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Photographed by Kossak
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Uj Idők 1907/1/20

Miss Allan's Dance

Miss Maud Allan dances Greek dances in King Theatre, and it could also be read, that interprets Salome as well. I cannot decide, whether she really wants to present us the stormy changes and the dramatic conflicts of the soul, or not. And I am not interested in it at all. Dance is dance, and if someone was to prove me, that Hamlet's argumentations, the atmosphere of sunset or a mathematical problem can be obviously expressed

by dance, I would not have believed that person. That is why I find it indifferent, whether it is exactly the case of Salome, which is the motive of Salome's dance, or not.

Perhaps, this was not the most frequently discussed topic for theatre goers. It was rather the fact, that the dance costume of the miss is extremely scantily; either a yard of transparent veil or some jewelry. She does not even wear tights, though it is an elementary requirement of the theatres. Is someone at the liberty to appear on the stage before the honourable public? Is not it something which is done for scandal, is not it only sensation-hunting?

I think, it is not.

Moreover: this dance made the impression, that the ballerina show constantly performed in tights is meaningless and superficial as compared to this. Suddenly I tried to imagine how would an ancient, nude, marble sculpture look in tights?

How much would the accomodating fabric steal from its actual content? How banal and

meaningless would all its forms be under this levelling layer of clothes! However, here it is precisely a sculpture, namely something, which shows human body without any motion. Although plastic art and dance are related to each other in a number ways, there exists a basic difference between them: dance offers and shows movements in endless varieties, while the sculpture turns them to stone in a second, and only suggests the motion. Already for this purpose, the sculptor uses a great number of things. If he wants to be the most expressive, then he takes the clothes off his figure, and shows the magnificent mechanism of human body. The dance which gives up tights, does this in much bigger extent. But a nimble gesture, an ethereal bow, a sudden bend is so much more expressive, if it is not only the result of the strong movements of the arms, legs and the trunk, but also those of the great many muscles which control the functions of the body. How do a series of the muscles in the back, the shoulder-blade and the arms change, join, become smooth, swell and slipky, how is the voice of the movement emphasized by the game of the muscles, this precious orchestra, holding the interest of every artist! Something, that can only

sound in an undertone when covered, becomes force of expression here. Someone who has never drawn and moulded such a masterpiece like the human body, might never be able to understand, what a magic art is hidden in that marvelous unisono, which is played by the whole legion of muscles with a movement of the arm or leg. In spite of all the Heinze-mood I profess, that the art of dance is the art of body and that the bricks of this art, the muscles which are immediately ready for any kind of game, play decisive and primary role in it. Covering them with the awkward glaze of the tights is equal to daub a colourful picture over with a kind of transparent paint, or to plaster a marble building over with lime-mortar.

However, denouncing this form of dance is also understandable and thus recognizable. Dance, as a form of art, might live in the last centuries of its existence. Its significance has been decreasing continuously, since people started to lay the main emphasis on inner life. These days, nobody expects the king to be warfare Hercules, albeit many-many years ago, kings were selected from among warfare Herculesees. At present, nobody concludes divine phenomenon in the unrestrained

outburst of passion. Although far back in the past, passion outburst unrestrained, and generated respect. Far back in the past, dance was such an outburst, while it has become a theatre show by now. How strange would it be even to imagine, that general Damjanich grabs a fallen Austrian among his teeth and dances the war-dance with him. Nevertheless, Kinizsi did it. These days, great outbreaks are controlled by the rules of conduct and dance has also been captured by the rules of conduct. Thus nobody should be astonished, if the uncovered human body is also improper, and the superb functions of this mechanism are also branded improper. Disgust at such things is quite understandable, and we should not be surprised, if the camera artists of this kind of dance are primarily chose from among painters and sculptors, who are finally happy to see the human body in the midst of its most expressive functions in stead of the spiritless forms of many bored models.

The dances of Miss Maud Allan are not interesting and artistic by means of the motives mentioned in the program, but by the free beauty of dance movements. For many people, human body is an unusual scene, or spectacle. And it is not

hardly very likely, that there will be another Paula Borghese, who made her life-size sculpture cut out by marble with the absolute disregard of milliner-art and tailor-art. It is possible, that a police prohibition will once reach Miss Maud as well. But if we remember, even for one second, any figure of the dance in trousers and trail, we shall understand, why and to what extent is this dance a more ancient and true art, than the arts which are labelled this way nowadays. Those, who do not believe, they should not. But people with some sense of art are likely to stand on the side of this minority opinion.

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The Theatre Week

11th of January

Miss Allan Maud - ah! is there anybody, who does not know this name? - stated, that female nude figure is necessarily beautiful. As a consequence, that is how Miss Allan Maud constructed her line of logics, showing female nude figure is art. Because what is art? It is the manifestation of beauty, moreover Beauty. Begad, this is art, and that is why it is sure, that Miss Allan Maud pursues art, when she shows her poor small body nude to the hungry public.

