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EXPRESSIVE DANCING

N.Z. Girl and a New Art Form

SHONA DUNLOP, daughter of the late Professor Rev. F. W. Dunlop, one time Professor of Moral and Mental Philosophy at Knox College, University of Otago, called at *The Listener* office the other day to talk about what she called the "modern expressive dance" which she has studied professionally.

But here, first, is something about Miss Dunlop herself. She is one of the two principal dancers in the Bodenwieser Ballet shortly to visit New Zealand (the other is Hilary Napier, an English girl who, during the war, appeared in England and India with ENSA). Miss Dunlop left New Zealand in 1935, and studied dancing first in Vienna, under Gertrud Bodenwieser, then in Paris and Riga. When war approached she persuaded Madame Bodenwieser to settle in Australia. The dancing party toured South America in 1938 and after that worked in Australia for CEMA, which was organised by the singer Dorothy Helmrich.

"Moving Sculpture"

Discussing the new dance form, Miss Dunlop said, "We don't accept the classical form of dancing, that is, the traditional type as originally created by the past masters. We believe that, as the world is full of deep problems, it is possible to express them through the dance. Ours is quite a new form of the art; it is the expression of an adventure of the soul in a given form. So the artistic dance is an expression of human feeling in a sequence of movements. We build a structure from chaotic materials just as, in the hands of a sculptor, plastic work emerges from rough clay. Out of human movement, there should rise the moving sculpture we call 'the dance'."

"Do you think New Zealand audiences—or spectators—are likely to accept the 'expressive dance' as enthusiastically as your party does," we asked.

Miss Dunlop replied that she had made a hurried trip to New Zealand partly to find that out and partly for a short holiday.

"It's like this," she went on, "every epoch has its own characteristic art. You cannot ask people of our century to express themselves in a like manner to the people of the past. You cannot ask a painter of to-day to paint in the style of the rococo period. So why ask a dancer to-day to express himself in the same way as the dancer of that period when classical ballet became the style? We have lived through great changes and developments. The status of women, especially, has altered completely since that time."

Tradition is a Guide

"Then, as you don't admire the present ballet form, we can't describe you as a ballerina?"

"No, not ballerina. We admire, of course, the documents of the past in so far as they are artistic, but we try to (continued on next page)