

card), the Countess of Londesborough would be pleased to present Pavlova and her partner as the special entertainment during a soirée in her town house. Furthermore, the likelihood was that her guests of honor would be none other than King Edward and Queen Alexandra. Of course nothing more than this could be said; it would have been the height of impropriety to use the Sovereign's name in any capacity relating to a business arrangement, just as etiquette forbade a king making overt invitations on behalf of his hostess. On the other hand, discreet inquiries could be made as to whether Their Majesties would like to see two of their nephew the Tsar's finest dancers. Nothing could have been better calculated to woo Pavlova from her perch, and with the compliant Mordkin she swooped across the Channel. There was just over three weeks to fill before the Londesborough party. What of the other engagement?

Conclusive evidence for the identity of the pioneering hostess arises only in the reports of a 1911 court case. On that evidence the friend of Astruc was Mrs. Brown Potter. The *Times* reporter was the only one who wrote down "Mrs. Potter Palmer." Confusion was perhaps inevitable. Both ladies were American, both had great wealth, and both set enormous store by their standing in London society. But there the similarity ended. Bertha Potter Palmer was a Chicago matron renowned for the way she had hounded vice from the World's Fair in 1893. If she was known as "the Mrs. Astor of the Middle West," then Cora Brown Potter was perhaps New Orleans's answer to Lillie Langtry. Having detached herself from Mr. Brown Potter—though not from his money—she pursued her career as an actress, cutting a swathe through many capitals. She even managed London's Savoy Theatre for a spell, and appeared with Beerbohm Tree in a play at Windsor Castle. It was Bertha from Chicago, with her seven-strand pearl necklace and her towering silver hair, who gave a party on July 12, at which the highlight was a display by Russian Imperial dancers—none other than Karsavina and her friends from the Coliseum. The imagination boggles at Cora scheming to top *that*, but it seems she may have done so.

Part of the appeal of Daniel Mayer's agency lay in Mayer's personal entrée to the good offices of Alfred Butt, who controlled the immensely popular Palace Theatre. Mayer's ambition was to get Pavlova and Mordkin top billing at the Palace for a season beginning the following spring, immediately following the close of the Imperial Theatres' season. For two years Butt had been presenting Maud Allan's spectacularly provocative *Salome*, but now he was lacking a good dancing act: Maud had been Butt's mistress, but she left him for the immensely rich Duke of Westminster, whose charms must have exceeded the phenomenal £500 weekly salary she was drawing from Alfred. Mayer and Butt argued about the worthiness of Pavlova and Mordkin as an alternative to Maud Allan, and since no contract was signed prior to Lady Londesborough's party on July 19, it seems likely that Butt was waiting to observe their true effect for himself; it is reasonable to suppose that he had angled an invitation to the soirée. As a background to all this, Edouard Fazer seems to have been trying to set up some plan for Pavlova to head another

touring group, with London as the object. Pavlova addressed a letter around this time and in it she (or Dandré) mounted a convincing case for trying to present a complete Russian ballet within the framework of English music hall.\* By this time she had been aware that she could pick up as much money as she could leading a troublesome company.

The Londesborough party was the real test. The countess had arranged for a low platform at one end of the ballroom in St. Dunstan's Lane to serve as a stage. Distinguished guests arriving at the party from Park were dined lavishly, and then, after a short interval, were conducted to the seating arranged in the ballroom, where an orchestral group was ready to let Pavlova herself pick up the story, for she had written the *Daily Mail* the following day:

"Well—I danced first with M. Mordkin to a waltz by Chopin. I wore an exact replica of the costume worn by Thirties Taglioni, the great Italian ballerina who danced in London. It has delicate pastel shades, which fit in with the tender and somewhat morbid music of the first number. The second number was a dance of the type of Rubinstein. In this I appeared in flowing garments holding white lilies. A pale mauve light played over the scene."

"The King and Queen seemed eagerly to appreciate that dance, for they applauded with much enthusiasm. Dances to an adagio, and variations [the *Pharos* was the first Opéra gala], M. Mordkin and I appeared. Naturally I wore one of our old Russian garbs, with red and gold tissue and the classical *kokoshnik*. . . . I tried to carry everyone away, especially that which was the bief's famous 'Nightingale' tune."

Pavlova had had three weeks to sort out the details of the choreography. (There was no way she could be dancing an erotic bacchanale within a few feet of the King and Queen, she was representing *Russia*.)

