

# Ballet:

## The Rise of a Great American Art

By BETTY HOCKADAY

Ever since the breath-taking performance of the Ballet Theatre in Raleigh two weeks ago, the very mention of the word *ballet* seems to produce sighs of ecstasy from scores of Meredith "Angels." Such a reaction is instantaneous with many of us, for years of study and work in this great art have proved how truly glorious it is.

Ballet is an art that is either loved passionately or disliked equally as intensely. America has been slow to accept it, chiefly because of our early deficiency in trained teachers and promising talent. The Ballet Russe is responsible for a great deal of the growing American audience, for it was the first large-sized company to attempt a complete season of repertory. Since then (1933), ballet in America has been rapidly reaching artistic maturity. More money and finer performers have definitely raised the technical standards required for competition with the European professional ballet.

Ballet, just like any other art, it a reflection of the genre of its surroundings, which in turn is influenced by the traditions of countless preceding generations. American ballet as such is barely fifteen years old, but it can be recognized as a product and mirror of American creativeness, pioneering, and youth. Could Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*, Ruth Page's *Frankie and Johnny*, or Eugene Loring's *Billy, the Kid* be conceivably thought of as fruits of the European imagination? Hardly, for a highly developed art that has been deeply-rooted in the Russian

traditions does not readily change.

The names that are associated with contemporary American ballet are recognized all over the world as belonging to artists of boundless ability. The choreography of George Balanchine and Agnes de Mille leaves nothing to be desired.

Dancers such as Mary Ella Moylan, Maria Tallchief, Valerie Bettis, William Dollar, Anthony Tudor, Nora Kaye, Nana Gollner, Hugh Laing, Frederick Franklin, and John Kriza are constantly giving performances of the highest calibre. The talent of these artists plus the increasing appreciativeness of the American public will eventually cause the United States to lead the world of dance.

Of the wealth of ballet literature on the market today, the most informing periodical is the *Dance Magazine*. This magazine is dedicated to our own talent, therefore highly indicative of American ballet progress. Agnes de Mille's autobiography, *Dance of the Pipers*, is delightfully enlightening, and is a must for any ballet enthusiast. For anyone who is interested in the history and technique of this magnificent art, George Amberg's lavishly illustrated *Ballet in America* cannot be too highly praised. In fact, it would be a handsome addition to any library.

JOAN LANGLEY

(Continued from page one)

"Congratulations. Your try-out has qualified you for membership on our College Board." From 2,000 college students who entered the contest, Joan was



Alpha Psi Omega takes in new members. Left to right are Mary Cobb Dickens, Charleen Swanzey, and Kitty Waynick, new members, with Mary Jo Isaacs, Alpha Psi Omega vice-president.

one of 750 to be selected for the College Board.

A senior home economics major, Joan is president of the Granddaughters' Club and assistant editor of THE TWIG. After graduation in June, she plans to work in the field of home economics.

Serving as a College Board member, Joan reports to *Madoiselle* concerning college life and events at Meredith. In the

next three months she will have three specific assignments in the fields of illustration, writing, editing, or fashion advertising. Through these assignments Joan will compete with other preliminary winners for one of the twenty guest editorships which the magazine will award in May.

Those girls winning editorships will receive paid transportation to and from New York City, where they will spend four weeks in June.

### ALUMNAE NEWS

The following marriages have been reported to the Alumnae Office:

Martha Sue Smith, 1951, of New Hill, to John Marshall Clement on December 28. The couple is living in Raleigh.

Rosalyn Poole, 1952, of Dunn, to James Stephenson Farthing, Jr. on December 13. Fort Jackson, S. C. is their temporary home.

Allene Brown, 1952, of Ashboro, to Hoyt Vernon Brown on November 15. Their home is Hampton, Va.

Rebecca Jane Buchanan, ex-1954, of Dover, Delaware, to Joshua Marion Twilley on December 27.

The following births have been reported:

A son, Ralph, Jr., to Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Bowen (Frances Ann Estridge, 1951) on October 29.

A son, Hannis, III, to Mr. and Mrs. Hannis Thompson, Jr., (Frances Almond, 1951) on December 1.

A son, Richard Earl, to Mr. and Mrs. Earl Cook, (Helen Brunson, 1951) on December 19.

Did you know that the stone benches found at intervals around the campus were given by Meredith alumnae?

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