

Sherbon--Would you say that our social dance has suffered or profited by the merging of these influences?

Dunkel-- Personally I feel our social dance is a pretty sterile form as done now, and it is hardly social. It certainly has lost the zest of the original folk forms and the dignity of the aristocratic dance. In fact, I know of a famous dancer who compares our social dancing with the movements of an amoeba, devoid of intelligence, grace, beauty, rhythm or design, and says that a crowded ball room floor watched from a sound proof room would give you much the same impression as the bumping and jerking that you get from a drop of dirty water seen through a microscope.

Sherbon- Well, after all, there is not much that you can do to the music that we have nowadays. The same man says - the music is such that no self-respecting savage would make, it has no variety of rhythm, but merely a kick in the solar plexis on the first beat of every measure. Elizabeth, is that what you teach in your social dance classes?

Dunkel-- Now, Alice, is that quite fair? You're bringing that pretty close to home. No, we are not trying to revolutionize the music, we do try to get over some ideals for beauty of position and line and some variety of steps that will at least be compatible with good taste.

Dr. Allen-I know that you could go on with social dancing all evening, but I still have something else on my mind. I've been calling everything interpretive dancing and you've always laughed at me. Now, you have mentioned so many forms that I am more confused than ever. What I want to know is there such a thing as interpretive dancing?

Sherbon- Yes, there is such a thing as interpretive dancing. Thank goodness, you don't call it fancy dancing! You see, in the concert field, several forms have enjoyed popularity at different periods of cultural development. Of course, the first great flowering of dance as a fine art was the classical ballet developed in France in the courts of the Louis' and later enriched at the Russian court under imperial subsidy. The Russian ballet, which was introduced to the world through Diaghileff's great Monte Carlo ballet reached heights that the dance had never known before. It produced such great names as Nijinski, Pavlova, and Karsavina. But just as the culture which nourished the lavish spectacle of the ballet was supplanted by newer concepts of social relationships, so new dance forms emerged as the expression of these concepts.

Dunkel-- That's all very true, Alice, but elucidate a little further on Dr. Allen's question.

Dr. Allen-Yes, that's exactly what I want to know.

Sherbon--That's just what I'm coming to. Succeeding the ballet form we find the definitely romantic interpretive school which put its emphasis on self expression and simplicity. This period was in turn supplanted by the practical realism and dynamic intensity of contemporary social forces, from which has evolved a new dance movement - the so-called modern dance. The fallacy of such a name is immediately apparent when you consider that all of these forms were modern at the time of their emergence. Modern music, modern painting, and modern architecture reflect these same social forces. Because the modern dance is new and unfamiliar many people find it hard to accept. Only the perspective of time can evaluate its intrinsic worth.