The royal couple led enthusiastic applause for the first number, and as the dancers took their bows, the Countess of Londesborough came forward and told Pavlova that the Queen would like to meet her. In her confusion, Pavlova hesitated on the edge of the platform, not knowing how to negotiate the step; the King noticed this and with natural simplicity immediately stepped down. At that moment England utterly changed. Pavlova, in the informal style of royalty that she had grown up with in childhood, and it gave her a sudden positive confidence. In her dealings in the city, Pavlova continued:

"Just as Their Majesties were leaving, Cassini played 'Paraguay,' a South American tune to which I danced a hundred times. The Queen turned. 'I know

\* It is a supposition that the "Edouard" in question was Fauché. The Bibliothèque had the letter catalogued as being to Edward. \*\* Presumably this was a free adaptation of Legat's piece, or

From 'Anna Pavlova' - Her life & art  
- by Keith Money  
Collins 1982

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Maud Allan

exclaimed, and I was asked to give this encore. Quickly I tied a red 'kerchief round my head, for local colour's sake—'Paraguay' being really a Spanish dance—and I did my best, I at once forgot my fatigue; and although I had been performing for over one hour I think I danced better than I ever did before."

By the following day, July 20, Mayer had contracts ready to present, and he took them to the Grosvenor Hotel in Victoria; when he arrived he found Victor Dandr  was present and acting as interpreter, though his English was not perfect. Pavlova was eager to have Mordkin as her partner—she enjoyed his full-blooded Moscow approach—but she definitely saw herself as the motivating force in the new arrangement. Mordkin was just beginning to appreciate his own ability to please an audience (which was in contrast to Nijinsky's mysterious insinuation on the stage), though he knew that he could not achieve a success on his own. He agreed to be engaged for £80 a week, while Pavlova was to get five times as much; but from her £400 she was required to pay for any soloists or corps de ballet dancers she might wish to engage for the program. Mayer agreed to undertake to secure private engagements for the two dancers as a supplement to the basic income, and these special engagements would be very highly paid: 300 to 400 guineas was the suggested range. For all this work, Mayer was to receive 10 percent as agent and sole representative in England for the two dancers. The authority was for five years. Dandr  explained the details of the contract to Mordkin, whose English was nonexistent.

*Pavlova Posing for Statuette  
in Studio of Russian Sculptor*



*1900 Musical Union*  
**P**aris, July 8.—The Russian sculptor, Boris Erasmovitch Chuzel, has been taking advantage of the extraordinary popularity of Russian dancers to exhibit at his studio in the Rue Royale a series of works representing the dancers as they perform. None of the statues has created so great interest as that of Anna Pavlova, who, when she came to New York, as well as London and Paris, has delighted to honor the city of Paris. She is returning to Paris this year. Her last and dearest friend, the dancing girl, Mlle. Pavlova, has been the last and dearest friend of the city of Paris.



**ANNA IN ALABASTER**

M. Seraphin Souddine, the Czar's sculptor, is executing a royal-command statue of Anna Pavlova, the great Russian dancer, whose incomparable art and beauty immortalised by his skill for a future generation. Every evening M. Souddine sits at the Palace Theatre watching Pavlova dance, and all day long he tries to alabaster into life with cunning chisel-work. M. Seraphin Souddine, who is a handsome man in the prime of life, says that it will probably take him another 12 months to achieve his object. It is very difficult to show Pavlova's beauty in the frozen marble or alabaster. As Madame Pavlova is so busy with her beauty in the frozen marble, M. Souddine is only permitted to use alabaster for statues commanded by the Russian Court, but he is allowed to work in marble for his own work. Our photograph shows the great sculptor at work in the famous dancer's beautiful house at Gold

exact nature of the talks, so all was not wasted. Little girls like Muriel Popper were overwhelmed by Pavlova's sincerity and conviction on these occasions. They all knew she was someone special, and hard words or broken glass never altered their basic attitude of adoration. Pavlova was perfectly aware of the precepts of Stanislavsky's teachings, and much of that basic approach sat easily on her own methods, even though these sprang from inner convictions of which she was the medium rather than the conscious creator. Despite the heady analyses of dancing, the children were taken along slowly in the physical domain. While Pavlova was waiting until she thought them strong enough to attempt some pointe work, she compensated for this slow progression (slow to eager children, that is) with careful lessons in other departments of performing: how to put on a hair piece correctly, how to sit on stage in a graceful yet natural manner. Pavlova never tired of preparing the children for the hurdles that she had encountered as a student. She had a rare ability to present profound problems in a simple manner, and never expected results from blind obedience to command.

