

ing as a whole. Even at this early juncture of his development he had already sifted out and discarded the sonorities that formed a superfluous halo around the orchestra early in this century. There is, moreover, at least one fully rounded melody, the affecting blues theme of the trumpet that occurs about half-way through the third side of the album and again at the end.

But the greatest inspiration of all is the astonishing and revivifying opening of the *Scythian Suite* – an effect of swirling motion that is one of the most imposing finds in all musical literature. There are also other ingenuities along the way and the end builds magnificently. But the obsessive rumbling sounds recur so much that

they are quite enervating by the time the work is over.

A third Russian album on the Victor list, Prokofiev's *Seventh Piano Sonata* (performed by Horowitz), is a recent work, but one that has already become as much of a modern classic as the other two. Its attributes need scarcely be recounted at this time. I am still wary of the Schumanesque Andante and two miscalculations in the Allegro: a premature introduction of booming development material early in the exposition and the bogging-down of the subsidiary theme. The last movement is a tour de force that comes off in one astonishing piece. It is among the rare instances where ostinato technique works well.

WITH THE DANCERS

By MINNA LEDERMAN

ALL the excitement of the past season came early when the Monte Carlo gave us, fresh from Balanchine's hand, a premiere, a Petersburg classic and a revival.

The revival was *Le Baiser de la fée* which Stravinsky's presence made gala. When Stravinsky conducts we feel the tension of the long, melancholy, Tchaikovskian phrases and hear the spare sound of every instrument. His beat permits no swooning retards to soften one up, no brilliant telescoping of allegro measures. The ballet then takes on a truly spacious proportion. At the opening it was wonderful to see how Tallchief, young,

grand, implacable, carried off the central role. And how Danilova danced the mill scene with delicate, contorted grace and the look of a tender Modigliani.

Le Baiser is not major Stravinsky yet it is one of the great ballets of our time. Year after year Balanchine's Alpine Fairy, the terrifying nature deity out of Andersen's fable, looms larger as a conception of genius. Among choreographers Balanchine alone projects such forms. His images evoke no time or place, they have no atmosphere. Their force is naked and direct; they seize on the mind and become basic matter to which one re-

fers more transient experiences. In several passages *Le Baiser* exhibits this power at its highest intensity.

First there is the glittering appearance of the Fairy with her black Shadow. She swoops over the baby in devouring benevolence and the figure beside her moves ominously through the same arc of space — a device that fills the theatre with instant mystery and dread.

Later she is herself her Shadow, prowling through the village. She descends on the Boy in a series of constricting rectangles to wrestle for his soul. Rough and brutal, she thrusts him from left to right until she seizes his head in triumph and forces it to the ground.

And finally there is the searing encounter in the mill. She confronts him suddenly, a towering apparition and, helpless, he embraces and carries her rigid form away with him. Raising her veil, he rushes off in panic but returns to go through a painful submission. Dragging one knee after the other, he pulls the Fairy from behind him, down over his body in an extreme arabesque penché. Her head seems to touch the ground. She draws back and we see them both tense and anguished. So, their hands locked, they move in an open-and-shut diagonal across the stage with an effect of mounting, cruel sensuality. The Fairy then glides with her prey into the sea and the allegory fulfills itself. By soft, underwater cufing (a version new this season), she beats out his last breath, his last resistance.

"The Ice Maiden," says Andersen, "kissed him and he grew stiff with cold and sank. . . . She stood with

one foot pressing him down and so they floated out of sight."

For me this work has none of the charm and gaiety that endear it to many others. The hard sunlight, the yodeling Swiss peasants, seem blatant, a coarse relief for its central theme, the despair of human fate.

III

Charm, gaiety, affecting sentiment make up the new *Night Shadow*. A poet meets a beauty at a masked ball and almost at once abandons her for a sleepwalker. The scene is a garden among masonry ruins (a mildly acrid pastel by Dorothea Tanning) and for at least two-thirds of the piece there is an unbroken feeling of high spirits and elegant young people dancing through the summer night.

Much of the sense of well-being, the Italianate feeling, comes directly from Rieti's music. Indeed, the more of Rieti one hears, the more one understands why Balanchine is so partial to him. Except for a polonaise the score has no set dance piece, it is all operatic grandiloquence out of arias by Bellini. But it has the rushing ground-swell of movement we know from *Waltz Academy* and invites the performance of endless dances. Over its lively rhythms Balanchine spins a web of ingenious marches, polkas, whirls, jigs, bewildering cotillion figures that run from the beginning almost to the last minute. The diversissements alone are more fetching (though less elaborate) than the ones in *Bourgeois Gentleman*, especially the monkeyish capers designed for Boris as a Blackamoor. And one of the loveliest of all Balanchine's inventions is his pas de deux for the poet

and coquette which despite its four-four time and because of its gliding legato one tends to remember as a waltz of youthful infatuation.

