

JUST LIKE ARITHMETIC

In Praise of Dancing

OUR advance programmes told us that Miss Beryl Nettleton would give two talks on Dancing in IYA's Winter Course Series, "The Arts To-day," on the successive Thursday evenings, October 25 and November 1, but when we called on Miss Nettleton to see what she would tell *The Listener* about her talks we found not one person but two—Miss Nettleton and her partner, Miss Bettina Edwards—involved in preparing these talks.

"Our first talk will be on the history of ballet from the early fifteenth century up till the time of its re-birth in



BERYL NETTLETON
"Everyone should dance"

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and News Commentaries which were regularly rebroadcast here.

"Hot" News

As *Radio Newsreel* found its feet it concentrated mainly on presenting the raw material on which the news itself and the commentaries on the news were based. After all, every item in the news must be seen and reported by someone. In the ordinary way, his report goes in to the news agency, the news agency edits it and passes it on to the press and radio, and the sub-editors in the newsroom edit it afresh. But *Radio Newsreel* brought the listener the first-hand story, the eye-witness account, the original report itself.

Some of the classics of the early days were Robin Duff's running commentary on a dog-fight over Dover, the first-hand stories of the airmen themselves, and the daily—or rather nightly—accounts of the blitz on London. E. A. Montague, London Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, after he had sent his last message to his paper about midnight or 1 a.m., would walk up through the blitz, night after night, the mile or two from Fleet Street to Broadcasting House, to speak directly to North America and describe that night's raid.

France and England early this century when it was re-introduced from Russia," said Miss Nettleton.

"And from there we go on to the formation of the Royal Academy and the adoption of its teaching throughout the Empire," said Miss Edwards.

"You see," said Miss Nettleton, "I'm hoping that Miss Edwards will give one of the talks—we're preparing them together because we always work together. Or perhaps we'll make them into dialogues and do them together."

They explained, one beginning a sentence, the other finishing it, the gradual enrichment of ballet repertoire by the adoption and elaboration of folk tunes and stories; and they told us how the shortening of ballet skirts had made many more steps available to the ballerina and had made possible the virtuosity of to-day's ballets.

But when they spoke about the work of the Royal Academy—its charter was the last charter granted by King George V., Miss Nettleton said—Miss Edwards and Miss Nettleton became really happy.

"The Academy's teaching brought order out of chaos," they said. "It changed what could only be regarded charitably as 'fancy dancing' to something with an ordered technique. It works along sane lines for the well-being and enjoyment of the pupil."

"Scotch That Idea"

We asked them what they thought about the popular idea that the Academy dealt in toe-dancing.

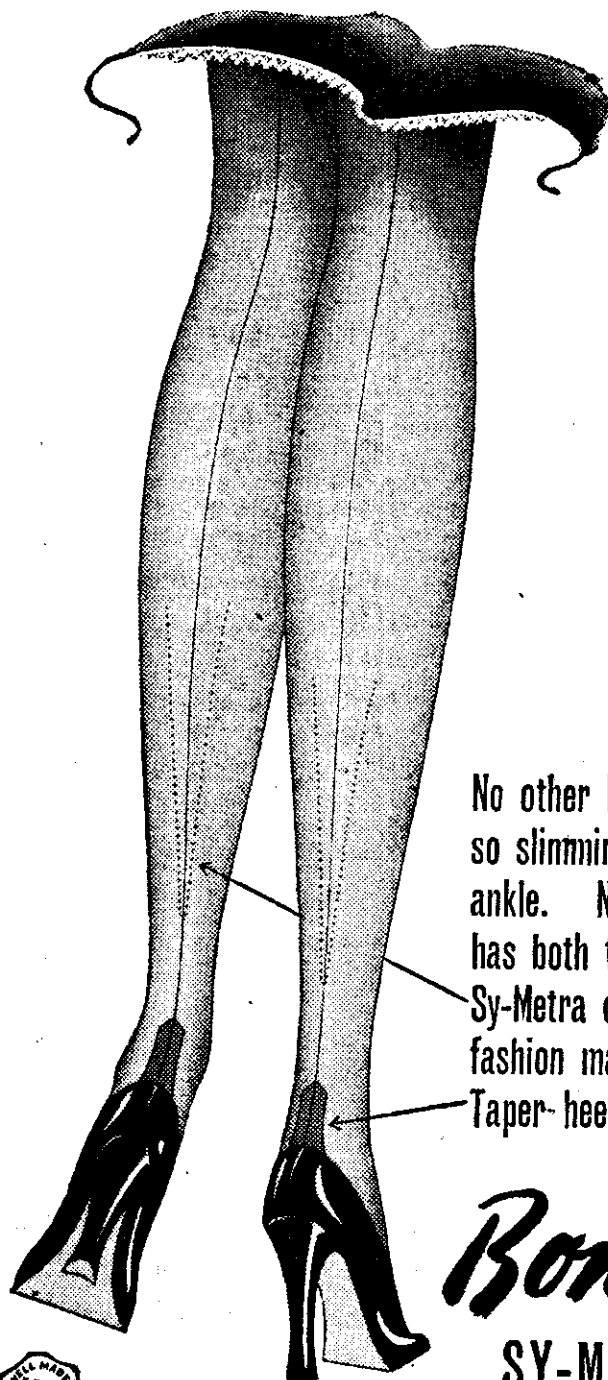
"Good heavens, children learn for six whole years before they ever go on their toes. I suppose we'll never scotch that old idea. It's the same with the mothers who arrive panting, at the first lesson, to ask how soon little Jennifer will be able to dance in public. That's not what we teach them for, it's not what the Royal Academy teaching is meant for—at least in this country. It's for their posture and their deportment and their general health. Everyone should dance. I'd like to see dancing taught in every school. I'd like to see it in every curriculum," said Miss Nettleton.

"Just like arithmetic," said Miss Edwards.

"Only more enjoyable," said Miss Nettleton.

A late amendment to the programmes announces that Miss Edwards will give one of these talks.

Harry Burgess, newly appointed Assistant Conductor of the BBC Midland Light Orchestra, is an exceptionally versatile musician, says the BBC London letter. He has been a conductor of the orchestras of a number of England's fashionable seaside resorts and spas. As violinist and pianist (accompanist), he has taken part in numerous operatic performances, including four seasons with the celebrated Carl Rosa Opera Company. He also played aboard the famous Cunard liners "Aquitania," "Mauretania," and "Berengaria." He was once, as bandmaster of the Durham Light Infantry in Batoum, required to rehearse and play, at short notice, the Persian National Anthem for the Shah, who complimented him on the result.



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