

Entertainment

Their 25th season

National Ballet presents romantic stories

By AGNES KRUCHIO

La Fille Mal Gardée, the second production during this season of the National Ballet, was a delightful new production for the ensemble. It is a period piece which is now regarded as a turning point of sorts in the history of ballet.

Created in July of 1789, La Fille Mal Gardée quickly became one of the most popular ballets of the time, and was frequently performed. It

represented a break away from the formal, pseudo-classical tradition; for the first time, the central focus of the dance performance was a series of episodes which formed a coherent story. Previously, strictly routinized dances formed the bases of a patched-up story line.

Here, the story is about a young pastoral couple, whose wooing is thwarted by the girl's ambitious mother, who wants to marry her off to a rich but imbecilic oaf. She, of

course, loves a poor, but handsome lad. Their persevering efforts are rewarded in the end by good fortune, and they live happily ever after.

It's a light and frothy ballet, but it is attractively staged by the National Ballet, and choreographed by Frederick Ashton, a founding choreographer of the Royal Ballet of England. The entire first act consists of attempts by the couple to woo each other, charming harvesting scenes, in which the entire village participates, and dances under a may-tree. The young couple repeatedly entwine each other with ribbons, and come up with cat's cradle designs, as well as create intricate patterns with the ribbons around the may-pole.

La Fille Mal Gardée is not a number with which I would start introducing anyone to the ballet, as it is simply too frothy and sweet for contemporary tastes.

There were, however, some truly humorous passages. In the matinee performance by Veronica Tennant,



A scene from Romeo and Juliet, The National Ballet of Canada's first production.

the clowning, teasing aspect of the mother-daughter relationship was highlighted. Tennant's comic talent

allowed the absurd aspects the situation of a young woman locked away from her lover to surface.

Etobicoke's girl crazy

By BELINDA SILBERMAN

Insane and light-hearted as ever, Girl Crazy is back in town again until Saturday.

Gershwin's musical which first appeared in 1930 is a humorous carefree look at love, good guys — bad guys, and the slow, easy life of the West.

The star, Kate (Diane Bilyk), is exclusively a Mae West character. Upon her mere entrance all the men are charmed off their feet, including her Hungarian ex-husband, Zoli (John Watkins) who is pathetically trying to win her back.

To make a long plot short, Girl

Crazy is essentially "Boy meets girl, boy gets girl". But this time in plural. The other couple, Johnny (Tom Simpson) who owns a ranch nearby, and Molly (Chris Dymond) who delivers the mail, manage to chase after all the wrong people until they finally realize they are meant for each other.

Etobicoke Musical Productions has unfortunately chosen to update some of the lines in the 1930 Gershwin script. There is mention of Nixon and among other things, Zoli claims he has tired blood. This updating doesn't appear to make sense, since the setting of the musical is obviously not of this decade.

Another problem lay in a murder scene. A strobe light placed above center stage, did not flick effectively across the entire width of the stage.

Despite these faults however, the production was very good. All the characters were unusually well portrayed, even the unidentified members of the chorus seemed to each possess their own individual qualities.

Surprisingly, the funniest scene in the show was totally unrehearsed. Kate and Zoli singing "Treat Me Rough" began, according to the script, to push and poke at each other.

Quite unexpectedly, Kate's wig dropped off and although half the audience fell into hysterical fits of laughter, the other half actually thought that it was part of the song number. This was due to John Watkins' and particularly, Diane Bilyk's fine covering up of the mistake.

Even with no other evidence save this, Etobicoke Music Productions showed itself to be a great deal more than the regular, run-of-the-mill, amateur company.

CKRY-FM

Today 12-2 P.M.: The Mayorality Bearpit concerning the city elections with audience participation.

2-6 P.M.: Nature of Music created and produced by Caroline Bruntin and Don Hope.

Friday 11-11:30 A.M. Tomorrow Will The Raven Sing, part 4.

Monday 4-5 P.M. Earthtones. 5-6 Mel Brooks interview.

6-8 P.M. Special on the Doors, their music on the times of the 60's. Produced by Eli Klein.

Tuesday 12-2 P.M. A live interview with the director and some of the actors of the Toronto Truck Theatre production "Blithe Spirit".

Wednesday 12-2 P.M. The Thursday Programme, views and music on Thursday by Craig Noble.

4:30-6:30 P.M. Faustian Variations - different composers and conductors views on the Faust theme. Lynn Tranter - producer.

Blythe Spirit is hot, cold

By MARY MARRONE

Noel Coward's lead character died of a heart attack, laughing at a BBC musical while recovering from pneumonia. Unfortunately, The Toronto Truck Theatre's production of his play, Blithe Spirit was not quite as successful.

The production is marred by a poor performance by the male lead, Charles Condomine, played by Anthony Dunn, who stumbles over many of his lines, as well as by several technical errors. Dunn never seems to feel comfortable in the role of the husband who discovers the complications of coping with a jealous wife and a seductive ghost.

The show is stolen by a minor character, in an excellent performance by Suzanne Ballantyne. Her convincing portrayal of the clumsy maidservant keeps the audience in stitches. She is the only actress who makes use of facial expressions giving her character personality and humour.

Jo Haviland also gives a good performance in the role of Madame Arcati, an eccentric bicycle riding medium whose fantastic outfits range from black ruffles and

feathers to plaid kilts and argyle socks. Her absurd incantations and recollections of ectoplasmic manifestations make the seance thoroughly enjoyable.

Though the production is less than perfect, the wit and humour of Noel Coward and the talent of the supporting characters make the play worth seeing.

Writer gets mangled

Former Excalibur newsman, David Chodikoff, was found dead on the fourth floor of McLaughlin Residence today after allegedly visiting the room of Neil J. Barratt, guitarist band leader of Interaction. The mad guitarist apparently played assorted recordings of his band, plus an ample sampling of impromptu guitar work, and the outspoken Chodikoff had his feet as well as other appendages packed into his mouth. Across his torso were found various welts which police believe are the direct result of Dave's failure to move out of the path of Neil's whip-like riffs. They looked like they had been branded on.

According to Barratt, the reporter was given due warning before being subject to the barrage of bren-gun crescendoes, familiar sounds to the many Interaction fans.

"I even warmed up first," said Barratt, "Just to give him a little something to choke on before starting to fly up the fretboard. It's nobody's fault but his own. He knew what was coming — and got what he had coming."

No charges will be laid as there is no section in the criminal code that states high quality music qualifies as a murder weapon.

Services for the young writer will be held at the yet to be completed Park Lawn Funeral Home on Steeles Avenue. Entertainment will be provided free of charge by Interaction — considered to be a fitting way of sending the reporter to that Great Concert Hall in the sky.



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