Night Shadow has flaws. It breaks in the middle to bring on the somnambulist and at the end to kill off the poet. Yet just at these cracks it shows a curiously fey element in Balanchine's imagination. Danilova enters like a clap of thunder. She holds a real candle, she wears real long hair down to her feet, a real nightgown with fringed sleeves and she marches with a vacant stare, clump-clump on toe to an air from *Norma* – a little figure out of pure melodrama exploding on the pseudo-fantastic scene. And we have at once another of Balanchine's extraordinary episodes in which a woman takes complete possession of a man. At first with childlike wonder (Magellanes is perfect for this) the poet touches, pushes, pokes, spins and embraces her. Then in unbearable excitement he lies down to encircle her feet. And when she walks over and through and beyond him, he gives himself up exhausted to the unattainable.

Danilova was deeply moving in this eerie role (it's a kind of tragic-spook opposite to *Coppelia*). I was touched by her shudder when she stumbled over the dead poet.

III

One can imagine how the Monte Carlo might promise its great ballerina a reconstruction of the Glazunov-Petipa *Raymonda* and then perhaps try to hedge with only the sure-fire last act. It's just as easy to see how, together with Balanchine, she would implore and finally insist that at least fragments of the whole be revived.

For how else then could America know the splendors of empire which were a part of their own childhood?

Of course it doesn't come off as richly as that. Balanchine did what he could – one felt his special touch in the lightness of many figures – and everything was danced with fervor and joyousness. But the young American company is too remote from the heart of the ballet, too inexperienced in its nineteenth century style.

Amazing, however, was the display of Danilova's range. The air of conviction, the grand taut postures and sweep of arms and head needed to give authority in the passages of stylized miming made the work live again when she was on stage.

As seen in the extended (but by no means complete) version of the first night, *Raymonda* is a pageant of formal ceremonies, dramatic episodes, court ensembles, folk ensembles and dazzling variations for soloists and groups. Looking back on this abundance I remember chiefly from the first scene Danilova's variation with the scarf (it was a mistake to drop that later) and, from the Oriental act, a charming sword dance and a favorite slave solo for Danielian, very odd and perfectly suited to his looks.

But the series of divertissements to which the last act is now stripped is a superb reminder of Petipa's art as we know it from the series in the *Aurora* version of *Sleeping Beauty*. There are several bold variations, less dainty than the solos of the *Aurora* fairies, but as clear and gemlike. And the pas classique hongrois in which four girls, with Danilova, all supported, go through a chain of adagio movements, ends in an entwined arabesque,

that is both noble and touching. The crown jewel, of course, is Danilova's moonlit variation on toe, which moves from slow, deep reverences to high thrusts of the head and ends in a brilliant allegro figure. Her control of the long phrase with its sharp staccato ending was a marvel to watch.

Glazunov's score is for the most part treacle, and in spots incredibly shoddy with music-hall tunefulness. But the last act is strengthened by the Hungarian folk material. The décor is lavish all the way through, its extravaganza items apparently out of the warehouse. Benois' symbolic curtain of the crusader on a big white horse with a tiny princess in a tiny far-off tower has more than a faint touch of Disney about it.

III

In its sixth year as a mammoth dance trust Ballet Theatre has split asunder with the violence of a stock market crash. Left outside are Mr. Hurok, several of his illustrious stars (already being regrouped in a super-cartel) and his billing as Best Russians. Retained for Ballet Theatre are the American productions, to which *Billy the Kid* will presumably be added, the Tudor repertory, and, among other *ballet russe* items, the very fine *Apollo*. The company, equipped to travel light, will soon visit London as a strictly American product. The dancers take with them, of course, everyone's best wishes — which they will need. At this journey's end and with their new slogan they invite a scrutiny sharper than they have known before.

One of the sad consequences of the break is the loss we shall know next season when Eglevsky and

Alonso no longer dance together. (Both go to Britain, Eglevsky joins Hurok later.) They are wonderful stars each in his own orbit, but as a pair, matchless, with the same cool perfection, the same modest way of emerging from the back of the stage to the foreground of one's attention.

Composed expressly for them was Ballet Theatre's only novelty this spring — Oboukhov's pas de deux to music from Tcherepnine's *Pavillon d'Armide*. Like the piece he revived last year from *Don Quixote* it shows his passion for sending dancers across the stage in razor-clean geometrical designs that exactly define the angle of motion and the point of rest. All the virtuoso emphasis was on the dancers' smooth line, their clean attack and effortless look. And in the coda, instead of the customary lifts and oppositions they gave us parallel extensions, sharp high turns, sudden unemphatic stops — a serene unison effect pleasing in the memory.

The prolonged absence of Hugh Laing and of Tudor himself has weakened the impact of the Tudor works. What will happen when Markova is no longer Juliet, Alonso Ate in *Undertow* and, almost unthinkable, we see *Pillar of Fire* without Kaye? In creating a ballet, Tudor incubates his dancers until they are the bodily essence of his will. The method works. It works magic. So long as his originals appear, every step, every lift, every burning look is fated, not to be imagined any other way. But in time, with the ravages of change, this personal rhythm is lost and we see exposed the skeleton of the movement itself. In Tudor the basic dance impulse seems not to be of major strength.