

DANCE ON THE ST. LOUIS STAGE: 1850-1870

A DISSERTATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
FORWARD	v
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
<u>Purpose</u>	4
<u>Problem</u>	4
<u>The Importance of the Study</u>	4
<u>Limitations of the Study</u>	8
<u>Definition of Terms</u>	9
<u>Source of Data</u>	13
<u>Procedure</u>	16
<u>Related Literature</u>	17
Historical Literature	17
Theatrical Literature	17
Dance Literature	20
<u>Organization of Material</u>	22
II. ACT I: 1850-1856 ST. LOUIS, EMPORIUM OF THE WEST AND RAILHEAD OF THE FRONTIER . . .	24
<u>Curtain Raiser</u>	24
<u>Scene I: St. Louis in 1850</u>	33
<u>Scene II: Theatres Old and New</u>	34
St. Louis Theatre	34
Bates Theatre	37
Varieties Theatre	41
People's Theatre	45
<u>Divertissements</u>	47
St. Louis Theatre 1850-1851	48
Bates Theatre 1851	60
Bates Theatre 1851-1852	65
Bates Theatre 1852-1853	70
Varieties Theatre 1852	72
Varieties Theatre 1852-1853	83
People's Theatre 1852-1853	90
Bates Theatre 1853-1854	95

Chapter

Varieties Theatre 1853-1854	100
People's Theatre 1853-1854	108
Bates Theatre 1854-1855	112
Varieties Theatre 1854-1855	116
People's Theatre 1854-1855	120
St. Louis Theatre 1855	122
St. Louis Theatre 1855-1856	124
People's Theatre 1855-1856	131
Varieties Theatre 1856	136
St. Louis Theatre 1856-1857	137
People's Theatre 1856-1857	141
<u>Summary</u>	144
Theatrical Seasons 1850-1856	149

- III. ACT II: 1857-1865 ST. LOUIS STAUNCH IN
THE PANIC OF 1857 BUT WITH DIVIDED
SYMPATHIES IN THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES . . . 151

<u>Entr'act</u>	151
<u>Ballet, Pantomime and Tendu Corde</u>	155
St. Louis Theatre 1857-1858	155
Woods Theatre 1857-1858	170
St. Louis Theatre 1858-1859	171
Woods Theatre 1858-1859	175
St. Louis Theatre 1859-1860	178
Woods Theatre 1859-1860	180
St. Louis Opera House 1859-1860	180
St. Louis Opera House 1860-1861	184
St. Louis Theatre 1861-1862	184
St. Louis Theatre 1862-1863	189
Deagle's Varieties Theatre 1863-1864	190
St. Louis Theatre 1863-1864	197
Deagle's Varieties Theatre 1864-1865	198
St. Louis Theatre 1864-1865	201
De Bar's Opera House 1865-1866	202
Deagle's Varieties Theatre 1865-1866	202
<u>Summary</u>	208
Theatrical Seasons 1857-1865	213

- IV. ACT III: 1866-1870 ST. LOUIS, THE FOURTH
CITY AND "THE FUTURE GREAT CITY OF THE
WORLD" 216

<u>Denouement</u>	1866-1870	216
Olympic Theatre		218
<u>Finale</u>		221
Olympic Theatre 1866-1867		221

Chapter

Deagle's Varieties Theatre 1866-1867	223
De Bar's Opera House 1866-1867	228
Olympic Theatre 1867-1868	228
Deagle's Varieties Theatre 1867-1868	236
De Bar's Opera House 1867-1868	238
Deagle's Varieties Theatre 1868-1869	239
Olympic Theatre 1868-1869	241
De Bar's Opera House 1868-1869	241
<u>Summary</u>	244
<u>Theatrical Seasons 1866-1870</u>	248
V. SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION	250
<u>Summary</u>	250
<u>Findings</u>	254
<u>Conclusion</u>	255
<u>Recommendations for Further Studies</u>	255
APPENDIX	257
A. An engraving of The City of St. Louis in 1852	257
B. Illustrations of the major St. Louis theatres of the period	
The St. Louis Theatre	259
The Bates Theatre	261
The Varieties Theatre	263
The People's Theatre	265
The Olympic Theatre	267
C. Illustrations of resident dancers	
Mlle. Henrietta Vallée	269
Miss Sallie St. Clair	271
D. Index of dancers who performed at the major theatres from 1850-1870	
Dancers: 1850-1856	273
Dancers: 1857-1866	276
Dancers: 1866-1870	279
E. Brief history of the newspapers used in this study	281
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.	282

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

By the middle of the nineteenth century, St. Louis,¹ Missouri, had been crowned the "River Queen."² The city, named after King Louis IX of France, was founded in 1764 by Pierre Laclede Liguest as a fur trading post on the Mississippi River.

