

World of Dance

Walter Terry

Ageless Pierrot

LEE, MASS.

MIDWAY in this summer's ten-week Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—the thirty-seventh year of the festival itself and the twenty-eighth year in the Ted Shawn Theatre—John Christian, the Pillow's executive director, brought together on one program an avant-garde, multi-media company in its festival debut, and the first dancer, other than Shawn himself, to bring dance to what was once an old Berkshire farm. The new company was the Gruppe Motion Berlin; the veteran soloist was Barton Mumaw, who made his professional debut in a Shawn production at Lewisohn Stadium in 1931 and who, two years later, became featured soloist with Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers (1933-1940).

Mumaw's selections included *Two Negro Spirituals* ("Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" and "Get on Board Little Children"), *Johnny Comes Marching Home*—both choreographed by the dancer himself—and his most famous solo, "Pierrot in the Dead City" (from Erich Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt*), created for him by Shawn in 1935. This "Pierrot," ineffably sad, was seen by countless thousands of concertgoers in almost every city and town in America and in other lands as well. If those same audiences could



Barton Mumaw, at fifty-eight, in "Pierrot in the Dead City"—"made the yesterdays seem like todays."

have seen Mumaw again this month, thirty years later, I doubt that they could have detected any difference in the appearance of the dancer or in his lightness of movement and technical control.

Even in those moments when the forlorn Pierrot seeks to recapture the gaiety he once knew in the now empty city, Mumaw gave forth with those sweeping *renversés* and those fleet

brisés volés—movement echoes of a joyous past. It was lovely to see "Pierrot in the Dead City" once again. It was also, of course, nostalgic, a nostalgia unsullied by rueful memories of better days, for Mumaw himself turned back the clock and made the yesterdays seem like todays.

The Pillow's newest festival acquisition, Gruppe Motion Berlin, is not likely to have many successful tomorrows if its *Countdown for Orpheus* is a fair example (I would imagine that the best was chosen for a Jacob's Pillow debut) of the repertory. Founded in 1962 by Brigitta Herrmann, Manfred Fischbeck, and Hellmut Fricke-Gottschild in Germany, and now with headquarters in Philadelphia, the "Gruppe" brought to the Pillow a long, long experiment that included projected close-ups of eyes (for example), electronic sounds, live grunts and other vocal emissions, and some well-shaped bodies doing some random movements of less than random interest.

Among the projections was a countdown in numerals. This appeared on the side wall of the theater, not the stage, and when some members of the audiences caught on that it indicated how many minutes left to go, they decided to go. As long as one felt, "Well, it'll be over any minute now," the courteous thing was to stay; but once warned, escape was paramount. As meandering lights touched stage and theater walls, I was amused to note that two great dance portraits, one on either side of the theater, of Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn—pioneers, rebels, and avant-gardists—of an earlier epoch, remained serene. Shawn, in his Indian "Feather of the Dawn" dance, looked upward for solace from the Great Spirit, while St. Denis, as the Japanese Goddess of Mercy, looked downward in what might possibly have been forgiveness.

Some of the dancers in Gruppe Motion Berlin moved well and with a certain motor urgency, but it wasn't enough. You will find much, much better multi-media dance explorations elsewhere.

This particular program also had a dash of Spanish dance, provided for by Teresa and her ensemble. Of particular interest was Teresa's exploration of the underlying rhythms of music by Johann Sebastian Bach in an excerpt from a toccata and in four two-part inventions. You may think of Bach in terms of a well-tempered clavier, but Teresa made you hear him by way of *taconeo*, the heel-beats of Spain. What she came up with were studies rather than dances, but they were fascinating, far more fascinating—ancient Spain and old Bach—than the presumably novel Gruppe Motion Berlin.

Views of Our Sphere

By Ernest Sandeen

We deserved that earth-shot from the moon's asbestos-gray horizon: a family portrait on the old homestead, yet not a single one of us could be seen and the only history being made was storm-swirls over rocks and oceans.

So our prophets from as long ago as the close of paradise had at last a picture to illustrate their remarks.

As the atoms in our invisible heads go on blasting out toward darker and darker lights what can we hope for but smaller and smaller snapshots of this place already small and lonesome enough.

The countdown, however, is pulsing in all our engineered spaces of mind, and each flight now must explode into the next till we and our shape in the sun and our weather vanish altogether (all together).

The Theater

Henry Hewes

DOMESTIC

TITLE AND AUTHOR	TENTATIVE CAST	OPENING
THE RECKONING, Douglas Turner Ward	Douglas Turner Ward, Lester Rawlins	Thurs., Sept. 4 St. Marks
SILHOUETTES, Ted Harris	Jeff Herman, Ann Stafford, Fred Forrest	Mon., Sept. 8 Actors Playhouse
THE END OF ALL THINGS NATURAL, G. Zoffer	Muni Seroff	Thurs., Sept. 11 Village South
THE OFAY WATCHER, Frank Cucci	Cleavon Little, Terry Kiser, Novella Nelson	Thurs., Sept. 11 Stage 73
THE AMERICAN HAMBURGER LEAGUE, Norman Kline	Bill Hinnant, Jack Fletcher, Jane Hoffman	Tues., Sept. 16 New
AND PUPPY DOG TAILS, David Gaard	Ken Klaiban, Horton Willis, George Reeger	Wed., Sept. 17 Astor Place
MERCY STREET, Anne Sexton	Marian Seldes	Sat., Oct. 4 American Place
HAUNTED HOST, Robert Patrick		Tues., Oct. 7 Hermes
GO FLY A KITE, Fredd Wayne (from writings of Benjamin Franklin)	Fredd Wayne	Sun., Oct. 12 Gate
INDIANS, Arthur Kopit	Stacy Keach, Manu Tupou, Peter Maclean	Mon., Oct. 13 Brooks Atkinson
THE PENNY WARS, Elliott Baker (from his own novel)	George Voskovec, Kim Hunter	Thurs., Oct. 16 Royale
BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE, Leonard Gershe	Keir Dullea, Maureen O'Sullivan	Fri., Oct. 17 Booth
DISCREET INDISCRETIONS, Lonnie Coleman	Joan Hackett, Darryl Hickman, Betsy von Furstenberg	Thurs., Oct. 23
ANGELA, Sumner Arthur Long	Geraldine Page, Rob Anthony	Wed., Oct. 29 Music Box
THE LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS, Neil Simon	James Coco, Linda Lavin, Marcia Rodd	Sun., Dec. 28 Eugene O'Neill