Fantastic frauds have already taken place around beauty and art, which is inseparable from beauty. For a very long time, people have been living in the comforting knowledge, that we only have to unravel Beauty, and we get the positive criteria of artistic values. And they unravelled. "Beauty is Divine expressing itself in human beings." "Beauty is True and Good manifested in form and through form." "Beauty is what we like without interest." ... and several hundred more definitions. These were all worded and still we

have not got any positive criteria about artistic values. And, meanwhile the time has come, when metaphysics operating with absolute values has completely died out /it finally rattled in materialism/, and at present we are in the stage when we have some nice poetic slogans and wordings about Beauty, but the way of measuring this phenomenon, and especially the way it can be placed in the relationship of necessary mutual presumption with art, is only known by the Academy of Sciences and probably by Tamás Szana. At present, I am looking for the artistic element in art, the safely recognizable elements of certain psychological processes, and I can surely throw Beauty into the corner as it is. It is all the more so, because here is good old trash, which demonstrates this independence of Beauty from art as plain as daylight. For example: the pictures of Innocent are undoubtedly beautiful, the female an sich he paints is also beautiful, but there is not even an inch of art in the picture. Moreover, there are charmingly beautiful among the wax female figures standing in the shopwindows of barbers; these are beautiful like the pictures of Innocent, though art was not present at their birth. Aestheticians, who

interpret Beauty in the same way, have a row with each other about the same picture, and wherever they agree, we can be absolutely sure, that they either liked the model or the topic, and the picture they like is trash. Because trash is nothing else, but an artistic product, which is nothing more than beautiful.

Consequently, Miss Allan applies the aesthetics of trash on her own product when she says that it is beautiful, consequently it is art. It is evident; and now the only question is whether her performance is really beautiful, or not. However, there are no positive criteria existing about it. I can only say, that according to my most personal feelings, the female body covered with sagging layer of fat, the jumping, sweating and softly, jelliedly wobbling complex of female forms had no inviting influence on me. Moreover, I did not like it without interest, and I did not see the manifestation of Good and True in it, either. Conversely I thought that a small tights would do a great good to it, because it would hold the loose muscles and would give a little bit more plastic massiveness to the forms. But later I was informed that tights are not beautiful, because

they are not liked without interest and I submitted to it, for the time being.

Let us say then, that it is beautiful. But is it artistic? Once the miss made movements as if she were climbing a tree; or to be more demonstrative, her movements were the same as those in the Geisha, when the wire-monkey chanson is sung. Later I was informed, that these were the movements of an Ancient Roman dancer, getting into Bacchanalia and ecstasy; of a woman tearing vine-leaves in order to wreath her wildly flying locks of hair with them, so to say. Then came the vision of Salome, and the miss was jumping around a cut head, like beating about the bush, and here we had to understand those complicated psychological tendencies, which storm in the colourful drama of Oscar Wilde. It is possible, that the miss really experienced the enthusiasm of getting into ecstasy and also experienced the complicated psychological tendencies of Salome. It is possible, because she says it, and she knows it the best. But she did not tell me anything about it: neither because I am insensitive, nor because she is not a good dancer. The reason is, that dance is not capable of expressing psychological or other events. Yes,

dance can express, at least to a certain extent, a psychological disposition: I am happy, that is why I am jumping; I am rapturous, that is why I am jumping; I am even more rapturous that is why I am jumping much more, but what is impossible, is impossible Even if I turn my arms and legs out I cannot make it understood, that mild zephyr is flitting over the field now, and Bacchus appears in this zephyr; and Ariadne, fifteen dancers and two-hundred litres of wine comes with Bacchus, and I am drinking wine now, and Bacchus winks at me, and now comes mild zephyr again, etc. Not to speak about the fact, that not even four arms and four legs can explain what was going on in Salome's spirit at the end of the act, when she notices the cut head of Johanna. Dance has extremely limited possibilities, and if someone wants to explain me complicated events and processes, the only thing I can do is, that I do not give a damn about it. It is something like as if somebody wanted to play the rhapsody of Liszt on a piece of wood.

What is impossible, is impossible.

Consequently, at this point we cannot judge whether Miss Allan is an artist or only a prig, because she fails with the different means of expression.

However I believe, that if she felt and sensed whatever is felt and sensed by the average people, she would not even think about proving these feelings; that is why it is suspicious, very suspicious to me! It seems to me as if dancing without tights would be the most significant and decisive part of the reform; that sweating nudity, why the miss was canonized by one of my young and enthusiastic colleague.