The years between 1850 and 1860 were a period of growth for St. Louis as well as the West. The terminus of the eastern railroad in St. Louis, the beginning of the railroad westward, the Gold Rush in California and the opening of western lands contributed to the city's internal expansion and to a time of vigor and development. During the 1860s, St. Louis changed from a trading center to a manufacturing city thereby moving into economic competition with other emerging western cities.

¹

"St. Louis is located on the Mississippi River about 10 miles below its confluence with the Missouri. Founded 1764 by Pierre Laclede; ceded by France to U.S. in 1803, chartered as a city 1822...."

Webster's Geographical Dictionary, "St. Louis."

²

Helen Davault Williams, "Factors on the Growth of Saint Louis From 1840 to 1860" (M.A. dissertation, Washington University, 1934), p. 83.

The Mississippi River was the main artery of transportation to St. Louis from its Mother City of New Orleans. Before the invention of the steamboat, overland travel was laborious, especially in the muddy seasons, and the return trip to New Orleans by flatboat was equally hazardous.

In 1817, the steamboat, the "Zebulon M. Pike," arrived from Louisville. "This liberated river commerce from dependence upon hand-propelled flat boats and made possible easier progress upstream against the current."³ Since the river changed depth at St. Louis, the city became a terminus for the smaller boats from the upper Mississippi and the larger boats from the lower Mississippi.⁴ As a result, soon St. Louis became the crossroads of transportation to the north and south as well as the gateway to the new West.

During the decades, 1850 to 1870, four theatres were built and seven major theatres were operated at various times during this period in St. Louis. Dance comprised an important part of the theatrical entertainment presented in

³ History: Physical Growth of the City of Saint Louis (St. Louis, Mo., 1969), p. 10.

⁴ Oscar Mervene Ross, "The History of Saint Louis 1848-1853" (M.A. dissertation, Washington University, 1949), p. 7.

a variety of forms--entr'act^e, entertainments, full length ballets, and as part of pantomimes, variety bills, spectacles and burlesques. The dance was performed by resident dancers and by visiting American and foreign stars and companies.

Traveling players had visited St. Louis since the early years of the century. Most of them had come up the river from New Orleans, stopping at the towns along the way; a few had come west from Cincinnati.

Noah Ludlow, theatrical manager and actor who had played since 1819 in St. Louis and his partner, Sol Smith, renovated the old salt house into a theatre in 1835, and this was superseded in 1837 by the building of the St. Louis Theatre. The theatrical offerings of Ludlow and Smith's company included not only drama but also dancing between the plays.

The pioneer work of these two men in building a permanent theatre, in bringing a resident theatrical company to the city and in maintaining professional standards of quality in theatre cannot be underestimated for all these served as a foundation for the 1850 to 1870 period when the St. Louis theatrical scene began to expand; at that time theatres were built, and numerous foreign and American stars played in the growing Emporium of the West.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to present a history of dance as it appeared on the stage in St. Louis, Missouri from 1850 to 1870.

The Problem

The problem of this study was to identify the major performers and the works in which they performed and to identify the theatrical trends in St. Louis before, during and after the War Between the States.

The Importance of the Study

American dance history before 1900 remains an area yet to be explored in a definitive manner. Juana de Laban wrote in her dissertation, "The Dance in the American Theatre: An Analytical History Based on the New York Stage from 1750 to 1821" that

little information could be obtained in our leading libraries on the early history of the dance in the United States. Further investigation led me to the conviction that here indeed was a field which had been practically untouched.⁵

5

Juana de Laban, "The Dance in the American Theatre: An Analytical History Based on the New York Stage from 1750-1821" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1947), p. 1.

Lincoln Kirstein devoted a chapter in the second edition of his book, Dance: A Short History of Classical Theatrical Dancing, to the development of dance in America before 1900, as did Richard Kraus in The History of the Dance in Art and Education. Kraus wrote

in the latter part of the nineteenth century, no dancers emerged on the American scene Indeed, ballet itself underwent a decline in the 1850's. While other foreign performers toured the United States . . . , ballet never took root here or flourished.⁶

Although the Romantic Era had ended in Europe, it still existed in the United States; one historian of the period wrote

from Jackson [1829-1837] through Buchanan [1857-1861], Americans rode the crest of the romantic wave as it swept across the country; but after the Civil War they became more critically aware of themselves and their relation to the world of reality.⁷

M. B. Leavitt, theatrical manager and contemporary of the period, observed:

Dancing has always been highly regarded as one of the most charming features of the stage, and America has been afforded the greatest terpsichorean

⁶ Richard Kraus, The History of the Dance in Art and Education (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 106.

