

A light breath of Scottish life

by D. Goss

Billed as a continuous ceilidh, *A Breath Of Scotland* returned to the Rebecca Cohn last Monday night. The half-dozen performers displayed a variety of talents, presenting to an enthusiastic audience a speedy, friendly and happy show.

"The Golden Voice Of Scotland", gifted soprano Margaret Anderson, received thunderous applause for her rendition of the Jacobite ballad *Will Ye No Come Back Again*, and especially for her execution of

Amazing Grace.

Comedy was supplied by the quick witted Eddie Ross in his costumed portrayal of an airline stewardess and later on as a clergyman. Ross, although a fair vocalist, sounded off-key when he tried to sing *Happy Highland Laddie*, and other songs.

The workhorse of the ensemble was accompanist Blanche MacInnes, who played throughout the programme and carried the singers well. Young Garry Nicholson was a

bit too 'cute'; but an amiable gagman for the Master of Ceremonies, Ron Coburn. Coburn, a comic and singer, kept the show moving smoothly.

The highlight of the evening was Billy Marshall. An excellent musician, Marshall is a singer-accordionist who was formally seen on CBC's *Ceilidh*. Playing a selection of jigs, reels, and ballads, he received standing ovation. His strong tenor voice carried excellently the traditional tunes such as

Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond, *Flowers of Scotland*, a rousing version of the *Scottish Soldier* and some of the music of Harry Lauder. His instrumentalization of *The Dark Island* was extremely haunting and well appreciated.

The audience was put at ease from the very first, and well entertained throughout. However, I cannot help feeling that the absence of skirling bagpipes took away somewhat from a 'true' authentic breath of Scotland.

Trockadero titillates

by Mark Simkins

Imagine Dame Margot Fontane with a hairy chest. Well, that's what we got with *Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo* last Friday night at the Rebecca Cohn.

This ballet company "à la travesti" from New York kept its large audience in stitches with its send-up of all forms of ballet, from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* to the latest Martha Graham.

Throughout the concert these males in tutus were excellent in their depictions of ridiculous ballet styles and the jealousies that often divide the prima donnas of ballet companies. The spectacle of two

muscular ballerinas squabbling with fisticuffs on stage, between numbers was enough to bring tears of laughter to the most humourless of folks.

A sketch of an aging lead ballerina who can barely straighten out from her curtain calls was hilarious. And, the leading lady who gave a fern from her dozen roses to her male lead caused guffaws to ring out from the back balconys.

Yet even in parody, the Trockaderos brought the magic of ballet to the stage as they satirized it so well, so much so in fact, that I really yearn to see ballet of a more serious nature soon.

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seems to be the pressing question asked in the film. Does anyone know? Does he know himself? Is there anything behind the cool, unfeeling facade that houses one of the world's greatest racing car drivers? Deerfield seems to be the contemporary existential equivalent to the protagonist in Camus' *L'etranger*. He professes to be a man who cares for nothing, believes in nothing, whose very lifestyle makes mock of death.

Through the death of one friend and the injury of another Deerfield meets, in a clinic in Italy, the bold, brash woman Lillian, played by Marthe Keller with a breezy sense of neuroticism throughout. She is as much a mystery as he is - and a mystery he is determined to solve, it turns out.

In a number of ways Lillian is very much the opposite of what he is. He believes in nothing, while she believes in something - some fate, or pattern - which orders life and death. There is no pattern he insists - yet there must be a reason. He cannot believe that death can simply descend upon anyone at random, without a logical force behind it. Rabbits on the track, he

insists, upon the seemingly inexplicable death of a fellow racing car driver, blatantly flaunting this symbol unashameably throughout the film. But Lillian knows that death can and does behave in this manner, because she is dying. And Bobby discovers this.

Here the film breaks out in full force into its panoramic photography of the European countryside, while plot and actors disappear in the splendid photography which had been threatening to overcome things from the beginning. There is an unusual amount of attention given to detail and small effects, many of which are meant to be clever character insights, though amounting to little, while the more important ideas of the film are allowed to pass unnoticed.

Eventually the inevitable happens - Lillian dies, leaving us with the feeling that perhaps Bobby Deerfield has been touched, been known intimately by someone. About this, however, we are never entirely convinced. Nor are we entirely sure that we care. And we never do find out what Lillian died from, either. Perhaps it was boredom.

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