The dance

Dance is an often debated and very fruitful topic in Budapest these days on the occasion that two world-famous dancers are simultaneously presenting their art. One of them is Miss Cleo de Mérode, but her hairstyle is more famous than her dance and much more is talked about her ears, what she covers, than about the other parts of her body, what she shows. The other famous guest is the American Miss Maud Allan, who travels around the world with more famous pretensions. She advertizes herself not only an artist, but also a reformer, a revolutioner and an apostle. She says she gives a new language to aesthetics. The language of dance movement, whose espressiveness is equal to that of all other languages. Already before her, another dancer visited Hungary, who was the apostle of this kind of teaching. She was also American; Miss Izadora Duncan. These Priestesses of weaving plastic art call themselves classic dancers and keep repeating that the movement of a firm, artful, lithe and brisk physique can tell and explain every-

thing to people, like a book, an explanation or a theatre performance. It narrates, performs, moreover, it explains. Miss Duncan danced only Ancient Greek presentations of atmosphere, but Miss Allan already dances drama, and sooner than we would expect, we might live to see a new dance apostle who performs philosophical essays, and even fiscal and taxational discussions with the rhythmic movement of her feet. We do not intend to occupy the position of rigid negation concerning the trustworthiness and authenticity of this new art. Certainly, dance similar to music, really has expressive power, because the first brings out the forms of the latter. Dance is convenient even to describe the temper of the different races and folks. It is also very likely, that parallel with the development of the cult of dance, its descriptive force will also increase both in content and extent. However, it is unquestionable that dance in its true notion can be nothing else, but the art of the gracefulness, charm and delicate vibration of movement. If it operates with different means and for different impression, it falsifies its own essence and its mission. Every art can stay clean only as long as it fights for

such effects and influences, which can only be reached with its own, natural means. The moment it tries to find the influence in strange fields, it is forced to adopt strange means as well; and it disturbs and depresses. This is similar to painting a sculpture: painting its hair blond, its eyes blue, its lips red and its body skin-colour. It is also a kind of improvement, a more characteristic representation or description, but in its result, it is nothing but rarity.

Nudity

Written by Miss Maud Gwendolen Allan

Everything is pure for the innocent, and everything is perverse for the perverted. Whatever I can say about the nudity of my dances can be deduced from this lengthened, and thus even more obvious proverb. To tell the truth, only some of the rather funny than disapproving comments of the dailies and weeklies in Budapest, which are otherwise so nice and clever, brought up the issue, that there might be any problem with my costumes and my partial costumelessness. How can leaving some parts and surfaces of my body uncovered have any other purpose than increasing the artistic

influence? I would not even joked about having any other purpose. As a consequence, not even the most congenial people referring to other purposes only as a joke can be right.

The case is the following. For a dancer, her body is her instrument and critical material, like the violin for the violinist and the material for the sculptor. For this reason, can this instrument or material be covered, when these are exactly the changes on her surface and the displacement of her parts, which are destined for bringing the artistic influence about? No, it cannot. It would really be foolishness, It would be as foolish as to close and cover a piano and sculpture in sted of opening the first and unveiling the latter.

After all, I do not explain it in details, The inhabitants of Budapest have anyway understood it, and appreciated me in a very sympathetic manner. I only wrote the above few words about this nudity, because Mr. Editor was so kind to call me upon writing them. Here they are.

With compliments to Mr. Editor

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Dancer in the lion-house

Since some days, an American dancer appears as a guest-artist in Király /King/-theatre within the framework of "Sogun" performances. She is Miss Maud Allan, who has already presented her art of dancing in the majority of foreign cities, but, perhaps, has nowhere else obtained such a great interest as in our beautiful capital. This interest has become especially great since the dancer gave a display of her talent in the lion-house of the zoo, in the presence of invited public. There were two lionets in the house, but they behaved themselves decently, and did not hurt or bother the brave dancer. As it was explained to the public by Miss Allan's impresario, the idea of dancing in the lion-house was born from the bet of Miss Allan with an earl saying that she is not afraid to dance even in the presence of the king of the desert. However, the sources are silent on the issue, whether the earl accepted the lionets as the king of the desert or not. Nevertheless, one thing remains certain that if Miss Allan leaves Budapest for performing her art of dance in

another city, she would certainly be celebrated there as someone who already charmed the lions with her ethereal and graceful dancing.

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How much would the accomodating fabric steal from its actual content? How banal and

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Consequently, Miss Allan applies the aesthetics of trash on her own product when she says that it is beautiful, consequently it is art. It is evident; and now the only question is whether her performance is really beautiful, or not. However, there are no positive criteria existing about it. I can only say, that according to my most personal feelings, the female body covered with sagging layer of fat, the jumping, sweating and softly, jelliedly wobbling complex of female forms had no inviting influence on me. Moreover, I did not like it without interest, and I did not see the manifestation of Good and True in it, either. Conversely I thought that a small tights would do a great good to it, because it would hold the loose muscles and would give a little bit more plastic massiveness to the forms. But later I was informed that tights are not beautiful, because

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