⁷ Richard Moody, America Takes the Stage: Romanticism in American Drama and Theatre, 1750-1900 (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1955), p. 5.

talent in the world, but we have no longer the peers of those who flourished in the Fifties and the Sixties.⁸

Dancing of the past and that of the present may be placed in two classes. The artists I saw during the last half of the Nineteenth century were more classic and finished in their styles and demonstrated that they had given their art an immense amount of study and practice⁹

Many foreign performers toured the United States as did a number of American dancers. David Grimsted wrote in his book, Melodrama Unveiled, that when the French ballet stars first appeared in relatively scanty costumes, many criticized their "'allurement as a threat' to sap America's moral strength," but instead their art only scored a triumph for the growing popularity of ballet.¹⁰

John Jennings, a contemporary author of the period, wrote

not so many years ago, there was a ballet every night; now there are few, except in the East, that have this feature, and for this reason--the abandonment of it in the West and South--the people who draw conclusions from everything they see and hear cry out that the ballet is dying out. This is not so. The ballet has been dropped from

8

M. B. Leavitt, Fifty Years in Theatrical Management (New York: Broadway Publishing Company, 1917), p. 100.

9

Ibid., pp. 162-3.

10

David Grimsted, Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture 1800-1850 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 107.

the list of attractions in the West, because the managers thought it too costly an institution for them to carry and not because the people did not want it. Some of the best paying theatrical investments of the day are based upon the fascinating and drawing qualities of a displayed female limbif any one thinks the ballet is on the decay just let him wait until such an attraction is announced in his neighborhood and then stand back and count as the bald-headed brigade goes to the front.¹¹

The period of 1850 to 1870 was selected for this study because of its specific importance as a period of theatrical activity in St. Louis as evidenced by the building and operation of five major theatres. During the early 1850s, prominent foreign and American dancers began promoting the development of St. Louis as one of the major ¹² theatrical centers in the western United States.

As further support for the need for the present study, Selma Jeanne Cohen, editor of Dance Perspectives, wrote the investigator about dance in St. Louis:

It certainly was an important theatre center--one of the most important in the country. I'm sure you will find that some of the plays, even most of them in the mid-nineteenth century, were followed by 'entertainments of dancing.'¹³

¹¹

John J. Jennings, Theatrical and Circus Life or Secrets of the Stage Green Room (St. Louis: 1882), p. 238.

¹²

Grant M. Herbstruth, "Benedict De Bar and the Grand Opera House in St. Louis, Missouri From 1855-1879" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1954), p. 13.

¹³

Selma Jeanne Cohen, personal letter, June 3, 1976.

The dancers, the works they performed and the cities in which they performed have yet to be identified as part of an unrecognized American dance history.

This study was deemed of value to dance literature as a contribution to the history of American theatrical dance before 1900.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to an attempt to identify the professional dancers and the works in which they performed on stage in the form of entr'acts, ballets and as part of pantomimes, spectacles, burlesques and variety presentations. The study was confined to activities which occurred in the major theatres operating in St. Louis between 1850 and 1870: The Old St. Louis Theatre, 1850-1851; the Bates Theatre, 1851-1855, renamed and then operated as the St. Louis Theatre, 1856-1874; the Dramatic Varieties, 1852-1855, renamed and operated as the St. Louis Opera House 1859-1861 and then as Deagle's Varieties, 1863-1872; the People's Theatre, 1852-1860; the Olympic Theatre, 1866-1882. The investigator made no attempt to include dance as performed in melodrama, minstrel shows, in music halls, or in theatres other than the aforementioned.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarification, the following terms were defined in the context of nineteenth century theatre and as they are used in the study:

Ballet was "a theatrical spectacle in which the action is presented in a highly specialized form of dancing and mime to the accompaniment of music."¹⁴

Stock Company, referred to a "theatrical company which was regularly attached to a particular theatre . . . operation on a true repertory basis with a nightly change of bill." Each of the actors undertook some special line of business. For example, the tragedian also appeared in comedy as the leading man. The juvenile lead was the young lover or hero. The low comedian played leading comic parts of a broad, farcical or clownish type and minor roles in tragedy. Among the other members of a stock company were specialists such as the leading vocalist, the principal dancer, the singing chambermaid or the countryman.¹⁵

Melodrama was a drama intended for popular audiences; the form included tragedy, comedy, pantomime and spectacle

¹⁴

The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, 3rd ed., s.v. "Ballet," by Ivor Guest.

