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THE DANCE: THE END OF A RECORD SEASON

An Increased Number of Performances Attended by Marked Appreciation

By JOHN MARTIN.

WITH the recital of Ingeborg Torrup at Hampden's Theatre next Sunday the season for concert dancing will come to an end. For the last several years it has been practically imperative for those who have followed the activities of the dancers in our midst to point to developments as significant; indeed, for the past three seasons, each one as it has arrived at its conclusion has been pronounced the most significant season in the history of American dancing. Certainly, this is no time to discontinue the practice, for facts and figures bear testimony that is of such a nature as to give us pause.

For example, there has been an increase in the number of dance performances given this year of slightly more than 100 per cent over last year, the total being 129 as against 64. The previous season's record was somewhere in the neighborhood of 35.

It seems very doubtful if this rate of increase will be maintained in the season to come, for the recital phase of dancing appears to have arrived almost at the saturation point, not only from the standpoint of audience capacity but also of available theatres and Sundays. Since there is every indication that the interest in and, what is more important, the intelligent appreciation of dancing will continue to grow, the forward steps of the immediate future will in all likelihood carry us into considerations that have nothing to do with quantity, but rather with organization and intensification. Perhaps there is even ground for hope that the visionary American ballet may heave into view.

The Season's Record.

But prognostication is not our concern at the moment. A study of the concrete record of performances may lead to numberless personal theories. The list below does not include student recitals, performances of studio organizations or those in motion picture theatres, private halls or clubs. An asterisk after a name signifies that the artist this year made his first New York recital appearance and the figures at the right give the number of performances.

Anita* Erna and Katharine* (Elizabeth Duncan School)	1
La Argentina*	18
Don Oscar Becque* with ensemble	1
Grace Cornell* (with a discur)	4
Agnes de Mille and Charles Weidman	1
Carlos de Vega	1
Dhimah with ensemble	1
Belle Didjah,* with assisting artists and ensemble	1
Dorsha and Paul Hayes, with ensemble	1
Anna Duncan	1
Isadora Duncan Dancers* with Irma Duncan	36
Angna Enters	3
Elsa Findlay's Ensemble* with Ronny Johansson	2
Alexandre Gavrilov and Ballet Moderne*	1
Carola Goya	3
Carola Goya and Carlos de Vega	2
Martha Graham	2
Martha Graham, with ensemble*	1
Hasoutra* with Michio Ito and assisting artists	1
Helba Huara*	2
Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and ensemble	3
League of Composers—"Les Noces"	1
Michio Ito with assisting artists	1
Ronny Johansson and Charles Weidman	1
Harald Kreutzberg and Yvonne Georgi*	8
Harry Losee* with assisting artists	1
Maria Theresa	1
Marsh Dancers with George Volodin	1
Jane* and Edward McLean*	1
"Mimus Evenings" of Otto P. Peterson	2
Neighborhood Playhouse—"Ein Heldenleben," "Israel," &c.	5
Lunia Nestor* with ensemble	1
New World Dancers*	1
Doris Niles with Cornelia Niles and ensemble	2
Anna Rohenne	1
Priscilla Robineau and Charles Weidman	1
Ted Shawn, with assisting artists	3
Felicia Sorel and M. Senia Gluck	1
Edwin Strawbridge with ensemble	2
Tamiris	2
Ingeborg Torrup	2
Demetrios Vilan* and Margaret Severn	1
Von Grona with ensemble	2
Margaret Walton with assisting artists	1
Hana Wiener, Vera Milcinovic* and ensemble	2
Benjamin Zemach* with assisting artists	1

La Argentina appeared in New York a number of years ago, but the dancer as well as local conditions have changed to such an extent that to all intents and purposes her concerts during the past season were her first here. Mr. Zemach was seen in the first production of the Neighborhood Playhouse at the Manhattan Opera House, but not as a recitalist. Miss Findlay's ensemble made its bow several years ago in "Orpheus," but the concert field was a new venture this season.

Obviously many events have been omitted which might be classed as dance events in a looser scheme of classification. There were, for example, Carola Goya's numerous joint recitals with Albert Carroll; Mr. Wiener's and Miss Milcinovic's concert for the People's Symphony; Le Petite (sic) Art Group's two appearances in Miss Kirkwood's subscription theatre down in the Village; Miss Humphrey's and Miss Findlay's evening of the dance at the Community Church; Emily Hewlett's invitation program at the American Laboratory Theatre, and a large number of other performances of a similar nature.

La Argentina's Contribution.

Beyond question the most important happening of the season was the advent of La Argentina; in fact, she appeared so exactly at the psychological moment that she can almost be said to date an epoch in American dancing. In a time of somewhat inchoate development, she raised aloft the standard of form and revealed the purposes and potentialities of the art of which she is such a supreme mistress. The effect on our own choreographic thinking was instantaneous and highly salutary.

But Mme. Argentina was only one of four distinguished European artists or groups of artists to find success. Harald Kreutzberg, himself not a complete stranger, brought with him his European partner, Yvonne Georgi, to give a glimpse of the more progressive tendencies of Middle Europe. It is interesting to remember that their first performances were not popularly successful, but before they had concluded their New York engagement they had roused so great a popular interest that their farewell appearance, at the large Craig Theatre, attracted approximately twice as many people as could obtain admittance.

The Isadora Duncan Dancers from Moscow, headed by their preceptress, Irma Duncan, achieved the season's record for the number of performances, and served to clarify much about the teachings of Isadora that has been allowed to grow dim.

The fourth distinguished visitor from overseas is in some ways the most interesting of them all; he is Leonide Massine. A dancer of the first rank, a choreographer second to none, he has been able to make himself one in the huge organization at the Roxy, adapting himself admirably to the exigencies of the "cross section of society" to which this mammoth theatre caters, and yet keeping his artistic integrity absolutely unsullied.

Aside from the moments of joy he has thus far provided in his personal dancing and the appreciable elevation in the general standard of choreography for which he is directly responsible, his presence just where he is is of the utmost importance in its promise for the future. What the fruits will be only time will tell, but that there will be fruits is clearly indicated.

Work of a Native Artist.

Perhaps the most impressive item in the record of our native artists is the emergence of Martha Graham from the realm of interesting experimentation into that of genuine creation. Her strides in the past year, both as solo dancer and choreographer, place her in the first line of modern dancers, whether native or foreign. Especially does her brief experience as leader of a group hint at new and enchanting worlds for her to reveal to us.

The three new ensembles other than Miss Graham's were on the whole more promising than the solo débutantes. The "New World Dancers," Miss Findlay's company and Mr. Wiener's all provided stimulating ideas, developed as yet unevenly but in most cases authoritatively. Among the individuals who made their bows, however, Miss Didjah, Mr. Losee, Miss Milcinovic and Miss Huara all revealed real qualities.

The production of "Les Noces" by the League of Composers, in addition to its high merits as a performance, introduced a gifted choreographer in the person of Elizaveta Anderson-Ivantzoff, and brought nearer the hope for a permanent ballet organization in that it demonstrated the existence of an audience for one.

There are incompetences here and there, failures and ill-advised performances of one sort or another, but in the perspective of a season that has come to an end they fade pleasantly from memory, leaving only the conviction that it is necessary to repeat once again the somewhat lively slogan that it has been the most significant year in the history of American dancing.