

For Sunday Guardian; Nov 20. '77.

EUREKA '77

AS OUR FAITH IN GOD DIES, LIFE LOSES ITS DANCE.

When we are able to look out from ourselves naked of schemes and without the tons of lies, without our conglomerate artificialities, we may see the largeness and the depth of all that surrounds us. Communion begins. It is from those heights, without interruption by vanity we sail into the music of life. And because music is sounds, because sounds vibrate, we, if we are alive are stimulated to move; if this movement has its pivot in the sun, we dance like all the stars in the heavens do, and as we dance we converse in the language of the Soul, there-with we join in the cosmic obligations of the universe.

We dance and we are as centre as flower is the centre of seed and ~~the~~ seed is the centre of beginning. To join in this activity is simply to find one's place with ease like water can be the colour of the spirit of a breath feeding the universe through a reed from one's lips.

Life is sacred there. Our movements become sensuous. We are lifted from the banality with its screechings and grindings, with its slams and cuffs into the deliberate search for a delicate strength, for a tenderness, for a knowledge of ineffable harmony.

Dance is the essence of Beauty. Dance is an expression of belief in life and consequently its Creator.

When life becomes an opportunity, a reduction of a Sacred dream to a mere act of survival, anything goes. There are no standards that challenge our real energies. In this uproar of scrambling among the slaughtered dream we further eat our own hands. Here we display gestures that are no more polished than instincts - a grab at this or that hardly to fulfil if not only to suit the untried immediate. Our faith in God dies, (if we were a God-fearing people) life loses its dance, its basic and earliest expression of honesty.

HUMMING BIRDS CUD DANCE

I take the view nevertheless and or whether the conclusions on our present state of affairs in Trinidad and Tobago - the West Indies, that all, each discipline, each act relates to everything else and therefore plays a much greater part of influence beckons us to abandon the ship of ourselves, we go drunkenly to other realities where we must accept the sad role of mere imitators.

Fifteen years ago we thought we had claimed ourselves and were therefore in charge of our destiny. Fifteen years later we are still confused in that presumption.

The Humming Bird Dance Theatre celebrates its fifteenth anniversary. But because little or nothing has happened in fifteen years to inspire the group to a higher level of accomplishment, or that because all that has happened has only served to scare its imagination into complacency. One sits for two and a half hours to watch what was little more than a coming together, a sort of meeting of people who used to dance and now, for their own benefit mainly and family and friends, they run through a few old dances so badly blemished by hard time and lack of stimulating content, that a few sparks here and there do nothing for their best intentions. To simply say that the company is good and that they stumbled here and there is not enough. The approach must be one with an eye to greater responsibility. Diamonds don't come into being as easy as that.

This dance theatre suffers terribly from a lack of purpose. It shows, for at most the gestures of this mine are thin first coats, through which the mistakes in the woodshow through.

Whatever fire that did burn in this company is now a smouldering coal on a wet evening-stage that in this concrete and unsympathetic Queens Hall.

The Hummingbirds are fairly young, maybe not one member other than the king of the flock is over thirty. So it is not too much to hope that this was an occasion to be caught in surprise by one at least new and naturally sparkling talent. This does not happen, Mr St Louis theatre suffers principally from a-bird-of-one feather complex and this limit begs its own boredom.

I have attended their rehearsals and have shared with them a pain that stagnation eventually brings. Under the most trying conditions, which include an uneven floor and confining space, for a dance studio, I have watched these devotees drain themselves dry at trying to interpret forms; to become at one with situations that were abstract to their experience and which no teacher or system was ready to deal with, and which ~~did~~ threw them into fits of oblivion when all that was reached was an effontery, the blame of which they must share.

Fifteen years later, one would come to expect a repertoire whose diversity was in the dance itself and not alone in titles of the eleven pieces that made up this fast moving show. How could they go wrong with titles like Eureka '77, Black Genesis, Hidden Rites, House of Bernarda Alba etc... but they did, and we must have the courage to tell them so. But that is assuming that the audience knows what it has

come to see, or that the audience has integrity. Generally we are lazy and dishonest and prefer to let those children who ask our opinion go down the drain impoverished by our mamaguy.

We need only yo say what we witnessed. The imprecisions, the cosmetic enthusiasm the inadequate costuming, the poor tape recordings that had the dancers always catching up. The alienation of a bare stage with not one single prop but three holes in one of its drop screens was impossible in spite of the atmosphere valves that the veteran lighting man, Mt Andrews was able to swear by.

Mr St Louis has had his share of pressure in this place, and it shows, but he continues like a devoted father leading his flock through a barren land looking for water. Where, O where are the lrbraries, the museums, the studios; where are the brave forums, the open galleries; where is the voice for our national cultural centre?

,.. and so, our weary feet, our struggling arms, we stumble. Dream loses its dances one by one, I feel her breasts die like magnets.

LeRoy Clarke
17th Nov '77
Poet of Spain.