¹⁵

Ibid., "Stock Company," by Sybil Rosenfeld.

and was constructed upon a situation plot, which employed mimed action, stock characters with a moral and humanitarian point of view where virtue triumphed and vice was punished.¹⁶

Pantomime was a form of expression in which ideas were silently conveyed with expressive movements of the arms, legs or face in passages within plays and ballets.¹⁷

Farce was "an extreme form of comedy" which utilized the devices of probability, horse-play and bodily assault. "Its subject was the inherent stupidity of man at odds with his environment."¹⁸ In the nineteenth century, short one-act farces were popular.

Burlesque was a part of farce in the sense of being a "portraiture on the stage" which in drama included comic pantomime, comic opera, travesty and extravaganza.¹⁹

American Burlesque was "a native sex and comedy entertainment for men only . . . popularly known as 'burleycue and leg show.'"²⁰

16

Frank Rahill, The World of Melodrama (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1967), p. xiv.

17

The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, 3rd ed., s.v. "Pantomime," by M. Wilson Disher.

18

Ibid., "Farce."

19

Laurence Hutton, Curiosities of the American Stage (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891), pp. 104-6.

20

The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, 3rd ed., s.v. "American Burlesque," by Bernard Sobel.

Extravaganza was "a fantastic affair intended solely for amusement, . . . its subject was taken from mythology or
²¹
fairy tale."

Burletta was "closely allied to both burlesque and extravaganza." It was a theatrical piece which contained
²²
at least five songs in each act.

Spectacle included "equestrian shows, tableaux vivants, striking musical exhibitions, circuses, startling
²³
and freakish shows . . . and panoramic display" or a theatrical piece with virtually no plot which relied upon scenery and exciting stage effects more than upon
²⁴
music or dance to make its effect.

Travesti referred to the occasion, in both drama and ballet, when a female wears a man's costume and takes the
²⁵
part of a male character. On the other hand, the term was also used to mean that "comic female characters were

²¹

The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, 3rd ed.
s.v. "American Burlesque," by Bernard Sobel.

²²

Ibid.

²³

Richard Moody, America Takes the Stage, p. 206-7.

²⁴

Ethan Mordden, Better Foot Forward: The History of American Musical Theatre (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976), p. 9.

²⁵

Anatole Chujoy and P. W. Manchester, ed., The Dance Encyclopedia, s.v. "Travesti."

26

played by men."

A Benefit was a special performance given for a member of the company who received the financial proceeds from the evening's box office receipts after the management had deducted the theatre's operating expenses.²⁷

Variety or Vaudeville in the period following the War Between the States was a "nomenclature . . . which was loose and often misleading. The term 'vaudeville' came into scattered use at this time to describe, in a general way,²⁸ a variety entertainment."²⁹

Variety was "the olio in its pure state, and the form had been a part of the nineteenth century entertainment long before the appearance of vaudeville."²⁹ The main components were "skits, songs, dances and comic monologues--together with some of the minstrel show's humor and the staples of circus programs--acrobats and animals."³⁰

Vaudeville combined a "succession of unrelated songs,

26

The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, 3rd ed., s.v. "Principal Boy."

27

The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, 3rd ed., "Benefit."

28

Albert F. McLean, Jr., American Vaudeville As Ritual (University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 18.

29

Ibid., p. 25.

30

Ibid., p. 22.

sketches, dances, acts of physical prowess and comic
³¹ monologues." into an entertainment acceptable to middle
class families and general audiences.
³²

Sources of Data

The materials for this study were classified into three categories: primary sources, unpublished sources and secondary sources.

The most extensive primary source for the St. Louis theatrical dance history was found to be the daily press. Daily advertisements provided a chronological picture of the theatre scene. Often daily commentary on the previous evening's performance or the performers accompanied the advertisements. These unsigned reports discussed the audience's reception to visiting stars, the quality of the performance or the amount of support given to the production by the resident stock company. The investigator chose the daily newspaper, The Daily Missouri Republican, as the chief source of advertisement and theatrical commentary for this study. This newspaper consistently operated as a "daily" throughout the period, in contrast to the several other papers which operated on an irregular basis from 1850 to

³¹

Ritual (University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 18.

³²

Ibid., p. 31.

1870. In order to supplement the information gained from the Daily Missouri Republican, the investigator chose the Daily Missouri Democrat. This newspaper, although largely a source of information for trade and commerce, did include theatrical advertisements and news.

