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Ballet's Forgotten Man To Open Cafe

FOLLOWING the success of Colonel de Basil's Monte Carlo Russian Ballet in New Zealand and Australia in 1936-37, another season of Russian ballet has been arranged for Australia this year. It will open at the end of September with the largest ballet company yet to have toured the Commonwealth. Directors will be Victor Dandre and German Sevastionov, and the outstanding dancers will include Nina Baronova, Tatiana Raibouchinska, Lichine, Shabelovsky, Paul Petreff and Jasinsky.

This company has just played a season at Covent Garden, London, where lately the involved politics of ballet management have reached a climax.

Last winter the Monte Carlo ballet split into two rival organisations—one under the name World-Art, Inc., which was supported by the famous choreographer, Leonide Massine, and the other under the leadership of de Basil himself and Prince Serge Obelensky. The de Basil group possessed a great deal of scenery and the right to produce the most important ballets in the repertory.

For a time the two factions glowered at each other, but some six months ago they made up differences, and it was announced that a super-ballet company, including the talent of each group, would make its debut at Covent Garden in June. However, while the super-ballet was preparing, Colonel de Basil, who had not personally signed any agreement, flatly denied that any merger had taken place. He asserted he did not speak English and had not understood what the World-Art Company had proposed.

His statement resulted in the prompt attempt of World-Art to sue him, but they found he no longer owned the scenery and production rights of the de Basil Ballet, but had sold them to a new organisation, Education Ballets, Ltd.

So World-Art turned to sue Education Ballets, which countered by hastily opening a season of ballet at Covent Garden with the original de Basil Ballet's choreographer, David Lichine, as director. At the same time World-Art announced it would open across the street at Drury Lane, with Massine in charge.

Meantime, Colonel Wassily de Basil, forgotten, went off to Paris with the intention of opening a restaurant.

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