVERS' AND WRITES OF ITIn This Week's New York Letter Popular Critic  
Reviews a Current Attraction of  
Unusual Merit

By WALTER PRICHARD EATON

EMANUEL REICHER, the noted German actor, who has learned to pronounce English after a fashion and has rented the Garden Theatre, in New York, this winter, where he is endeavoring to create something at least remotely akin to the New Free Folk Theatre, in Berlin, has made, for his second bill, a production of a play in America, either in English or German. Possibly, it has been acted in the original in some of the German centres, like Wismar or in Danzig, but we have not any record of the fact.

Yet it is odd that "The Weavers" has not reached our stage before—not the popular stage, to be sure, but our experimental theatre—because, while it is one of Hauptmann's earlier works, antedating "Hannele" by six months and "The Sunken Bell" by three years (it was introduced in Berlin in February, 1890), it is a play of quite extraordinary naturalism, and takes the drama, about as far as it perhaps can go away from the conventional plotting and arrangement—not, however, along the lines of the Shaw dialogues, such as "Getting Married," but along the lines of making not an individual but a whole movement the hero of the drama.

It is probably not the fashion to read Hauptmann any more—certainly not since this war began, and everything German has come under the ban—one of the terrible results of international strife. The new generation can hardly be aware of the eagerness with which we youngsters in the 90s used to wait for news of his latest drama, and for the text. Sudermann's "Helmut" ("Magda") was also produced in 1898, and at once went around the globe, as nothing of Hauptmann's ever did, not even "The Sunken Bell." "Magda" in Germany and "The Second Mrs. Tansqueray" in England were really the outstanding international successes of the 90s, with Hauptmann's "Cyranos" a close second. But neither Sudermann nor Pinner had the quality of idealism which the heart of

youth found in Hauptmann. Hauptmann was a dreamer as well as an experimenter. In one play he would carry naturalism to a point beyond Ibsen; in his next work he would resurrect German romanticism, and remind you, perhaps, of Heine; in his next he would be Shakespearean—but always, in every play, remaining Hauptmann, the idealist, the respecter of the integrity of the human soul, of human freedom. How many such poets and writers Germany has produced? It is they who will have to make the hostile nations forget Hitler and Belgium.

Well, "The Weavers" which is the particular object of our remarks, has at last reached our American stage, and reached it by means of a rather surprisingly good production—we say surprisingly good, because, although Herr Reicher himself is a fine actor, his resources are limited, and "The Weavers" demands a long cast. But with the aid of several German actors in New York who speak English, he has overcome this difficulty, and trained his large company into that intelligence and naturalism of ensemble which characterizes the German theatre.

"The Weavers" is a play in which the hero is a strike. There may be individual, personal heroes, in the sense that the strike has leaders, and there may be individual villains in the sense that the strike is aimed at certain manufacturers, one of whose houses is sacked. But even here the characters are not continuous. The leader in the first act is not the leader in the second. The manufacturer the strikers are attacking at the beginning fades out of sight before the end, and the strike has moved on to another village.

Neither, for that matter, is the strike itself ever settled, the story brought to a conclusion. At the close we hear that the strikers have the best of it with the local police, but we feel quite certain that the soldiers will be upon them shortly—and what then? Nothing is really settled. The play is but a naturalistic picture of the woes of the German weavers in the '40s, without any preachment whatever, save as one lurks in Hauptmann's very evident sympathy with the downtrodden and oppressed. So naturalistic is it, in fact, and so keen is his sympathy, so human, that today, in 1915, the drama seems infinitely more up to date than either "Magda" or "The Second Mrs. Tansqueray," its more famous contemporaries.

Continued on Page Two

## THE CHRISTENING OF BRYAN THE SCRAPPER



At this auspicious occasion we see Vice President and Mrs. Marshall, David Horsley, Harry E. Tudor, C. M. Pais and Capt. Jack Bonavita, of the Horsley Film Company, and The Scrapper so christened by Mrs. Marshall.

## THE MOVIE CAMERA IN THE LAND OF THE INCA



A camera man of the Paramount Travel Pictures introducing the wild Chunchos Indians of interior Peru to the mysteries of the movies.