Other primary sources for the study included playbills, journals, pictorial magazines and theatrical books written by contemporary figures.

The second category, unpublished materials, was comprised of theses and dissertations which have been written about St. Louis history and St. Louis theatrical history. The theses and dissertations made many references to dance as part of the theatrical entertainment, but this subject received only brief attention or mention. The investigator examined personal letters, scrapbooks and collections of primary documents in the Gundlack, Ludlow-Field-Maury, and Smith Collections at the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

An additional source of unpublished materials was the Lillian Moore Collection at the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center which the investigator received permission to review.

The third category of materials which the investigator explored included secondary source materials in the form of books, monographs and articles. Sufficient

material was found so that the writer could present a competent theatrical dance history of the period. The primary documents were authentic, but it was realized that various newspaper critics/reporters whose writing constituted much of the primary source material of this study may have been biased, inaccurate and unqualified in some cases. Although, the quality of their reporting was felt to constitute another area of study, the daily press did make a significant contribution by communicating a picture of the theatrical scene in St. Louis to the theatre-going public of the day.

The investigator depended upon the advertisements in the newspapers as the major source for reporting the performances at the major theatres. These advertisements were assumed to be as correct a record as could be found, unless a subsequent notice followed in the newspaper reporting that a dancer did not perform because of illness or accident or indicating that a particular work was not performed.

The materials for this study were gathered from the following depositories: the St. Louis Public Library, the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis, Library and Archives; in New York, the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center and the Museum of the City of New York.

Procedure

The investigator examined, collected and compiled materials for a history of dance on the St. Louis stage. A preliminary investigation was conducted for the purpose of providing an overview of St. Louis during the nineteenth century. The investigator began by reading general American theatrical histories, then examining both historical and theatrical literature pertaining to St. Louis.

Having determined the time period of the study, the investigator collected the chronological material by reading the daily newspapers. The next step was to identify the performers and works in which they performed.

The investigator designed the study so that it would cover three major periods. For each period the history of St. Louis during the specified time span is presented and this is followed by the corresponding theatrical history of the period. The data were then subdivided into theatres and then further divided into chronological theatrical seasons, therefore offering the reader a means of comparison of theatrical offerings during a season.

After recording the events of these two decades, the investigator compiled the findings and drew a conclusion regarding the theatrical trends in St. Louis from 1850-1870.

Related Literature

In order to prepare a dance history of the St. Louis stage, a search through related literature was deemed important to clarify the writer's understanding of the subject. The literature related to the problem of this study in the following categories: historical literature, theatrical literature, and dance literature.

Historical Literature

As background for the study, several accounts of the history of St. Louis provided an overview. Reference works about St. Louis history contributed concise accounts and important dates with respect to the theatres. These works included J. Thomas Scharf's two volume work, History of St. Louis City and County From the Earliest Periods to the Present Day, The Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis and Old and New St. Louis by James Cox. These books among others which dealt with specific periods offered the necessary background regarding the city's development.

Theatrical Literature

During the nineteenth century, dance shared the same bill with drama and the investigator found that the theatrical literature yielded excellent source material.

General histories of the American stage provided a survey of drama in the United States. Among the works consulted were Arthur Quinn's two volume work, A History of the American Drama: From the Beginning to the Civil War; and A History of the American Drama: From the Civil War to the Present Day, Bernard Hewitt's Theatre U.S.A. and America Takes the Stage: Romanticism in American Drama and Theatre, 1750-1900 by Richard Moody.

Two of the most outstanding histories which contained many references to dance and dancers were Charles Durang's History of the Philadelphia Stage 1749-1855 and George C. D. Odell's Annals of the New York Stage, a multi-volume work which like Durang's book provided much valuable information on actors, dances, theatres and entertainments.

St. Louis has been a topic of several theatrical histories. The most extensive study was The Theatre on the Frontier: The Early Years of the St. Louis Stage by William G. B. Carson, which covered the period from the early 1800's to 1840. A sequel, Managers in Distress: The St. Louis Stage, 1840-1843, recounted the experiences of the famous partnership of Noah Ludlow and Sol Smith, theatrical managers who built a circuit of theatres in the south and west. John S. Kendall's The Golden Age of the New Orleans' Theatre was an invaluable reference to the careers of numerous performers who played both the

New Orleans and St. Louis theatres.

Among important journals, Ludlow's Dramatic Life as I Found It and Smith's Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years, contained insights into the development of the St. Louis theatre during the first half of the nineteenth century. Other journals by theatrical managers helped trace dancers as their careers took them to other cities.

