

udice of one who has suffered, not as a professional musician lending his special gifts of Negroidness as local color to the presentation of what is (however friendly) after all a white man's faraway and poetic point of view about it all. The Negro invariably sounds insincere in such a position and his presence is of no advantage either to his race or to the work.

WITH THE DANCERS

EDWIN DENBY

BALANCHINE AGAIN; DEBUT OF THE CARAVAN

NOW that the Metropolitan does have a ballet masterpiece in its repertory—one as good as the very best of the Monte Carlo—there's a conspiracy of silence about it. It's true people ignored this ballet last year, too, when it came out, but I think they'd better go again, because they are likely to enjoy it very much. It's the Stravinsky-Balanchine *Apollon* I mean, which the Metropolitan is repeating this year, and which it does very well, even to playing the music beautifully.

It is a ballet worth seeing several times because it is as full of touching detail as a Walt Disney, and you see new things each time. Did you see the way Balanchine shows you how strangely tall a dancer is? She enters crouching and doesn't rise till she is well past the terrifically high wings; then she stands up erect, and just standing still and tall becomes a wonderful thing. Did you see how touching it can be to hold a ballerina's extended foot? The three Muses kneel on one knee and each stretches her other foot up, till Apollo comes and gathers the three of them in his supporting hand. Did you notice how he teaches them, turning, holding them by moments to bring each as far as the furthest possible and most surprising beauty; and it isn't for his sake or hers, to show off or be attractive, but only for the sake of that extreme human possibility of balance, with a faith in it as impersonal and touching as a mathematician's faith in an extreme of human reasoning. And did you notice the counter-movement, the keenness of suspense, within the clear onward line of Caliope's variation (what the moderns call the spatial multiplicity

of stresses). The intention of it—the sense of this dance—is specified by a couplet quoted in the program, a couplet by Boileau which contrives to associate the violence of cutting, hanging, and pointing with an opposite of rest and law, and makes perfect sense, too:

“Que toujours dans vos vers le sens coupant les mots,
“suspende l’hemistiche et marque le répos.”

Aren't you curious to see how incredibly beautiful this couplet is when danced? Or did you notice how at the end of a dance Balanchine will—instead of underlining it with a pose directly derived from it—introduce a strange and yet simple surprise (an unexpected entrance, a resolution of the grouping into two plain rows) with the result that instead of saying, “See what I did,” it seems as though the dancers said, “There are many more wonders, too.” And did you notice how much meaning—not literary meaning but plastic meaning—he gets out of any two or more dancers who do anything together? It's as though they were extraordinarily sensitive to each other's presence, each to the momentary physical strain of the other, and ready with an answering continuation, so that they stay in each other's world, so to speak, like people who can understand each other, who can belong together. And he combines this intimacy with an astonishing subtlety on the part of each individually. The effect of the whole is like that of a play, a kind of play that exists in terms of dancing; anyway, go and see if you don't think it's a wonderful ballet. The subject is the same as that of the music, which as you know is, “the reality of art at every moment.”

The dancers at the Metropolitan do these extremely difficult dances very well. Lew Christensen (from the Caravan) has, it is true, a personal style that is easy rather than subtle; but, besides being an excellent dancer, he is never a fake and at all times pleasant. The girls have a little more of the Balanchine tautness and they too are excellent dancers and appealing. The costumes are good.

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The intelligentsia turned out in full for the All-American Evening of the Ballet Caravan, they approved of the whole thing vociferously, and they were quite right. There was a happy community feeling about the occasion, a sort of church-social delight, that would have surprised the out-of-towners who feel

New York is just a big cold selfish place, where nobody has any interest in anybody else. The ballets—*Showpiece* by McBride and Hawkins, *Yankee Clipper* by Bowles and Loring, and *Filling Station* by Thomson and Christensen—have been reviewed here on separate occasions. Taken together they show that an American kind of ballet is growing up, different from the nervous Franco-Russian style. From Balanchine it has learned plasticity, and extension, and I imagine his teaching has fostered sincerity in these dancers as in others he has taught. But our own ballet has an easier simpler character, a kind of American straightforwardness, that is thoroughly agreeable. None of these ballets is imitative or artificial, and there is nothing pretentious about them. Hawkins shows us a good-humored inventiveness, Loring a warmth of characterization, and Christensen a clear logic of movement that are each a personal and also specifically American version of ballet. I think this is the highest kind of praise, because it shows the ballet has taken root and is from now on a part of our life. And the dancers themselves have an unspoiled, American, rather athletic quality of movement that is pleasant. As a group they are first rate in their legs and feet and in the profile of the arms. I think they still lack an incisive stopping; and the expressiveness across the shoulders that will shed light through the correctness of movement; but their improvement in the last two years has been so phenomenal that these reservations aren't serious. At present the boys steal the show, especially Christensen with his great ease, and Loring with his human quality, but they don't try to steal it; and Albia Cavan and Marie Jeanne show they intend to catch up with them. But one of the very good things about the Caravan is its homogeneity as a group. And I congratulate them all wholeheartedly, just as the audience did.

Of Balanchine's ballet in the *Goldwyn Follies* I would like to say that it is worth seeing if you can stand the boredom of the film as a whole (but don't leave before the mermaid number of the Ritz Brothers). It is worth seeing because the dancing is good, and one can see it; and because there's something moving left about the piece as a whole. But it is particularly interesting because you see a number of dance phrases that were composed

into the camera field—an effective and necessary innovation anyone could have learned from Disney, but which nobody tried till now. It is the only way dancing can make sense in the movies.

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As long as nobody else has mentioned her, I think it's only fair to add a word about Marie Eve, the dancer at the nightclub called the "Ruban Bleu." Her numbers aren't at all the usual thing. In each she tells, with an unemphatic ironic charm, a little character story, put together of nonsense words and ballet steps, about some romantic young lady who, more often than not, enjoys being dreadfully complex because she really isn't; and so she enjoys it. There is nothing quite like Marie Eve elsewhere in the dance world, and her precision, her charm, and her good sense make her bright subtlety very attractive.

ON THE HOLLYWOOD FRONT

By GEORGE ANTHEIL

THIS has been a singularly dull six months, with practically nothing of importance to report except that Kurt Weill has finished his picture *You and Me*. Paramount tells me that the score is excellent. I have heard only sections; what I did hear is typically Weill, it makes no concessions to Hollywood. Most "better" composers who come out here believe that one must make concessions; it is a mistake; one need only satisfy the rigors of the motion picture form, which is, of course, dramatic and special unto itself.

I still believe that Hollywood producers and directors really want a new music. There is only one trouble—there are not enough intelligent and forward looking music directors in Hollywood. Hollywood still offers American composers a great possibility. There are it is true, still many reprehensible things—for instance the butchery of the dubbing stages—but one cannot imagine this situation as permanent. I have proved to my own satisfaction, at least, that Hollywood now wants—and will want more and more—"background" scores of a new and indi-