

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 15, 1957

Peninsula Ballet

We consider it a privilege to give a helping hand and a bit of praise to the Peninsula's newest venture - the Monterey Peninsula Civic Ballet, Co. We also give a handclap to the Monterey Peninsula Concert Assn., which had the foresight to sponsor the three premier performances of four complete ballets in the Pacific Grove High School auditorium on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, Feb. 20 and 21, followed by a matinee on Feb. 22 at 2:30 o'clock.

The four ballets to be performed are "Pastorale apres Degas," music by Delibes; "Capriccio Espagnol" by Rimsky-Korsakov; "Rossini Variations," music by Rossini and "Cake-Walk," music by Gottschalk. Solo performers will be Roberta Tabata, Alaine Hurlbut, Henry Kersh, Dale Lefler, and Frank Bourman. In the Corps de Ballet will be Betty Eckerson, Susan Heiland, Akemi Ito, Gloria Lewis, Sherron McGaughey, Merri Robinson. Judy Shintani and Danell Walker. Betty Eckerson has been a member of the ballet company workshop from its beginning, coming weekly to rehearsals from Salinas. She is an entry from the Salinas School of Dancing, and a student at Hartnell College. Susan Heiland appears as a junior member of the company. She started her ballet training with her cousin, Alice Ashford. Last year she appeared in the Carmel Ballet Academy program of the "Nutcracker." She attends Carmel Mission School.

Akemi Ito, accompanied by Frank Bourman, will be seen in the "Capriccio Espagnol" and in a duo variation. Besides her ballet training with Miss Dean, she has studied with Fuku Tanaka of the Fujima School in Japan. Although there is a vast difference in the Oriental and the classical ballet Miss Ito, we think, is proficient in both. She attends Monterey High School.

Gloria Lewis also is a junior member of the ballet company. Her appearance in "Pastorale" is an indication of the company to encourage young and serious students. Miss Lewis attends Walter Colton School in Monterey.

Sherron McGaughey is an honor student at Monterey High School. She will dance in each of the ballets. Her dance school is the Dorothy Dean School of Dancing in Monterey. Merri Robinson's background in dance also includes modern and tap, for which she won an award

given on a national program entitled "Stars of the Future." Her home is in Salinas where she attends Hartnell College and her training has been with the Salinas School of Dancing.

Judy Shintani will appear in three of the ballets. She has been studying in advanced ballet classes with Miss Dean for the past three years. Her school is Pacific Grove High.

Danell Walker dances roles in "Capriccio Espagnol" and "Cakewalk." She was one of the dancers chosen from the first workshop auditions, where she was picked for her seriousness and enthusiastic charm. She attends Santa Catalina School for Girls.

Roberta Tabata, a charming young miss, is featured as soloist in the ballet "Rossini Variations." It is rare to find such natural feeling for the classic ballet, we are sure, in one so young. This natural beauty enhances her technique and style. Her training, we understand, has been exclusively with Miss Dean. Roberta resides in Monterey and attends Monterey High School.

Alaine Hurlbut is featured as soloist in the ballet "Pastorale apres Degas." She expects to continue on in a career in the dance. For a year she has been a resident of Pacific Grove and a student in the high school there. In Oakland, where the family made their home before moving to the Peninsula, she studied with Paul Pause. She has appeared in the Woodminster Amphitheater Ballet productions as well as with the Oakland Light-Opera Company.

The three men of the company - Dale Lefler, Henry Kersh and Frank Bourman - have all had professional careers. Dale Lefler toured for four seasons with the "Ballet Intime" and "Coronet Ballet" concert groups. For eight years he appeared in Hollywood's finest musicals and assisted in the movies. Frank Bourman's background as a professional dancer includes two years touring in Europe with the renowned "Ballet Rambert," as well as three years with the Greek Theater Light Opera Ballet. At present he is stationed at Fort Ord.

Henry Kersh is the soloist in "Pastorale." He has been soloist with the Santa Barbara Ballet, Halprin-Lathrop Contemporary Dancers, and solo concerts. Last year he toured Europe with "The Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas." His artistic ability will be seen on the posters, stage sets and program for the ballet. He is on the teaching staff of the Dorothy Dean School. Jess Corsant has painted in oil the beautiful program cover. As a

young man of 14 years, he had an exhibit of landscapes in a one-man show at the Kansas State Capitol. He has specialized in painting ballet dancers in performances and rehearsals.

With all this talent, the three ballet performances of this month in the Pacific Grove High School auditorium will be featured by artists of Monterey County and will surely be a civic as well as an artistic accomplishment. May the auditorium be filled to capacity for each performance!