IMPORTED

HELLO AND GOODBYE, Athol Fugard	Colleen Dewhurst, Barry Primus	Thurs., Sept. 18 Sheridan Square
A PATRIOT FOR ME, John Osborne	Maximilian Schell, Dennis King, Beatrice Straight	Thurs., Oct. 2 Ethel Barrymore
CRIMES OF PASSION, Joe Orton		Fri., Oct. 17
MIXED DOUBLES, Harold Pinter, John Bowen, and others	Vivien Merchant, Nigel Stock, Victor Maddern	Tues., Dec. 2

MUSICALS

SALVATION, C. C. Courtney, Peter Link	Boni Enten, Marta Heflin, Yolanda Bavan	Wed., Sept. 24 Jan Hus
JIMMY, Mel Shavelson, Bill and Patti Jacob	Frank Gorshin, Anita Gillette, Julie Wilson	Tues., Oct. 21 Winter Garden
RONDELAY, Jerry Douglas, Hal Jordan (from La Ronde)		Tues., Oct. 28 Hudson West
LA STRADA, Charles K. Peck, Jr., Lionel Bart (from film)	Bernadette Peters	Sat., Dec. 13 Lunt-Fontanne
Coco, Alan Jay Lerner, Andre Previn	Katharine Hepburn	Thurs., Dec. 18 Mark Hellinger

REVIEWS

CHUSHINGURA, Takeda Izumo and Kagami Jisih, Fukuchi Ochi	The Grand Kabuki	Wed., Sept. 10 City Center
KUMAGAI JINYA, Namiki Sosuke and Momiji Gari, Kanatake Mo-kuami	The Grand Kabuki	Wed., Sept. 17 City Center
A FLEA IN HER EAR, George Feydeau; TINY ALICE, Edward Albee, THE THREE SISTERS, Anton Chekhov	ACT Company from San Francisco	Mon., Sept. 29 ANTA
FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES, John Herbert		Wed., Oct. 22 Stage 73
MACBETH, William Shakespeare (text rearranged)	The Performance Group	Fri., Oct. 24 Performing Garage
THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH, Thornton Wilder (tentative)	Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center	Thurs., Nov. 6 Beaumont

The New Season is Off

LISTED LEFT are shows scheduled to open in New York before the end of 1969. Most immediately noticeable is the relatively small number of new imported plays. This reflects the current doldrums in the London theater.

Of the new domestic plays listed, nearly two-thirds are being presented Off-Broadway. Furthermore, Ellen Stewart's ambitious schedule at Café La Mama's two off Off-Broadway theaters equals the entire Broadway and Off-Broadway output. It includes Edward De Grazia's *The Americans* (Aug. 27-Sept. 7); John Bottoms's *Man Versus the Computer* (Sept. 10-14); Adrienne Kennedy's *Rat's Mass* (Sept. 17-28); Donald Julian's *Folly* (Sept. 17-28); Ching Yeh's *Won Ton Soup* (Oct. 1-12); Larry Wunderlich's *Fingers* (Oct. 8-19); a new play by Eric Bentley (Oct. 22-Nov. 2); Robert Patrick's *The Golden Circle* (Nov. 5-16); a new play by Tom Eyen (Nov. 5-16); *Eldridge Cleaver*, a La Mama Dance Drama Workshop creation (Nov. 19-30); and Paul Foster's *The Stoned Angel* (Nov. 19-30).

The number of new musicals is the lowest ever, presumably because producers are having difficulty raising the large amounts of money required. Beyond the five listed, *The House of Leather* by Fred Gaines and Dale Menden may open here in December. And *The Girl Upstairs* by James Goldman and Stephen Sondheim (Jan. 11), and *Alice* (adapted from *Alice in Wonderland*) by N. Richard Nash, Hal Hester, and Danny Apolinar (Jan. 21), are definite entries.

Although it has lost its highly acclaimed APA-Phoenix Repertory Company, New York will still have an unusually high proportion of classics and revivals. From Japan comes the marvelous Grand Kabuki with two programs of Japanese classics. ANTA is bringing William Ball's American Conservatory Theatre here from San Francisco with Gower Champion's staging of Feydeau's farce, *A Flea in Her Ear*; and William Ball's unorthodox productions of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* and Albee's *Tiny Alice*. The Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center will open with either *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *The Devil's Disciple*, or *The Time of Your Life*.

For dedicated theatergoers, the most eagerly awaited event will be the first appearance in this country of Jerzy Grotowski's Theatre Laboratory. The Polish company will present Calderon's *The Constant Prince* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's small Third Theatre (Oct. 16-Nov. 1), and will follow this with Wyspianski's *Akropolis* (Nov. 4-15) and *Apocalypse* (Nov. 18-28).