The Remarkable Career of 'Mr. J'

YANIA

His interest and achievement in dance go right back to school days in Yugoslavia.

By MIRIAM LIDSTER

THOSE OF US who have grown to know, enjoy and appreciate "Mr. J's" many talents have also wondered how this wonderful career began. In fact, I became so curious that I asked many questions and would like to let you all in on some of my findings.

In his early years in Yugoslavia Anatol Joukowsky went to Cadet School, which is for the same age bracket as our high schools, and here he began his first training in dance. All young men in cadet school were taught to dance. He finished at the age of 15 and with such a great interest in the arts that he immediately went on to the State Theater School at Beograd, capital of Serbia

The State Theater School is a four-year institution wherein each student studies opera, drama, music, and, if his interest is primarily dance, he studies 11 different phases including history of dance, history of costume, dance technique (which includes ballet, character dance or ethnic dance, pas de deux or the supporting of a partner, and dance plastic—very similar to modern dance). In the third year of Theater School each student begins his training in choreography, staging, which includes design, lighting, spacing, and the history of the stage. All of the dance technique courses are continuous throughout the four years. While going to school students perform in the theater. They are used as background for big dance numbers, may be in processionals, etc. Anatol recalled that he had once carried a sword in Aida.

When a student finishes his course in the State Theater School he goes to work in the State Theater, and if a dancer, he begins in the last row of the corps de ballet. If one has the ability, he may then work to the front row. Anatol danced with the corps de ballet for two years, was solo dancer (premier danseur) for two years, and in 1935 became ballet master and choreographer for the State Theater.

The theater belongs to the State and is directly connected with the Department of Education. There is a two-months vacation period. While in school and also thereafter in the State Theater Anatol would take his vacation in the country hunting, fishing, and watching the people of the country dance. He saw them dance at weddings, festivals, and on all holiday occasions, and here it was that he said he discovered the nice things of the folk dance of the people.

On these vacations friends got together. One might be a painter, one might be interested in costume, one might be a musician. All were interested in the beauties of the country and all were hunters. By the way, Anatol says the hunting is very good in Yugoslavia.

Anatol's group traveled together during the summer vacations for many years. The first trip was only in Yugoslavia, but they later traveled to Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Syria, North Africa and Spain. These tours began in the summer of 1923 and the last was made in 1941.

ANATOL

While Anatol was doing professional work in the State Theater, he was also building a group of ballet people who were very much interested in ethnic dance. This was a group of friends who got together and learned and danced ethnic dances on their own time—after their theater rehearsals and during holidays. From this ethnic group comes one who is now Director of the Ethnic Museum in Beograd, another who is a professor of botany in East Germany, one who is musical director of Radio Station Beograd, one who is a professional pianist—now touring the Argentine—and one, his wife, Yania.

Anatol first knew of his wife, Yania Wassiliewa-Joukowsky in the State Theater School. She was a first-year student when Anatol was in his fourth year. She was a slight girl with long braids and he delighted in pulling her hair, but his eyes were for the older girls. Yania Wassiliewa was born in Warsaw, but after the revolution her parents emigrated to Yugoslavia where she began her ballet training. She made her debut at the National Theater in Beograd in 1930 and soon became a prima ballerina. Later Yania was engaged by Colonel de Basil and danced with the Ballet Russe. Her brilliant classical technic, her temperament and sincerity permitted her to perform not only the main roles in such classical ballets as "Swan Lake", "Sleeping Beauty", "Golden Cock", "Les Presages" and "Les Sylphides", but also, because of her dramatic talent and knowledge of plastic-expressive dance, to perform the leading roles in such plays as "Francesca da Rimini," "Daphnis et Chloe", "Josephslegende",

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ON WITH THE DANCE

By CAROL M. GOVE

Of the Beresford Folk Dancers

Gay-stepping, swinging polka
Puts awkward at their ease,
All dignity forgotten
As quickly as you please.
The stranger soon feels welcome,
Is not a stranger more;
And nobody self-conscious
The way he was before.
Thus folk-dancing is spreading,
A joyous enterprise;
And people who said, "Panty-waist!"
Now praise it to the skies.
The costumes are enchanting--
Some come from foreign lands,
While others are created
Right here by Mom's own hands.

So rally round you teachers,
Nor fret about mistakes.
New fun you'll find in living:
LET'S DANCE, for goodness sakes!

