

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 5/22/87 -- Vol. 5, No. 45

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; MT meetings are in MT 4A-235.

\_ D \_ A \_ T \_ E                    \_ T \_ O \_ P \_ I \_ C

06/03 LZ: ?

07/15 LZ: (unknown, but it will be in 1B-205)

HO Chair:        John Jetzt    HO 1E-525 834-1563  
LZ Chair:        Rob Mitchell LZ 1B-306 576-6106  
MT Chair:        Mark Leeper  MT 3E-433 957-5619  
HO Librarian:    Tim Schroeder HO 3M-420 949-5866  
LZ Librarian:    Lance Larsen  LZ 3L-312 576-2068  
MT Librarian:    Bruce Szablak MT 4C-418 957-5868  
Jill-of-all-trades: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329 957-2070  
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1. As previously announced, Thursday, May 28, 1987 the film festival will be Abel Gance's NAPOLEAN.

Abel Gance's NAPOLEON  
NAPOLEON (1927), dir. by Abel Somebody-or-other

This is a mammoth spectacular white-washing of the early career of Napoleon Bonaparte by a fellow Frenchman. It is truly an epic spectacular. Filmed in lush monochrome [and then tinted] and silent but for a beautiful new musical score [by Carmine Coppola], this is an impressive cinematic achievement. This is the most complete version available. [Comments by ecl]

Mark Leeper  
MT 3E-433 957-5619  
...mtgzz!leeper

Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble  
High-class Dance Criticism by Mark R. Leeper,  
Dance Critic of the SF Club Notice  
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At the outset, let me say that it is ironic that I am called upon to review an evening of dance. (Perhaps it is more accurate to say I am calling on myself to review it.) This is really only the second evening of dance I have ever seen. The first was on my most recent (and only) visit to Leningrad. That night we went to a Russian folk dance show, which turned out to be Cossack dances with everything that entails. I immediately decided I like dance and that one evening became de facto my basis of comparison. So when a local high school hosted the Alvin Ailey dance company, I jumped at a chance to see it.

My first observation is that Mr. Ailey should not be so reticent to let his dancers flash sabers, balance bottles on their heads, or throw knives into the stage. And just a whisper to the wise, Mr. Ailey--it might liven things up considerably if every now and again you brought a bear out on the stage. I'm not saying it has to be a really big bear. A middle-sized bear will do. Actually, just about any bear is better than no bear at all.

Well, the presentation consisted of three dances (numbers?--I don't know what the right term is. I'm a neophyte!). The first one was called "Streams." It was all very abstract, but I get the impression it was supposed to be happening underwater. I have the feeling that what I was looking at was someone's impression of pond life in a drop of water from a particularly fetid swamp somewhere. The dancers came out two at a time or in gangs and sort of swam across the stage.

Now, I could be wrong about the dance. It may have had absolutely

nothing to do with water or pond life. The marvelous thing about dance is that it is entirely open to interpretation what the choreographer is saying. When nobody can tell what a writer is saying, he is considered a bad writer. However, people make allowances for choreographers because they are much less common than writers so you have to take what you can get, but mostly there is always the lurking fear that these guys are a little unbalanced to start with. (Of course, that is not true. Mr. Ailey is as sane as anyone and he wouldn't want the bad publicity of coming after some minor dance critic with a knife or a blunt instrument, would he, Mr. Ailey?)

When the dance was over the dancers came out in pairs for their applause as if someone could actually keep straight who did what. I mean they all were dressed the same and they were clearly supposed to be interchangeable. Questions like "What one are you?" hardly apply. Even if you get an answer it wouldn't mean anything to you.

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The next dance was being performed for the first time. It was called "Crumble." It will not be around long. Not that it wasn't good or at least no worse than the others, but in the program it said under "Streams," "First performance April 15, 1970, Brooklyn Academy of Music," which sounds prestigious while under "Crumble" they could only say "First performance May 15, 1987, Red Bank Regional High School." That means it might make it as a dance in Yugoslavia where "Red Bank Regional High School" might sound impressive, or at least exotic, but it sure isn't going to make it in this country!

In any case, what the dance was about is that there was one woman and five identically dressed men, each apparently trying to woo her. They each flirted with her and she kept all five of them on a string. That was how the dance started and continued and that's how it ended, with no progress made. It was very realistic.

This was the best dance of the evening because you could really tell what it was about sometimes. I woke up at one point to see one of the men had died and was lying on the floor and the other were dancing around him, oblivious. He must have lain on the floor for at least ten minutes or so, dead, and I said to myself, "Is it really great dance to lie on the floor in front of an audience and for ten minutes do nothing

but sniff floor wax?" After about ten minutes he came back to life and started dancing again. Sure, it does not make a lot of sense, but this is dance and anything can happen.

This dance meant something and it affected me deeply. I wanted to get up and yell to the woman the five men were making such a fuss about, "Hey, bitch, what makes you think you're such a prize anyway?" But as a dance critic I have my reputation for being high-class to maintain. That does, however, bring me to the weighty question of sexism in dance. It has been suggested to me that dance is male-chauvinist since the women have to run around on their toes and look light and ethereal while the men are allowed to walk with their heels on the floor. I was watching for this and to some extent it is true. But what I did see was a lot of men holding women over their heads. Almost never do you see the women dancers holding a man over their heads. Try this experiment. Stand across the room from an adult. Tiptoe over to him and hoist him over your head. Did you enjoy the tiptoeing or the hoisting part more? Which side do you think the chauvinism is on?

The last piece was supposed to be "Blues Suite." It is a set of dances to the sounds of blues songs. It was supposed to be a powerful evocation of those days when hard-working men and women toiled in the field under the hot sun all day and then at "quatin' time" would return to their ramshackle shacks and would run around on tiptoes and hoist each other over their heads.

Unfortunately, that was canceled and replaced by a much shorter dance called "Fire and Ice" or some such. This seemed to have a flavor of Mexico or Brazil or wherever it was that the flashbacks in "Suddenly

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Last Summer" took place. It was sort of like the pond water dance though a little hotter.

Well, that was the evening. If Alvin Ailey comes to your neighborhood and Cossacks are dancing right next door, this critic recommends you see the Cossacks.

