

that, to put it in highly technical terms, is pizzazz. Yes, I know that this bit of onomatopoeia is usually reserved for show biz, but both a Callas and a Mer-
man, or a ballerina and a hoofer, need it.

The program presented by the Ballet Romantique, aside from serving as a vehicle for the two Youskevitchs, provided performing opportunities for that splendid young dance principal of the American Ballet Theatre, Ted Kivitt; the dark-eyed, exotic, and sensuous Edith Jerell, onetime leading female dancer of the Metropolitan Opera; the handsome and stalwart Dean Crane, usually associated with enterprises at Ballet Arts; Alicia Lovely and George Chatal, who danced winningly in a lively and unaffected version of the "Peasant Pas de Deux" from *Giselle*; plus excellently schooled supporting players.

The dancers and the dancing, then, were fine, but most of the numbers on the program were little more than vehicles and not particularly worthy vehicles at that. Igor Youskevitch's *Pas de Trois* to music of Khachaturian was agreeable enough and valuable chiefly because it united the two Youskevitchs and Kivitt in the act of performing. The same choreographer's *Romeo and Juliet* (using the Tchaikovsky score) is, I would guess, serviceable—Maria is a pretty Juliet but not, here, a very good actress, and Kivitt makes a credible Romeo but one who needs the guidance of a director, not just a choreographer.

For himself and Miss Jerell, Crane came up with that never neglected biblical heroine, Judith, and her historic victim; and Larry Stevens, a choreographer with promise, even if he is not always disciplined, had his go at Adam and Eve (the most popular dance theme of the year) in the not very satisfactory *The Green Apple*, and in an excursion into comedy, *Afternoon of a Straw Hat* (both to scores of Poulenc—the latter using music from the old ballet, *Les Biches*).

The performance by the Ballet Romantique could not, obviously, be numbered among the major dance events of the year. But it had its special purposes. It was one of several distinguished and adventuresome dance groups to take part in a Monday-night series produced by Eugene Dildine in the tarnished old movie house that he hopes to turn into a permanent home for dance; it brought onto one stage an excellent assembly of dancers of different styles; and it gave us glimpses of two generations of the family Youskevitch, the master *danseur* and the novice. All of this constitutes a part of the dance scene. But how about better choreography for that scene? How about the services of a theater director to release and direct the steps designed by a choreographer? How about that pizzazz?

—WALTER TERRY.



For All to See

A REAL HERO of the Middle East war and its aftermath, it became apparent shortly after the recent convening of the United Nations General Assembly, is television. The medium has won another victory for reality over fantasy. The small screen, David fashion, has slain with its smooth stone of truth the Goliath of bombast, rhetoric, and deception in international diplomacy. Domestic political conventions and election campaigns have had to accommodate themselves to the electronic mode, and now it is the turn of men who speak in the court of world opinion.

Why now and not before? We have had television coverage of sessions of the U.N. General Assembly and of the Security Council, and the confrontation was not apparent, the victory not plain. The crucial difference in television's image of the Middle East struggle was the collapsing of the time dimension that historically has separated fantasy and reality in wars. This was the sixty-hour war, and the explosion and implosion of information were almost simultaneous. The effect was to illuminate the whole context of the experience in so blinding a blaze of immediacy that propaganda could not survive. Statesmen must take notice—not only the Russians and the Arabs but the Israelis and the Americans. The medium, per se, is capable of sublime indifference to parochialisms.

The big drama on television when the General Assembly convened was the arrival of Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin to present the Soviet resolution condemning Israel as the aggressor in the swift war. Television's stage was set for him by President Johnson's morning address to educators in Washington and by Ambassador Arthur Goldberg's stepping aside to let the Russian delegate make the first speech to the United Nations. Mr. Kosygin's case, it quickly became clear, was hard line and familiar. It had all been said during the Security Council sessions.

The Premier spoke of Israeli arrogance and atrocities that brought to mind "the heinous crimes perpetrated by the Fascists during World War II." Viewers who had followed the Council meetings had been confused when they heard similar charges hurled back and forth across the table by representatives of both sides of the debate. How could you know which delegates were telling the truth? All nations fighting all modern wars have lied during the actual conflict; but here, in the General As-

sembly, as the impassive, deliberate Russian chief intoned the ritual of diplomatic obfuscation, an entirely novel element was present in the great Assembly chamber and in the minds of viewers striving for objectivity.

