

the composers commissioned on the other series. A swell song was the one given to the purple-shirted cohorts, which went, "our captain is so peaceful". . . . this followed by the sssssss-bang! of a trench mortar being fired.

## WITH THE DANCERS

ELLIOTT CARTER

THE dance season began brilliantly with new works by the Littlefield and Russian Ballets, and a revival of some old ones by Joos. Miss Littlefield's troupe revealed great improvement over last year's *Sleeping Beauty* (repeated during the summer at the Stadium with Smallens correcting the tempi). The choreography is more imaginative, and the dancers are better trained; they showed up well in a small hall and danced with verve and sureness. Poulenc's *Aubade* was offered with Alexis Dolinoff's version of Balanchine's original and more piquant choreography, with Dolinoff in the main role. There was also a miniature *Fantastic Symphony* entitled *Poème* to Ravel's *Pavane* and a miniature *Choreartium* to music by Bach. This last was healthy and vigorous and quite decently danced. As always in Miss Littlefield's work there was a powerful touch of the vaudeville troupe doing something pretty swell. You cannot expect much careful and delicate workmanship from her but you can expect good, obvious theatre even if it's pretty cheap. Miss Littlefield played very safe in her choice of ballets, giving imitations of already proven successes. A little original work would be appreciated.

The morose, none too elegant evenings staged at the shabby Metropolitan have already achieved an air of nostalgia befitting the institution which the Ballet Russe has now become. Few surprises can be expected. The freshest of the new works was the *Gods Go A-Begging* which, with the help of a Handel score, was once a gay little piece. Lichine as choreographer built this up out of scenery, costumes, score and choreography created for Diaghilev. It is much less delightful now. Danilova and

Shabelevsky footed it with such exquisite elegance that they walked away with the show.

*Francesca da Rimini*, with which Lichine started from scratch, was less successful. The work had plenty of staring and stamping, waving and pointing of the most melodramatic school. While a "neo-romantic" ballet could be done that way, this one was a failure due perhaps to Lichine's lack of expertness. In neither of his ballets did he handle the movement of groups well and his *solis* and *pas de deux* relied too often on that most obvious of formulae, the pirouette at the musical cadence. However Lichine who has just begun in this difficult type of work already shows a great sense of the theatre. Oliver Messel's scenes and clothes are like fine arts examination "spot questions." I recognized Gozzoli, Fra Angelico, Sodoma Carpaccio and Rossetti. Aside from this challenge to one's knowledge there was little worth seeing in the work.

Not so with the *Coq d'Or* revived in the "futuristic polychromy" which Goncharova made into a sensation in 1914. You could scarcely see what was going on for the décors, and a good thing too, for the dancing was not much to look at and the extravagant miming was pretty unfunny. Fokine's choreography, which is a break with the Petipa tradition, seems much more antiquated today than his predecessor's and it is likely to remain so. It has much less scope either in humorous or in lyric works. The décors had that fuming kind of sensuality exploited by Russians for their international Tea-Room trade. The success of this *Coq* crowded *The Amorous Lion*, an expected première, off the bills! Next year we will certainly be given *Kikimora*, *Sadko* or *Kitège*.

Miss Littlefield and the Russian Ballet are the victims of that unfortunate shortsight of the Business Manager, which gives us warmed-over seconds, old successes in new disguises, instead of new works built on new conceptions. Theirs is the easier way; it is always much acclaimed both by the public and the critics alike. But all too soon it will produce that certain tired feeling.