**E**ven with her pupils and her endless schedule at the Palace, Pavlova cheerfully took on extra jobs. She chaired the annual dinner of the London Stage Society on May 18 and even made a brief speech. She opened the Ionic Picture Theatre (a sign of the times) in Finchley Road; she helped at the bazaar held at Grosvenor House in aid of the Colonial Intelligence League (leaving the dancing on this occasion to Maud Allan and others);

she even made an ascent in a Maurice Farman biplane. She took her up for a circuit above Hendon one Sunday in the summer when other women were determinedly making their way in their search for emancipation. The premier horse race of the year, the Derby, was run on June 4 that year. At Tattenham (a strategic bend on Epsom Racecourse), Emily Davison, a school teacher, darted out under the rails just as the field was clearing past. She had suffragette colors sewn inside her dress, and the horse she brought down belonged to the King. Her injuries resulted in her death soon after.

Society's greatest interest and concern seemed to be a huge ball taking place at the Albert Hall the following year. It was a late-night costume pageant called "Fête at Versailles" in aid of the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society. The costumes were the re-creation of a reception such as might have been given for Louis XIV at the Palace of Versailles. Hundred of dancers took part in rehearsed processions that formed part of a tableau, which had Pavlova, supported by Novikoff and other dancers, as the central attraction. The star was dismayed by the huge expanse of floor on which she was expected to perform, and she was also perplexed as to how she should face the mock King of France (actually the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz) or genuine royalty in the form of Queen Mary, who was going to grace the Royal Box. Pavlova solved the problem neatly, performing a Mozart minuet for "Louis XIV" and turning to present the rest of the program to the Queen of England. Pavlova wore pink ostrich feathers in her hair and a red wig, and pink silk looped in panniers over a

The New York premiere coincided with the opening Whaley season at the Metropolitan. They were without since the ship bringing him and his family to America, released from internment, was not due to dock until the following day. Pavlova was actually performing in Salt Lake City that night, but she managed to scoop the theatre page headline in New York:

PAVLOVA AGAIN IS "INCOMPARABLE"  
ON THE SCREEN

*Achieves Wonderful Triumph in Picture  
"The Dumb Girl of Portici"*

SPLENDID FILM DRAMA

*Auber's Opera "Masaniello"*

*Furnishes a Story of Unusual Power*

any who have seen her as a dancer in the flesh and to the eyes of those who have not because of the prohibitive prices, Anna Pavlova was the inimitable, proved a revelation because of her wonderful power as an actress. . . . Pavlova, in her first attempt, has shown so marvelous a histrionic ability as to call from many in the first-night audience the opinion that she would make the Carmen of them all. If the great film plays of recent years are superlatived [sic], the consensus of opinion would place her at the head as a spectacle, *The Birth of a Nation* for emotional appeal, *Carmen* for individual force, and *The Dumb Girl of Portici* for artistry. But in all fairness to Mme. Pavlova's production, it is a fact, although it stands pre-eminently as the artistic achievement of the year, if not of all other years, it combines in high degree the other three qualities. The picture is as big as it is beautiful. It gives the new film-star an opportunity for the display of her talent, every one of which is done in a most original way.

It would have been an unusual occurrence for an acclaimed new dancer to be absent from her own premiere. But Pavlova had several weeks to go before the long haul of the tour was due to begin. Although she had every excuse for calling a halt, she was determined to see it through to the end. Meanwhile, *The Dumb Girl of Portici* picked up the tag of an "all women's" production, about which the critics were said to be especially enthusiastic; many clubs were buying blocks of seats and attending en masse with a widespread enthusiasm for Pavlova, and for the first time in general, occasional adverse reaction was inevitable. The dancer's name carried the production; yet she did not have a continuous display of the skill for which she was best known. There were, too, some references to the fact that Pavlova does not possess a conventionally pretty "screen" face.

Her five-year option on Pavlova's services had expired (and she was going with his bank account), and this meant that, by the end of 1916, Pavlova was free to accept any new offers. For a while she toyed with the idea of embarking from San Francisco on a Pacific tour, with ballet only. It was plain that the career was at an end—an honorable end, of that there was no question—but the financial sacrifice had been massive,

and it would take a lengthy period of further unremitting work for the inroads to be repaired. There was talk of Hawaii, of Australia, even of the Orient: "I believe the Orient will give me many ideas for new dances, especially the Hindoo and Japanese," she had said in an interview on the West Coast. Pavlova also spoke of Ivy House, though she could hardly get farther from home.

