

# DANCE CRAZE OFFERS INVITING FIELD FOR AMERICAN COMPOSER

**Great Music Writers of Past Centuries Have Used the Graceful, Rhythmic Steps of Their Time in Much of the Best Music Given to Posterity—The Tango, the Maxixe and the One Step, as Subjects of Serious Composition—Development of Dance**

By ALEXANDER RUSSELL

"Love's Music"  
Oh! 'tis sweet!  
What's dancing?  
It's the mirth o' the feet!"  
(From an old Masque.)

THE world has gone dance mad. The public clamor aroused by this event has been extraordinary. Assailed and defended with equal violence, this amazing phenomenon of the twentieth century has ceased to be an incident and bids fair to assume the proportions of an epoch.

Were this revival of dancing a mere fad of the moment it would long since have ceased to disturb the even tenor of our existence, but it is some years since the first ripple of the turkey trot and the tango broke upon these shores, and the tidal wave which immediately followed has inundated the ball rooms, the hotels, the cafés, invaded the sacred precincts of the home and even threatens to engulf religious institutions. Everybody is dancing, old and young. Many who never trod a measure before have been caught upon the crest of the flood and are carried along in struggling ambition worthy of a better cause. Who among us has escaped the deluge?

It is, in fact, the Renaissance of the Dance; it is too late to condemn; it is high time to consider, whence comes it and whither will it lead us?

To determine the origin of this popular movement we must review the history of the dance. Starting as an external rhythmical expression of human emotion, the dance grew into the various folk dances of different peoples. Under the civilization of the Greeks and Romans it reached the dignity of an art, and in the public uses they made of it became the progenitor of the opera. With its revival under the reign of the Grand Monarch of France and his successors it assumed a delineative aspect and became largely a stage convention. With the furore caused by the introduction of the waltz into Europe in the early nineteenth century it ceased for a space unduly to influence the public imagination.

It was not until the recent educational tours of the Russian Ballet and its high priestess, Pavlova, and those other pioneers of the revival, Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Maud Allen that the world was again stirred by the dance.

## Dance Brought Back to the People

There is an old axiom that art moves in a circle. It is, then, the turn of the wheel of time which has brought the dance back to the people who gave it birth, and if we look upon it merely in the light of a popular amusement which is having an extraordinary vogue, we are sadly lacking in perception. It is a world-wide movement of an artistic character, and in its wake will follow creative musical inspiration. This is certain.

A glance at the history of music shows that music and the dance have been inextricably interwoven since time began. Music long ago won its place as an absolute art independent of this relationship, but it is inconceivable that the dance should exist without music. It is from this point of view that we should consider the matter. The dance has always had a direct and vital influence upon musical composition; what effect will the present revival of dancing have upon the music of this generation and of the future?

## Dance Forms in Music

Since Scarlatti and Bach every great composer has made use of the dance forms of his day as a vehicle to express artistic thought. The suites of Bach and Handel were largely a collection of pieces written in the dance rhythms popular at that time. Out of these grew the sonata, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven raised the minuet of the French Court

to the dignity of symphonic association. Everywhere great composers have seized upon the waltz as a medium of expression and each poured forth in the folk dances of his native land the wealth of his creative genius. The name of Chopin is linked inseparably with the Mazurka of Poland; that of Liszt with the Hungarian Czardas. Thus had been created in the Temple of Music a niche for that sister art—the Dance. It was inevitable that this should have happened.

To illustrate this dual relationship there were given recently in New York City under my direction seventeen presentations of the "Renaissance of the Dance." The



Eloise Holden in the Interpretative Dance (Schubert's "Moment Musical")

purpose was twofold—to present the chronological history of the dance as an art, and to emphasize its intimate association with the music of the master composers. Starting with the classic dance (derived from the Greeks) the program illustrated the evolution of the dance through the ages and concluded with the modern dances, the tango, the maxixe and the one-step. In each period were pieces for the violin, the voice and the piano from the pens of great composers, written in the form and rhythm of that particular dance—a Beethoven minuet, a Strauss waltz, and ballet music by Gounod.

The classic, eighteenth century, folk and descriptive dances were interpreted by Eloise Holden and Lorraine Manville with rare grace and charm. Miss Holden's versatility of talent was also demonstrated by her delightful singing of a Massenet Gavotte and a waltz song by Glazounov-La Forge. Jacques Kasner played the violin illustrations with fine artistry and the modern dances were danced by Dorothy Masterson and Clifton Webb. The public interest in these performances was extraordinary, thousands beyond the capacity of the hall attending each day.

## Music of the Present Dance Craze

These performances served to emphasize a most significant fact, which cannot be passed without comment—this revival of dancing is undoubtedly due in a large measure to the influence of the player-piano and the phonograph, which have created the opportunity in countless thousands of homes for the apprecia-

Clifton Webb and Dorothy Masterson in "The Maxixe"

tion and enjoyment of music. So great is the demand for dance music that the manufacturers of these instruments have difficulty in supplying it. But in spite of the vulgarity and inanity of most of the music ground out over night to satisfy the insatiable appetite of the public there has grown up a class of dance music of distinction and individual charm. The tide has already set toward the artistic. I have heard a "tango" written by the conductor of a Broadway theater orchestra which is worthy of serious attention as a morceau for the piano. Under the fingers of a good pianist it could become a thing of beauty. I know one young composer with a symphony to his credit who has undertaken a tune for the use of the Castles in their public demonstrations.

Why does not the young American composer lock up his symphonies and sonatas for a space and seize upon this opportunity so pregnant with possibili-

Eloise Holden in Seventeenth Century Rigaudon (Rameau)

ties? Let him tear a leaf from the diary of the great composers and apply his technical skill and artistic idealism to the ingratiating and contagious rhythm of the new dances and create a new art form in this mould. Let him write a tango for music rather than for the dance. Perhaps then a few seasons more and we shall hear a Harold Bauer in another of his delightful programs of dance music, playing a one-step by some as yet unknown Edward MacDowell, and investing it with all the beauty of his superb art. The composer who will thus interpret the spirit of the Renaissance of the Dance through the medium of true creative genius must become the veritable Pied Piper of this generation.

## SALE OF ROYALTIES OF COMPOSITIONS OF DUDLEY BUCK, Deceased

For the purpose of closing estate the undersigned, as Executors, will sell at public auction all the royalties payable in connection with the compositions of the late Dudley Buck, through AUGUSTUS W. CLARK, Auctioneer, at No. 5 West 44th Street, Borough of Manhattan, New York City, on the 9th day of April, 1914, at three o'clock in the afternoon. The sale will be absolute and without any reservation. For further information apply to Dudley Buck, Room No. 1246, Aeolian Hall, No. 27 West 42nd Street, New York, or to Bergen & Prendergast, attorneys, No. 25 Broad Street, New York City. DUDLEY BUCK, FRANCIS BLOSSOM, As Executors of the Estate of Mary E. Buck, deceased.

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