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Oakland Classes

The Oakland Recreation department has started two new folk dance classes and a class in square dance fundamentals. The Oakland Folk Dance Council will sponsor a new beginners class to start in March. Applications will be taken at the Oakland festival.

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"Devil in Village" and "Fire in the Mountains."

Over a period of years the Ethnic Group worked together learning the dances Anatol brought from his many tours. They retained all of the ethnic steps and folk flavor, but often had to arrange them for stage presentation. The Department of Education would not sponsor them. They had to find their own musicians and orchestrate their own tunes. Finally when they felt they were ready for performance they went to the Department of Religion and gained a sponsorship from this group—a tongue-in-the-cheek type of sponsorship. They gave their first recital of Ethnic Dances in 1937 at the University Auditorium of Beograd. Because of the Department of Religion's sponsorship, they had many high officials and outstanding members of society in the audience. The group received such acclaim that after this performance all doors were open to them.

While working with the State Theater Anatol often took the ballet to other State Theaters—Greece, Bulgaria, Germany—to perform. He was often asked to do choreography for other theaters. In developing choreography for his own theater he traveled to many countries to study the style of dance and to observe the staging, design and choreography of the operas. Many times he was granted leave to study new operas as they appeared in the country of their origin. Until 1941 he studied, choreographed, danced, and thoroughly enjoyed working with people who loved the art of dance.

In 1941 Anatol joined the Yugoslavian Army, as a volunteer. He then became a prisoner of war. Both Anatol and his wife were shipped to Berlin. Anatol joined the French 5th Armored Division by the Rhine in 1945.

That year Anatol enrolled his wife and himself for the American quota to come and live in the United States as he had a sister in San Francisco. While waiting for the quota he applied for a job in 1948, to Colonel de Basil of the Ballet Russe, which was playing in France. He traveled with them to Spain, Portugal and Africa. While with the company he danced, choreographed and was second stage director. In 1950 they made a movie and then, because of the illness of Colonel de Basil, the company disbanded.

On January 31, 1951 a new phase of the Joukowskys' life began when they arrived in New York. It was snowy, slushy and there were no taxicabs available. Anatol had $50.00 in his pocket and no idea of what he was going to do. But he thought, "Americans have a spirit, and because they have spirit they like art, and because of this I will be able to make a living."

They eventually arrived in San Francisco and, I hope that you will all agree with the many of us who know Anatol and Yania that a trip to San Francisco is now not complete unless you have seen some of his lovely dances, or have had the opportunity to meet and talk with the very gifted Joukowskys.

Cayuga Twirlers

New officers have been elected by the Cayuga Twirlers of San Francisco. They are president, Walt Dexheimer; vice president, Ed Medley; secretary, Ruth Davis; treasurer, Hector Luperini; delegate, Tom Wall; publicity, Vi Dexheimer, and historian, Ada Hesemeyer.

The club invites visitors to join in the fun at 51 Lakeshore Plaza, near 34th avenue and Sloat boulevard, the third Wednesday of each month.

"Well—What's wrong with our costumes?"

Polish Ethnic Groups

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match the skirt trim. Headdresses are elaborate flowered pieces, some high and some low. Multicolored necklaces add a colorful touch.

Polish ethnic dance groups are glad to perform for occasions. They have a long history of exhibitions. During the Golden Gate International Exposition at Treasure Island San Francisco's dance group won a cup for its performance.

The groups find many reasons to celebrate during the year. There is Polish Constitution day, celebrated in May in Golden Gate Park. This is a day for singing, talks, music and dancing. There is the General Puloski celebration, and a special event for Thadeus Kowciuska who fought for American Independence under George Washington.

Chairman of Group 7 is Zofia Kowalkowski. Purpose of the club, she said, "is to propagate and acquaint others with Polish music, culture and background, art, poetry and literature as well as keeping traditions alive among American-born citizens of Polish descent." National headquarters are in Washington, D. C., and Chicago. Anyone who can claim one Polish parent is invited to join. At present, there are more than 1000 members.

Mrs. Roman Nowakowski, an active member and officer in several of the clubs, said that members will do ethnic dances for programs upon request.

Idyllwild Workshop

A Folk Dance Workshop under the sponsorship of the Idyllwild Foundation and the Folk Dance Federation of California South, will be held July 10 to 17. This will mark the workshop's third year. Madelynne Green and Vyts Beliajus will be on the faculty.

Requests for information may be sent to Elma McFarland, secretary of the Idyllwild Workshop committee, 177½ N. Hill avenue, Pasadena 4.