

Entertainment

Editor: Agnes Kruchio

Considerable choreographic talent

National dancers present original material

By AGNES KRUCHIO

The National Ballet's yearly workshops seem to improve with age, and during last week's renewal of a three year old tradition of presenting original works by dancers, the company showed itself to be in fine form indeed. Fresh from a cross-country tour, during which they have played to sold-out houses everywhere except in Quebec (where no ballet company seems to have much luck), they demonstrated also that considerable choreographic talent can be found among the dancers of the company.

Two of last year's notable choreographers again produced interesting works. Anne Ditchburn's piece, Kisses, stands out as a dance that brings together thoughtful observation, insightful and intelligent comment and a playful sense of humor that occasionally has a startlingly bitter edge. It is a series of vignettes with music ranging from Eric Satie, through Laura Nyro to a throbbing African number. The glimpses offered range from a gun enamoured cowboy who can't be bothered with feminine attention, to a pretty courtship dance, to a haunting, erotic interlude between two women, sensitively portrayed by Sonia Perusse and Wendy Reiser, to a blood-tingling finale in the African piece, which is entitled Survival.

Ditchburn's other piece, Afterhours, is fairly open-ended, set to Morton Gould's Vivaldi Gallery. Humorous, playful choreography characterises this portrayal of the trials and tribulations of marriage. The second part of the

dance becomes far too open ended, the humour declines sharply and interpretation of on-stage activity becomes downright impossible. While the women had little chance to show off their technique, Frank Augustyne dazzled, as ever, with his magnificent leaps and great ease.

A Work In Progress turns out to be Constantin Patsalas' interpretation of Stravinsky's The Rites of Spring; presenting only the first 17 minutes (the dancers only had two weeks to work on the new dances), Patsalas makes effective use of the intrinsic rhythms of the piece.

His choreography is frankly reminiscent of the Bejart Ballet's interpretation of the same music — although in places he presents an improvement on their ideas and themes often he tones down and civilizes the original wildness of their interpretation. The Rites of Spring is just what the name suggests — a pagan, pulsating worship of spring,

an unequivocal upsurge of life, the awakening life-force demanding its own place in the sun. Patsalas' choreography enhances many of the dominant musical currents, but occasionally his arrangements become almost too graphic and once lovely but obvious and trite when repeated.

Sonata, choreographed by James Kudelka, is set to a (yes) sonata for violin and piano. A lyrical and flowing piece, it was traditional in style and aesthetic, with each of its four movements carefully following the musical moods which seemed to be the major purpose of the choreography; it lacked any other kind of discernible direction. The execution of the dance by most of the company was superbly smooth, polished and precise. Veronica Tennant's faultless performance proved disappointing — her painfully stark execution contrasted sharply with the warmth and grace of Nadia Potts and Karen Jago in later movements.



Wendy Reiser and Sonia Perusse portray two women in a sensitively executed interlude with romantic overtones in Anne Ditchburn's Kisses.

Night Porter is boring, sexless pretender

By JULIAN BELTRAME

"Last Tango in Paris is a light-hearted romp compared to The Night Porter."

That is the critical view of one Newsweek Magazine critic, overshadowing the bizarre picture of Charlotte Rampling hiding her wares beneath a carefully placed pair of suspenders.

The simple point is that the ad, including the critical opinion, is a campaign, and couldn't have more ideally suited the impression advertisers have attempted to put across to movie goers all over this continent. Judging by Sunday night's crowd at the Four Season's Sheraton, the campaign is working, even though the film cost each of them \$3.50 to see.

If there exists a single relevant reason for comparing The Night Porter with Last Tango, this reviewer couldn't see it. Then why mention Last Tango at all? Again it's clear that Porter is trying to cash in on Last Tango's success, and on the fact that both were made by Italian directors in English.

But this is advertising, not criticism.

Italians though they both be, one

cannot compare Bertolucci with Liliana Cavani. The former is a masterful, visual director; the latter, judging from this film, is just pretending to be that.

If a comparison of the two films could be justifiably made, it is that both films look like they were conceived during one night's fancy and nothing was added afterwards. The Night Porter follows one simple idea without deviations.

Two people, one pretending to be a doctor in a German concentration camp, the other pretending to be fearful of the sexual acts she is made to commit by him, meet years later, after living as church mice, presumably to hide themselves from the stark reality of their guilt. They abandon their reservations and exult once again in the sado-masochistic urgings of their soul.

Little else is added to this basic idea, and one suspects that if another director had handled the script the film might have been reduced to a good hour. But Cavani stretches it out to feature length, basically by indulging in one slow pan after another. Often she puts in shots which have no meaning or con-

nection with what went on before or after.

The net result is that the entire film moves along about as quickly and with as much life as a condemned man walking to his chair.

The major flaw of the film is simply that there is no point, hence no direction. There is no reason for any of us to remain in our seats for very long; at no time is there any indication that we are about to be moved in any way.

I suppose that if it hadn't been for the promo of this film, there would have been plenty of people walking out. In one sense we are disappointed even in that expectation. Certainly there is one sexually explicit scene in which Max (Dirk Bogarde) and his child-lover (Rampling) actually look like they're indulging in the old "in-out", but Cavani handles it in such a way that not even that is sexy.

The film goes through the motion of tracing out the background of these two characters without even

remotely indicating why their background is important. I found myself constantly expecting something to happen not because the film led somewhere but because nothing had happened so far.

Dirk Bogarde distinguishes himself once again by rising above the limited material he is given, and actually succeeds in convincing us that he is this evil, humorous, sadist who liked Nazi rule only because it enabled him to indulge his imagination.

Rampling is less successful, although her performance cannot be faulted.

A lot of ridiculous things have been said about this boring movie, not the least of which has been that it is pornography. It has been established by the Supreme Court of the United States that no definition of pornography can be found, but there are a lot of critics out there who keep insisting they know what it is.

As usual—they are wrong.

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