

c/o Countess von Harrach,  
Keferstrasse 18,  
8000 MUNICH 40,  
West Germany.

Dear Cherniavsky,

I have now read Volumes 8 and 9. They much interested me. They also greatly saddened me. It is always a melancholy business to read of someone gradually slipping more and more down the ladder. And particularly if it is someone you've been very fond of, admired, and had as a friend.

I wrote you all I could think of regarding Maud when I wrote to you two years ago. I cannot think why you should not have received that extremely long letter. But I will recapitulate a little in this. Not much, for I have little to add to your own careful research.

I met Maud when I was 18. I was introduced to her by Arnold Bax, the British composer. (famous in those days: his works little performed now.) I think because Bax had known Busoni who was, of course, the love of Maud's life. Though her attraction ran more I believe for women than men. That evening - about 1928? - she danced for a few friends in her large and lovely London garden to a gramophone. In the soft twilight air it was something to watch. What was so essentially different from her and most other dancers was her extreme musicality: that absolute and perfect co-ordination between movement and the rhythm of the music - whether of the hands, the eyes, the swing of the neck, the twist of the leg. All was absolutely in time. Rare in any executive art. She was a musician through and through. And Busoni knew that as well. I have read letters of his in which he stresses this point as well. At her house you also met everyone - in the arts, politics - whatever. She entertained simply but well. Knew how to mix people and get the best out of them in the way of interesting talk. I admired her greatly. And, of course, being young, was fascinated not only by her own elusive graciousness - it wasn't so much beauty as a sort of mysterious and sympathetic flow - such as you see when you look at the Apollo of Veii in the Julia in Rome. I saw her from time to time. She always came to my recitals in London bringing someone well-known with her. Young artists need people of influence if they are to make the career - just as writers need publishers who will believe in them. Before my wife died a couple of years ago I finished three volumes of autobiography and I mention these years when I knew Maud and others - like Colette, Ravel etc. She was also one of them. But they were creative and lasted. She was an executant. And she just had her day.

I lost touch with her a little. Then in New York the ~~XXXXXXX~~ early part of 1936? I played again on the East Coast of the USA. After a New York recital my brother-in-law's cousin, Polly Rockefeller gave a party for me and there was Maud amongst the guests. I think she was with Anne

You ask for the names of dance journals in London. (Crown none.)  
You'd write to Sir Frederick Ashton O.M. I mention my name but I haven't seen him for some years. Better that you write to the Secretary of the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden. They will give you all information. It's Jock Murray publisher of both you'll need some of these in his section. Buckle (he wrote the excellent life of Lisinski) might help you. He writes things I think for the Sunday Times. Concentrate first on getting your book taken.

Or was it the  
before? I have  
no papers with me  
& can't remember  
exact dates.

Morgan. But I'm not sure. There were so many strange faces there. After I'd finished my various engagements Maud asked me to come 'as her guest for a couple of months' to Los Angeles where she said she could get me 'plenty of work.' I had free time that Summer and wouldn't be doing the usual round of Holland, England, Scandinavia etc till September. I went. I knew many people in Los A myself - like Jimmy Whale (he made Showboat and the Invisible Man and other excellent films) also Johnny van Druten (he made I am a Camera - the play from Isherwood's Mr Norris changes trains) They were an interesting lot. But Hollywood began to pall on me. As did all that West Coast life - so far removed from European ideas and values. I stayed a whole fortnight longer than I'd intended because Mrs Mullen (a kind nice motherly woman) begged me to do so and to give a recital part of which Maud would dance to. I did - thus missing a date in Cincinnati and Austria. When I left as Maud's 'guest' I naturally said I'd like to contribute to some of the expenses of the house she'd taken. To cut a long story short I paid the lot and had to cable my family in England for the money! Maud had no idea of money. Nor had Isadora. Most artists have none. I didn't blame her for conning me. I thought it rather a joke. So did my wife.

I didn't see Maud again until just before the War. She and Verna had parted then. (Of course I guessed what their relationship was. It was perfectly clear.) But from then on my wife and I found ourselves being made more and more responsible for various debts which in the end amounted to a great deal. But between us we had some cash and could help. I myself had been helped often enough when still a student. She stayed many months with us at our house on the Solent in Hampshire. And Robin, my wife, who was genuinely fond of her and sorry for her financial crisis, one after another, helped out over and over and over again - as did I, too. ) Another joke. Our trustee was furious because we'd given Maud so much and went behind our backs to remonstrate with her. He was very tough. Later on a Brigadier-General in Montgomery's 21st Army. Maud got £500 out of him !!! So much for charm and that quality she had of mesmerising and enchanting others.) During the War the first year she was at a loose end. I joined the Army the moment War broke out. I was later seconded to ~~work in~~ one of the foreign Services at the BBC and then went back after D Day to go abroad as a member of Psychological Warfare. (Bill Paley, head of CBS in the States was one of our team - and others you wd know.) We paid up Maud's last debts (as we thought) paid her fare to America, and gave her enough cash to last her six months there. (She said she wd be living in her parents' old home wh she wd sell and then be 'comfortably' off.)

\* First as the  
Program organiser,  
later as the  
Acting Director  
before going  
again into  
uniform.

I wrote a couple of times to Pitta Millard (who I knew and enormously liked) and asked where Maud was and how she was situated, but never got a reply. Perhaps War-time Mail went the same way as my letter to you from Italy!

\* I've thought of her as being an 'amateur' & extremely professional & disciplined though she would rather give way to improvisation - depending I suppose upon how she felt intuitively at some given moment. After the War I mentioned her name to Richard Strauss at Baden in Switzerland. And this is what he felt for. I imagine he had seen her 'Salome'.

Not one of us in London knew her brother had got into trouble. Only years after the War was I told of it - and then didn't believe it. The Pem-Billing Case was, of course, famous. But forgotten. No-one dreamt of digging it up again, feeling Maud had been exposed and hurt enough by Darling's final summing-up. It was, as you must surely know, more political than a moral issue. There was great hatred in certain political circles of Mrs Asquith who was such a close friend of Maud's. (But so was Bernard Shaw, Lord Astor, Alphonso of Spain - and others of like celebrity.)

That last time she danced at Redlands she had rehearsed in a large room in Hollywood. (I can't remember now whose.) She did her work to a gramophone. And I watched. I believe Jimmy Whale was also there. I knew she was at least sixty - and looked it. But the moment she started to move it was as though she had recaptured youth. She was a very remarkable artist and had music to the ends of her finger tips. \*

If I did not write again it was because I was too occupied. After six years of war work I was then asked to plan the new and adventurous (and I think wonderful) BBC Third Programme. I was therefore busy from morning till night. The USA had faded into the far distance. But one day lunching with your parents at Venice the past came to life again. And then we talked not only of Maud but many others we all knew in common. And so I felt I shd write to dear Manya - and did so.

I read of Maud's death in The Times. I had no idea how her last years had been. My own wife was then beginning to be an invalid and later to die from the heart disease she had then started.

I don't think I have much more to tell you. You'll find some anecdotes etc if you ever get my other much longer note.

I hope your book succeeds. If you come over we could meet. Ring Woolley Park or here. You have the numbers. I am not well these days. And hope to go to Madeira now for a few weeks. I'm not even sure WHEN I'll be in England but plan now to be there the end of April.

Yours sincerely,  
 Strindberg Amyot

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Maud showed me the Khama MSS. At least that was what she said the bulky music was. She wanted me to sell it to Toscanini whose daughter I knew!! I believe she got 'advances' or id from many. Where it is now I have no idea. She may have sold it to a Mr Sachs of New York.