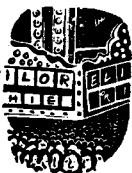
They had seen the war's images with their own eyes. The tragic conflict had unrolled like film on a projector in their living rooms, a great cinemascope classic. Slowly at first, the scenes came; then more swiftly, as Israeli censorship was lifted and the correspondents and their camera crews got around, until the scenario literally gushed forth from the fount of history like an *Iliad* cut to a ninety-minute special.

Viewers had seen the Egyptians in the streets of Cairo leaping exultantly for the holy war. They had heard the Arab chieftains calling for the liquidation of Israel. They had witnessed the Israeli troops going efficiently about their campaign with sadness and no lust for killing. In one of the most memorable television scenes, a young Israeli soldier, a musician, wounded and burned in his first day's fighting, wept more over the unwanted cruelty of the war than over his own pain. All communications are selective, and all are selectively perceived; but if objectivity can be approximated, the evidence that television had amassed in the battles of who was out to get whom was extremely persuasive.

Yet here was the Soviet Premier, followed by delegates from Czechoslovakia and Syria, rehearsing the old script of diplomacy, ignoring television's evidence, and building a case for future back-room bargaining. It was a traumatic experience for patient viewers whose hopes for peace are heavily invested in the U.N. One knew this was a mere holding operation, with endless *pro forma* reiteration for the record by all sides. The real story had gone on behind the scenes. The medium has its message for the great and small powers, comfortable in their ritualistic verbalizing: Cut the script, speak to the point—and to people. When statesmen learn this lesson, as they must, perhaps television will have made a contribution to the search for peace.

The irony of it is that the fantasy of the diplomats should have been so ruthlessly exposed by a medium founded in this country so heavily on fantasy itself. If television can reshape diplomacy, there is hope that someday it may even reshape itself—if it turns its truth lenses inward.

—ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON.



The Admirable Sidney

SIDNEY POITIER has a way of reminding me of Gary Cooper. For one thing, Mr. Poitier is becoming almost as archetypal in his roles as Cooper was. When you first meet him in a picture these days he has a vaguely shy dignity, a taciturnity that denotes inner strength, and a sensitivity that tells us he has gone through pain and suffering. But Poitier is also a splendid, responsive actor, and now and then his pictures have a way of seeming to be better than they actually are, made so by the conviction he establishes. Gary Cooper used to be able to do this, too. But unlike Cooper, Poitier isn't allowed to get the girl (or even a girl) in the end, and all the handsome masculinity he represents must wait for the day when mores and attitudes change sufficiently to allow him to respond to the love signals sent his way by white heroines who aren't particularly concerned about color barriers.

The suggestion of a breaching of those barriers is present in *To Sir, With Love*, an English-made film that presents Poitier as a teacher in a London secondary school. A female member of the staff is obviously attracted to him, and even more obvious is the adoration of a pretty sixteen-year-old pupil. But Poitier, as the teacher, while insisting on all his elemental rights as a human being, draws a firm line in matters of romance. This renunciation is meant as one more example of his dedication to righteousness, as a reinforcement of his essential dignity, and perhaps to demonstrate also his awareness of realities. But it's an easy way out, too, for his screenwriters, who become curiously race conscious while seeming to promote both tolerance and idealism.

I can hardly claim to know the solution myself, both filmically and dramatically, but it does seem a shame that Poitier is being consistently de-sexualized in his films. So, with each passing film, he becomes an ever more solid symbol, a minority figure who must eventually triumph over the majority types, while making prejudice seem lowly and nasty. In the Old West the symbol, when goaded to the extreme, was quick on the draw and drilled his adversary. Poitier, on the other hand, is quick mentally and in a flash of perception finds the key that will unlock a dilemma. He does this in both *To Sir, With Love* and another new film, *In the Heat of the Night*.

