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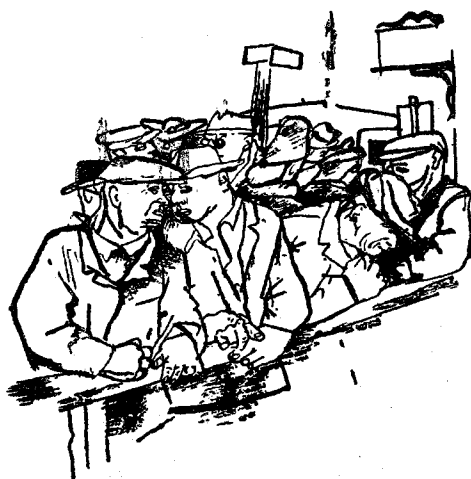
sweeping pageant died away as a force in the modern theater for the simple reason that no playwright had anything tremendous enough to be said in terms of audiences of twenty thousand and stages covering blocks. The last big pageant on Broadway, the story of the Jews, flopped dismally because it bored its audiences to death.

The Communist Party of New York State has revived the pageant, with great success. *Truth to Your Eyes* is revolutionary in production and writing as well as content. The stage and the great audience are perfectly suited to the major drama of our time—man's fight against aggression. Starting with the obvious advantage of having something big enough to say to warrant the use of Madison Square Garden as a theater, the author and his talented production staff introduced a number of innovations in the old pageant technique. The most important, obviously, is the use of the Living Newspaper style on a vast scale, with lighting acting as the curtain. But Mr. Roberts uses the loudspeaker not only to explain the action on his huge stage, but also for the voices of the actors themselves. For the obvious difficulty in presenting a play at Madison Square Garden is the simple objection that most of the audience would not be able to hear the actors if they had spoken lines. Mr. Roberts solves this difficulty by dubbing in the voices of the actors from his loud speaker, and his production staff functioned so ably last week that the illusion was uncannily perfect.

*Truth to Your Eyes* was presented for one night only, by a large troupe of actors, production men, lighting experts, dancers who all have other jobs in the theater and could give only part of their time to rehearsal. The production was magnificently professional—and I take off my hat to this theater troupe that made up in enthusiasm what it lacked in time and money.

I suppose the Communist Party can't go into the theater business as a regular thing, but I think *Truth to Your Eyes* ought at least to go on tour, and play several more performances around New York. It was great and exciting drama.

AN UNFORTUNATE LITTLE COMEDY called *Where Do We Go From Here?* opened last



John Heilker

week and, unless I miss my guess, will very presently close. It's a study of boys in a college fraternity house, and seemed to be as well meaning as it was dull. Mr. William Bowers, its twenty-two-year-old author, fumbles around with great themes—youth against the world, anti-Semitism, and the like, but, alas, his little play is too inept to be effective.

RUTH MCKENNEY.

## Ballet— Old and New

THE reorganized Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and the reconstructed Mordkin company held the center of the dance stage these past weeks. It was all spectacular enough, theatrical enough, and unquestionably a reflection of the thinking and living ways of a considerable section of society—but, for all the large and consistently enthusiastic audience that crowded its performances, the kind of ballet offered to the public this season, revival or new, scarcely made for people's theater, people's dance, or just plain entertainment for the people.

Russian princes, enchanted swans, glove girls from the Left Bank of Paris, either bank of the Danube, animated plants, sorcerer's magic, fairytale in one way or another, daydream preoccupation with unrealities, is neither of the people nor in its interest. Nor does anything revolutionary by way of form crop up in these shows to compensate for the poverty of their thematic materials.

Massine dances admirably, but he offers nothing technically or ideologically that wasn't there before. Neither does Mordkin. Their ballet is sometimes brilliant, even exciting, always brittle and too often dull.

Of the Ballet Russe's new productions, *Seventh Symphony* hits a new low for painfully trite and nebulous romantic effusion, and *Bogatyri* collects flora and fauna from *Coq d'Or*, *Aurora's Wedding*, and a host of other ballets, for some completely unimportant legend of princesses and dragons and more princesses. Even its *Gaité Parisienne*, for all its elegant costuming, its comedy, its high-stepping can-can, and its exceptional dancing by Danilova, is pretty thin stuff that won't take a quick re-sitting.

Mordkin's stuff is principally revision. His new ballet, *Trepak*, entertains a number of good intentions, but proves a confusion of peasant dances, religious orgies, and a Devil, a sort of rustic Falstaff, carrying off the fair maiden and whatever other honors. *Voices of Spring* is completely reminiscent of every other Blue Danube ballet, pleasant, light, and utterly unimportant for all the exceedingly pleasing dancing of Patricia Bowman, Karen Conrad, Leon Varkas, etc.

The Monte Carlo Ballet has been reorganized, not renovated, the Mordkin Ballet reconstructed, not rejuvenated. There are new faces, but not new concepts. Their ballet remains largely ballet not for the people.

Of a healthier if less elaborate nature were

the simple folk and theater pieces of the Korean, Sai Shoki, who uses elegant masks and costumes, wit, and a sensitivity for the small emotions, to provide a gratifying if limited evening in the concert hall.

Tamiris, in the Washington Irving High School Theater, where people are provided with all the best in dancing at 50 cents a ticket, presented in an excellent performance among a dozen compositions, her early *South American*, *Impressions of a Bull Ring*, as well as *Cassandra* out of her most recent *Trojan Incident*. On the same program, displaying considerable development, Ida Soyer presented her *War Face*, *Last Spring* and, with Ida Little and Bettina Mershon, a group of *Negro Spirituals*. It was a good show.

More on the folk side of the ledger were Argentinita, whose dancing draws for inspiration on the struggle of her people against fascism, Antonio Triana, and Pilar Lopez in a program of Sevillas, Farrucas, Bulerias, Malagas, the repertory of Spanish dancing. The dance, however, that stopped the show was *Anda Jaleo* to a song of Garcia Lorca (murdered by the fascists in Granada), a warm, gay, and simple Gypsy trio of the spirit that must right now be holding the bridge-heads on the Ebro and the Segre. Spanish dancing is like that: completely human, bubbling over with the foibles and the passions of the folk, sharp, honest, and, more than all else, direct, simple, and straightforward—especially when done by such excellent dancers as Argentinita and her ensemble. OWEN BURKE.

## The Music Week

ONLY occasionally does an artist appear who molds means of expression and intellectual concept into a perfect whole. Such an artist is Povla Frijsh. Her program at Town Hall this week showed that, unlike many another singer, her voice is not her only asset, since she possesses in addition a discriminating and resourceful mind. There is no shabby mysticism about Mme. Frijsh's approach. Study and consideration of the music and the embodied ideas of the composer lead to an understanding on her part which is most successfully projected to the audience. The pleasure of listening to Povla Frijsh is the pleasure of entering into the meaning of music as expressed by those composers who devoted their art to the writing of song. Great voices have for so long been dragging the art of singing into the quagmires of booby-hatch song literature, that perhaps it is inevitable that there shall soon arise a new race of vocalists, from whom we may demand, first of all, brains. This writer offers his heartfelt thanks to a singer, who, through her performance and program making, has saved for him some illusions. After all, a vocalist may be more than a leather-lunged dynamo for whom making music is synonymous with making money.

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