"It is a great big place with, oh, so many windows for letting in the sunshine. It is not to live for show there, no, no. It is to live for life, you understand?"

"A garden? Oh yes, a very big one, with all sorts of flowers. I dig the flowers, and work with them, make them bloom all summer, and get myself dirty like a pig, yes?" She laughed and clapped her hands at this idea. "I own birds, too, and they sing for me, and I like best the wild birds. And never am I home in summertime but I think of many plans for dances and costumes. One dance I do is from watching the hovering of a butterfly, another a hummingbird. And their colors suggest gowns."

"I have many friends lost in the war, yes; and often when I must dance I am sad. Tonight I have a letter from a dear friend in London; her husband is just killed in the war. He, too, was my friend. But one must think of the people out in front, so that you do not make them sad too, is it not so?"

She did not mention that Ivy House was being used as a hospital for wounded officers. Like Isadora Duncan, Maud Allan was a "dear friend" of Pavlova's: "Miss Allan has a room in my London house that's her own whenever she cares to use it."

Pavlova had recently lost her Pekinese, Purchok ("Powder Puff"), and the replacement was a Boston terrier bought in Los Angeles and named Poppy. The new recruit quickly had to get used to the traveling, just as Purchok had done. During the week she was at the Mason Opera House in Los Angeles, Pavlova attended a rodeo and was very impressed by the activity, particularly the skill of the riders. Though her voice was usually withheld from the public, it was noted that here its staccato sweetness filled the air as she cried "Bravo!" at the events that excited her most. A small boy sold her peanuts, and when he was told who his famous client was, he returned and asked to have one of the peanuts back to remember her by. He got it, and a kiss as well. Pavlova loved children, but there was obviously no place in her life for any of her own; indeed, she sometimes hinted that there was a physical reason that precluded the possibility. For years she carried in her handbag a newspaper clipping of a woman posing with her thirteen children. "You see," Pavlova would exclaim, unfolding the faded relic time and again, "she has so many children, and I have none." Instead, the characters she created on stage became a sort of family, just as the loyal team of her household was. They were the familiars who seldom altered, even though their surroundings were an endlessly blurring kaleidoscope of hotels and theatres and railway carriages.

Work was the anodyne, the insidious drug that could not be denied, and now it hovered perpetually, just beyond the field of vision, as a coachman to a horse in harness. When asked if it was not all terribly hard work, she replied, "Oh yes; one could not do



Outside Shepherd's Hotel, Cairo, 1923.

witness two Hindu wedding ceremonies, and from there visited the caves of Ajanta, 150 miles away, on one of trips she often organized for the company, and usually herself. The deep chambers of the cave, with their rarely rich carvings hewn out of the living rock, held an air so potent as to be almost sinister. The celebrated temple which had recently been restored by the Italian experts and Ceconi, had a cumulative effect that was almost stunning. At last Pavlova had found an unsullied image of the past. In Bombay, she was driving in a carriage with Stier and spotted a marriage procession. They stopped to get a look, and someone in the crowd recognized Pavlova and offered her if she would care to witness the actual ceremony. It turned out to be a double event: two brothers were marrying two girls and none of them was more than a child. Pavlova took in the ceremony with avidity: the showers of rice over the couples, the rubbing of the brides' feet with milk, the little fingers of the bride and groom being tied together with string.

Pavlova was also subjected to more banal social conventions in India, including attending a horse race as the guest of the

Governor. On seeing a disgruntled jockey belaboring his horse after it had lost a race, she rushed across the unsaddling enclosure and accosted the culprit with a stream of rapid-fire French. The jockey could not understand a word of this, but the import was clear enough, and by the time a flushed Pavlova had rejoined her group, the jockey could be seen solicitously stroking his mount as he led it away. Just before leaving Bombay, Pavlova witnessed a second juvenile wedding; this time she asked to be allowed to give a few rupees as a wedding present. The groom was eleven and the bride nine.

The customs of India so intrigued Pavlova that her questions were sometimes embarrassingly direct. When she saw a young man cremating the body of his father in Calcutta, she thought the ritual beautiful, though her companions shrank from the sight. She said then that she would wish to be consumed by fire when she died. Nobody could deflect her from the topic. "I shall die before any of you. I could never grow old and die slowly."

