

the practice room is as much a part of life as the factory or the jungle, intellectually speaking. It is because all his movement has this living quality that it can have a continuation in someone else's, or combine with any other kind of living movement, I imagine, without anything being lost. It is also for this reason (that Balanchine's movement is natural to the body) that the technical training of the American Ballet has been so happy. Its members are now both exceptionally well grounded in the essentials of dancing, proficient in the technic of the ballet. Personally I am not a "balletomane." But dancing that makes sense is so rare it is worth being serious about.

Theatrically at the opposite pole from the Metropolitan is the Experimental Dance Group which I saw recently in the Bronx Y.M.H.A. It is a new organization headed by Bill Matons, a company of young people not professional dancers, with a sociological viewpoint, and without time and money for enough rehearsals. There are a number of groups like that, but I enjoyed the Experimental Group. The program consisted of topical pantomimes, some with music, some to poems or with a few spoken words. What I liked was the clarity of story, the humor, the exactness of gesture, and the good taste of the choreography. Mr. Matons is a comic of exceptional talent. I hope he gets a chance at a longer form before getting on Broadway.

Edwin Denby

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

LAST month Catherine Littlefield produced all of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* with orchestra and for the first time in America. Up to now we have only known the *Mariage d'Aurore*, its last act, which is given repeatedly by the de Basil Russian Ballet.

This work with Petipa's choreography is the great classic of ballet, summing up the tendencies in previous dancing and putting them to a fine score written especially for it. It contains all the ballroom dances and idealized etiquette of the court of Nicholas the First, theatricalized and made brilliant by the traditional ballet technic and enhanced by Tchaikovsky's music. Well done, this ballet should show us the ideal human world of

the past in terms of movement, man behaving according to the conventions of a perfectly ordered society which automatically brings out in him the most elegant, most graceful and most humanly social aspects.

There are two things to consider in a modern performance of this work. The first is the choreography. If re-devised it must translate a contemporary ideal man into more modern ballet terms. The other is its great difficulty. A company needs to be very good indeed to bring out all the implications of a score that almost visually describes the classic ballet gestures.

Miss Littlefield's choreography ignored Petipa's except in the *Mariage d'Aurore* which was by far her best number. She seemed to have no serious conception beyond that of telling a fairy story in a fairly ornamental way. Had her troupe been better she might have rivaled Radio City Music Hall in sumptuousness and absurdity. As it was, the inadequacy of her company left her intent obscure, assuming that she had any beyond giving the work its American premiere.

The trip to Philadelphia was rewarded chiefly by an opportunity to hear the score; but even here, where precise indications are given, there was so much license taken with the tempi that interest shifted from the total effect to the minutiae of orchestration.

Elliott Carter

OVER THE AIR

GODDARD LIEBERSON

AFTER a ceaseless two month's hunting of radio programs that would contain some element of contemporary music, the most significant discovery I have to report is that Bing Crosby has discovered Debussy (which he pronounces *De-bus-sie*, out of affection no doubt for that ancient jazz maestro, Henry Busse!) This program and one by Mark Warnow on which appeared George Gershwin's *Summertime* played *à la* the opening of Stravinsky's *Sacre*, and a *Swing Fugue in G* have kept me happy with popular tunes.