Many theses and dissertations have been written about St. Louis theatrical history in which there are often references to dance as part of the theatrical amusements.

In Margaret Blackburn's thesis, "The Stage in St. Louis, Missouri, After 1850," the enormous growth and development in St. Louis during the decade of 1850 was surveyed. In this study specific theatrical productions and social affairs which St. Louis society attended during the period are mentioned.

Grant M. Herbstruth's dissertation, "Benedict De Bar and the Grand Opera House in St. Louis, Missouri, from 1855-1879," is an inclusive two volume work on the man and the theatre that he managed. Herbstruth's work provided a source for procedures that he employed in organizing his materials.

Theodore Clark Johnson's dissertation, "A History of the First Olympic Theatre of St. Louis, Missouri, from

1866-1879," presents a chronological history of a major St. Louis theatre of the nineteenth century. Johnson's study is similar to that of Herbstruth's dissertation, but on a smaller scale.

John David Russell's thesis, "The Rise and Decline of the Variety Theatre in St. Louis, 1867-1896," deals in depth with the theatre after 1870.

Dance Literature

Few writers have examined American dance history in detail, except through the careers of various dancers or related arts topics. Dance Index contains the most complete collection of monographs on the subject of American dance, primarily nineteenth century dance. Most of the remaining studies on American theatrical dance history were found in Dance Perspectives, Dance Magazine and scattered in theatrical and historical publications.

The majority of these articles were written by Lillian Moore, George Chaffee and several other authors. The work of Lillian Moore in the area of American theatrical dance history has been a major contribution of important dance scholarship. Her ultimate goal of writing a history of American dance was not realized in her lifetime, but her articles have provided valuable information on important

dancers of the nineteenth century.

George Chaffee's works contribute to the iconography of dance history in his cataloguing of lithographs, engravings and music prints of the dance artists of the nineteenth century. His collections contributed valuable morsels of information about dancers and works in which they performed.

Other writers such as Ivor Guest, Arthur Todd and Marian Hannah Winter offered additional information on a variety of subjects related to nineteenth century dance. Mr. Guest in particular has written many books about the nature of nineteenth century dance in Europe. The Romantic Ballet in Paris and The Romantic Ballet in England contributed information about performers, works and choreographers. His book, Fanny Elssler, recounts the star's visit to America in the 1840s^D and includes the names of American artists with whom she danced. Arthur Todd wrote a series of articles in Dance Magazine entitled "Four Centuries of American Dance," which gave to this investigator an overview of dance in America before 1900.

A search through the related literature revealed no other studies similar in purpose to that of this one in which dance on the St. Louis stage was recorded between 1850 and 1870.

Organization of Material

The design of the study developed into three periods within the years 1850-1870:

Chapter II, "1850-1856: St. Louis Emporium of the West and Railhead to the Frontier" deals with a capsulized explanation of the beginnings of drama in St. Louis, the influence of Ludlow and Smith, theatrical managers, who built the St. Louis Theatre and included it in their Southern theatrical circuit. The city in 1850 is described and how the city's amusements broadened with the addition of new theatres is explained. Each of the theatres is described and the theatrical seasons from 1850 through 1856 are reviewed separately and at each theatre. Many foreign and American ballet stars and companies contributed to these seasons.

Chapter III, "1857-1865: St. Louis Staunch in the Panic of 1857 but with Divided Sympathies in The War Between the States" encompasses a period of turmoil. Although St. Louis did not realize the full impact of the Panic, it did produce financial pressures on the operating theatres. The theatrical seasons from 1857 through 1859 are reviewed separately and at each theatre; the diversity of these seasons was provided by the perennial visits of the Ravel family and the Ronzani Ballet Troupe. During the War Between

the States, dance almost disappeared from the legitimate stage except in the form of variety entertainment at a new theatre, Deagle's Variety Theatre.

Chapter IV, "1866-1870: St. Louis Moved into Economic Competition with Other Emerging Western Cities" treats the events of the years following the War Between the States. In 1866, the Olympic Theatre opened; the following year, The Black Crook set the stage for the spectacles and extravaganzas in the years which followed. Finally, the popularity of the variety theatre relegated dance to a new role in the theatre during the years from 1866 to 1870.

In Chapter V, the investigator considers the findings for each of the three major periods and reached a conclusion about the study. Proposed suggestions for further studies are included in this chapter, followed by appendices of illustrations, a compilation of dancers who performed from 1850-1870, and a selected bibliography.