In Cairo the company was performing at the decaying old Kursaal Theatre. The stage was full of holes, and the dressing rooms were cubicles. While Pavlova complained to the manager, several of the Poles eased their gloom with the local liquor, so that the chaos backstage took on operatic dimensions. There was also the usual struggle to meld a recruited orchestra into some sort of recognizable ensemble; as always it was the music that suffered most on these tours, since the dancers were already familiar with the repertoire and had only to find the best way of circumventing the physical pitfalls. Rather boldly, Pavlova allowed the *Egyptian Ballet* back into the repertoire for the occasion; but whatever its absurdities, the audience took the move as a compliment, and the theatre resounded with applause. The Queen of Egypt attended the opening.

Despite the political upheavals that were adding tensions to Cairo's life, the company followed the usual tourist rites, lurching across the sands by camel to see the monuments, and even going back to Giza for a second look, by moonlight, after one of the shows. Pavlova posed dutifully for the huge plate cameras of the Anglo-Swiss agents who materialized at every tourist spot, and she even climbed up onto the shoulder of the Sphinx for one picture. The surroundings were shattered and desolate, a far cry from the splendors once summoned up by Maryinsky scenery painters. As usual, the local rigors were taking their toll in the company, with fevers, influenza, and even mumps thinning the ranks.

The Mohammed Ali Theatre in Alexandria was a relief after the Kursaal. The city's principal house of respectable entertainment was ornately elegant; gilt glimmered in the curved auditorium, and when the dust had been banged out of it, the plush was still rosy. Audiences arrived smartly dressed, and huge floral tributes were carried onto the stage. In the streets, posters were announcing the impending visit of Maud Allan, who was already in Cairo dancing to scant audiences; Pavlova, unwittingly, had for the time being "drained the waterhole" for dance in Egypt.

of Colonial rule; there were still brief contacts with the indigenous population. Pavlova saw Kaffir dancers give a performance in Johannesburg, and it was reported that when the leader of that troupe was told that the greatest dancer in the world was coming to see him, he replied, "She hasn't seen *me* yet!" He himself was noticeably unencumbered by the overtones of foreign rule, but his "corps de ballet" were given rugby shirts and shorts to wear along with their animal plumes; only the leader was allowed to parade with a bare torso. To these Kaffirs, most of whom were mine workers, a rugby shirt was a part of their life; in some senses it was more honest than suggesting that they had all strayed in from distant horizons. Members of Pavlova's company were eager to talk to these native dancers, but a portcullis of strict, if unofficial, apartheid denied them the opportunity. It was the same in Pretoria, Kimberley, and Cape Town. Pavlova was seen, but she did not have much of an opportunity to see. Her main contacts—local managers and impresarios—were almost incessantly European; in fact, her South African representative, Leo Cherniavsky, was a Russian Jew, a former violinist who had had a protracted affair with Maud Allan before the war. It was a foregone conclusion that Pavlova's visit to Cape Town would be a success. Ladies of society strove to outdo each other in gestures of goodwill, and it was axiomatic that one of their gifts should be an ostrich feather fan, common currency in European fashion, along with the tail feathers of egrets and the skins of increasingly rare wild cats.

Pavlova had traveled 12,000 miles to Australia in order to appear in two cities on the initial leg of the journey. She won Sydney and Melbourne effortlessly. In some ways her fame had preceded her uncomfortably: *artistes* in Eastern Australia had been presenting tattered versions of *The Swan* for some time. The *Bacchanale* did not fare as well; when Pavlova presented this signature piece from earlier days, Australian audiences reacted with an embarrassed shuffling and not a whisper of applause. Apparently the scanty costumes and the overt abandon of the piece were considered risqué; Victorian England was, in many ways, still a reality in this British Dominion.

After the closing performance, Pavlova was bombarded with paper streamers, normally reserved for departing steamers. A little girl walked on stage and presented her with a boomerang bound with expensive flowers. In piping tones she said to Pavlova: "The boomerang comes back, and we hope you'll come back too." The J. C. Williamson theatre organization was already laying plans for just that eventuality, though Pavlova had the demon Tasman Sea ahead of her, and a tour down the length of New Zealand. This would take her from a mild, windy autumn in Auckland to the first gripping fingers of sleetish winter in the South Island, and there would be none of the comforts of North American central heating.

Auckland had reckoned to put its best foot forward in honor of Pavlova, and a team of workmen slaved away to prepare the stage for the great ballerina. With infinite pains they surfaced the boards with linseed oil. When a young dancer landed on the back of her head during a rehearsal, it was apparent that a lot of



With Novikov in the *Bacchanale*, Germany, c.1927