In the first mentioned he has an unruly bunch of adolescents to contend

with. They are kids from a slum suburb of London who have managed to prevail against every known method of learning and discipline. They smoke in class, bait their teachers, and evince a set hostility to any form of authority. Poitier must not only subdue these near-hoodlums, he must somehow win their respect and teach them something. It takes awhile, but he does so, succeeding so admirably that the entire class becomes an adorable group of youngsters. James Clavell, who wrote, directed, and produced the film, fills the last half hour with so many heart-tugging episodes that the entire crew must have been awash in tears at the end. Even Poitier, good as he is, has to struggle to maintain his acting conviction.

In *The Heat of the Night* also poses some difficult problems for Poitier. Picked up as a murder suspect in a small Southern town, he reveals himself to be a Philadelphia police officer who had been merely paying his mother a visit. He is also a specialist in cracking homicide cases, and, though the town police chief—played with sizzling zest by Rod Steiger—is most unwilling to employ a Negro in his prejudice-encrusted bailiwick, he does so when the case proves to be more complex than he had supposed. Norman Jewison, the director, endows this racial thriller with atmosphere and foreboding as the town forces gather against the Negro usurper, as Poitier methodically goes about his task of deduction and discovery. The tension grows, however, less from the mystery and the threat of violence than from the relationship that develops between the skilled, intelligent Negro and the police chief who is slowly forced to discard his fixed set of assumptions. Both Poitier and Steiger are splendid as they subtly establish this relationship until a mutual feeling of respect is arrived at.

Of course, the rules must be observed. Poitier must remain a prideful, lonely figure at the end, and Steiger, too, must pay the price of loneliness, because he can no longer share the majority (of his community) point of view. But, this familiarity aside, *In the Heat of the Night* is a tense, fascinating film, benefiting from a tight, well-written script by Stirling Silliphant, and from the sure direction of Mr. Jewison, who gets better and better with each picture.

MARRIAGE, divorce, and sex are the preoccupations of three new films that have come along from various points of the compass. From England

comes *The Family Way*, which tells the story of a pair of very young newlyweds who run into distress when they attempt to find marital happiness in bed. The young man, to put it bluntly, is frightened into impotence, and the girl hasn't the foggiest idea about how to guide him over the conjugal rocks. Meanwhile, word about their failure gets around in the industrial town in which they live, and the whole situation is made worse by the fact that the couple must learn to cohabit while sharing the crowded household of the boy's parents.

THE ingratiating nature of the movie comes principally from fine, sympathetic performances by Hayley Mills and Hywel Bennett as the young couple, and by John Mills and Marjorie Rhodes as the older pair. A good deal of robust humor naturally springs from the material, and some pathos, too, much of it provided by the elder Mills. Well produced and directed, for the most part, by John and Roy Boulting, the film errs only in winding itself up all too neatly in one final scene of a type more fitting for the stage than the screen.

Woman Times Seven, made in Paris under the aegis of Joseph E. Levine, provides Shirley MacLaine with the opportunity to play seven different heroines in a series of vignettes directed by Vittorio De Sica. Unfortunately, since most of these females appear to be French and since Miss MacLaine appears to be firmly Americanized, she isn't always convincing, although she is certainly pleasant enough to watch. The stories tend to be on the thin side, each one revealing a supposed facet of femininity. Alan Arkin, Michael Caine, Vittorio Gassman, and Peter Sellers appear in small roles and cope with their sparse material as best they can.

Hollywood doesn't usually provide us with much in the way of satire, but *Divorce American Style* makes about as sharp a comment on the institution of divorce as we could hope to expect, especially with Dick Van Dyke and Debbie Reynolds in the leading roles. After seventeen years of marriage, the two are brainwashed by friends, lawyers, and a psychiatrist into a suit for divorce which eventually leaves the husband with only \$87.50 a week out of his \$25,000 yearly salary. Naturally, in the long run he's better off to return to his wife, even though Jean Simmons, another divorcee, is there to console and comfort him. It's not economics, however, but the belated recognition of love that vitiates the satire and brings Dick back to Debbie (both are amusing, if sexless, in their roles, by the way). Norman Lear wrote and produced, and Bud Yorkin directed this abrasive comedy, and they are obviously a talented team.

—HOLLIS ALPERT.