CHAPTER II

ACT I: 1850-1856 ST. LOUIS, EMPORIUM OF THE WEST AND RAILHEAD TO THE FRONTIER

Curtain Raiser

St. Louis was originally a French city, both in character and appearance; however, by the first part of the nineteenth century, St. Louis had become a part of the agrarian South. With a prophetic sense, the editor of the Missouri Gazeteer wrote in 1837

when experiences shall have fully tested the hazards in lower latitudes, [New Orleans] true wisdom will point to St. Louis as the place where the purchase and sale of merchandise . . . shall be carried on . . . and all balances can be settled at the mammoth city of the West.³³

Although this forecast of the destiny of St. Louis may have seemed somewhat exaggerated at the time, "the analysis of the St. Louis editor was substantiated by the verdict of historians of the present, looking back on the events which followed."³⁴

The steamboat led the way to St. Louis becoming the Emporium of the West and the city breaking away as an

33

Oral Sumner Coad and Edwin Mims, Jr., The American Stage, vol. 14: The Pageant of America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 157.

34

Ibid.

economic unit from the South to become a part of the
 northern industrial system.³⁵ Steamboats provided
 transportation between New Orleans and St. Louis in a mere
 four days and twenty-three hours,³⁶ and this fact helped
 St. Louis to grow as a trading center as a northern market
 for the agricultural states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa,
 Indiana, which bordered Missouri.

With the increase of transportation, immigrants began
 to settle in St. Louis--first the Germans, followed by the
 Irish, Bohemians and then the English, turning the city's
 once gallic flavor into more of a cosmopolitan atmosphere
 than any other city west of Philadelphia.³⁷ By the 1840s
 St. Louis began to change from a predominantly agricultural
 economy into a trade center. In the 1850s, the city was
 recognized as unique in its importance as a railhead to the
 opening West. Later in the 1860s, St. Louis also expanded
 into a manufacturing center.

Noah Ludlow was an actor and theatrical manager,
 who had played St. Louis since 1819. In 1835, he returned

³⁵ Walter Harrington Ryle, Missouri: Union or Secession (Nashville, Tenn.: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1931), p. 22.

³⁶ Elihu Hotchkiss Shepard, The Early History of St. Louis and Missouri from Its First Exploration by White Men in 1673 to 1843 (St. Louis: 1870), p. 58.

to the city and began the important renovation of the old salt house as a temporary theatre.

The year 1835 had proved for St. Louis play-lovers a most eventful one. It had brought them a long and apparently satisfactory season, and it held promise for the future, not merely of a resident company, but also of a real theatre to house this company and to afford relief from the torture of the salt house.³⁸

Unfortunately the temporary theatre was to have a short life, for early in 1837, fire destroyed it.

Since Ludlow returned to St. Louis in 1835, plans had been underway to build a new theatre. The cornerstone of this first theatre west of the Mississippi was laid May 24, 1836. The new theatre was named the St. Louis and was located on the southeast corner of Third and Olive Streets. Ludlow and his partner Sol Smith opened the theatre on July 3, 1837.³⁹ The theatre served the growing community until it was torn down in 1851.

Until the St. Louis Theatre was built the city had been dependent on traveling players and troupes, mostly from New Orleans who played St. Louis during the breaks between the established New Orleans season. Several attempts by

³⁸

William G. B. Carson, The Theatre on the Frontier: The Early Years of the St. Louis Stage (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1965), p. 163.

³⁹

Carson provides a detailed account of Ludlow and Smith's experiences in St. Louis.

Ludlow and Smith and a rival manager, James Caldwell of New Orleans, had been made to operate "theatres" over the years. Ludlow and Smith's efforts had been the most consistent in presenting "seasons" in St. Louis and including the city as part of a theatrical circuit with other stops along the river. With a permanent theatre, St. Louis theatre-goers could enjoy a resident stock company playing for a certain number of weeks during the year.

Richard Moody wrote in his book, America Takes The Stage: Romanticism in American Drama and Theatre 1750-1900 that "the American theatre in the nineteenth century with its magic of make-believe and heightened reality was a highly favored form of entertainment...."⁴⁰ The roots of Romanticism extended into the eighteenth century. The American theatre and drama from the period of 1820 to 1840 absorbed every phase of romantic spirit available--"glorification of the 'noble savage', delight in medieval gothicism, exaltation of the Revolution and its heroes and praise for faith in the democratic fight against political and social ⁴¹ tyranny."

Parallel to the dramatic themes were those found in

⁴⁰

Moody, p. vii.

⁴¹

Ibid., p. 28.

the Romantic Ballet: "...man's pursuit of the unattainable, ... complementary to the element of mystery which was such a dominant feature of Romantic art was a preoccupation with the exotic . . . the vogue for Gothic art⁴²

When American Romanticism reached its peak during the thirties and early forties, scenic spectacles, panoramic entertainments, and gaudy displays monopolized the theatres.⁴³ Moody explained that

"the region that gave the vital spark to American romance was that of the ever-enlarging frontier where men were equal in their adventurous struggle for existence where democracy inevitably became their common faith."⁴⁴

The romantic spirit began to dwindle away during the 1850s. After the War Between the States, the American outlook became more realistic, but romantic elements appeared intermittently until the close of the century.⁴⁵

In Europe and America, the Romantic Era in ballet extended for two decades, 1830-1850. George Chaffee wrote in one of his numerous articles about the Romantic Era that during the 1820s, "Paris was its chief creative center and

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Ivor Guest, The Romantic Ballet in Paris (Middletown Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), p. 3.

⁴³

Moody, p. 28.

⁴⁴

Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁵

Ibid., pp. 5-7.

dominating influence, and remained so throughout."⁴⁶ The romantic movement spread quickly; "ballet captivated the world of art and fashion and the entire theatrical public everywhere. On Through the 1850s, if no longer exciting in its novelties, ballet continued to delight."⁴⁷

Alan S. Downer, a theatre historian, wrote

the nineteenth century was primarily a century of great actors rather than great plays, and it is to actors, rather than the playwrights, that we must turn to find the theatrical expression of the spirit of the times.⁴⁸

Downer's theory can be extended to the theatre's sister art in the nineteenth century, dance. The ballerinas embodied much of the spirit of the Romantic Age and they became major vehicles of romanticism.⁴⁹

The styles of acting in the nineteenth century Downer basically divided into two opposite types: the "grand and lofty" and "the natural mode."⁵⁰ The diversity

⁴⁶

George Chaffee, "A Chart to the American Souvenir Lithographs of the Romantic Ballet 1825-1870," Dance Index I (February, 1942), pp. 20-21.

⁴⁷

Ibid., pp. 20-21.

⁴⁸

Alan S. Downer, "Players and Painted Stage: Nineteenth Century Acting," Publications of the Modern Language Association LXI (1946): 522.

⁴⁹

Lecture, Seminar on the "History of Theatrical Dancing in the United States Before 1900," University of Chicago, July 14, 1976.

⁵⁰

Downer., "Player and Painted Stage," p. 568.

of the two styles was in harmony with the ethereal and earthy ideals of the Romantic Era, and flow easily through a major dramatic form of the first half of the century.

Melodrama utilized the simple and ideal world, combining sentimentalism and violent action with realistic

⁵¹ settings. The melodramatic actor, forced by the lack of adequate scripts, developed "a series of rococo gestures

intended to give significance and largeness to his

⁵² performance." The stylization highly resembled a balletic form while showing "the common-placeness of life, love,

⁵³ death, revenge"

In listing the requisites for a nineteenth century actor, Leman Rede suggested that he should be "trained in dancing, singing, fencing, French and music."⁵⁴ The actor often developed "a stylized pattern of movement strongly reminiscent of the ballet."⁵⁵ This pattern of movement was

⁵¹

Lecture, Seminar of the "History of Theatrical Dancing in the United States Before 1900." July 15, 1976.

⁵²

Alan S. Downer, "A Preface to Melodrama," Players Magazine XXI (May, 1945), p. 14.

⁵³

Ibid.

⁵⁴

Leman Thomas Rede, The Guide to the Stage Containing Clear and Ample Instructions for Obtaining Theatrical Engagements, ed. Francis C. Wemyss (New York: O.A. Roorback, Jn'r. (1859), p. 18.

⁵⁵

Alan S. Downer, "A Preface to Melodrama," Players Magazine (February, 1945), p. 13.

used in pantomime, business or "by-play," and melodramatic dancing. The overlap of these genres enabled the dancer to cross the same boundaries as the actor. Many scripts employed a "dumb" role utilizing the dancer's technical skill and pantomime. More often than not, the nineteenth century actor was an accomplished singer and dancer and, likewise, the dancer was a pantomimist and actor.

Therefore, the stock company was a highly efficient organization which performed a wide repertory of works which included Shakespeare and Sheridan, Restoration comedies and melodramas. In addition, equestrian dramas became popular with fancy horsemanship as in Timour the Tartar. Spectacle held a place all of its own in the 1840s. Even earlier, burlesque was popular with such offerings as Buy It Dear 'Tis Made of Cashmere, a parody of the ballet Le Dieu et La Bayadere.⁵⁶ Farces and petit comedies with songs were used as afterpieces or curtain raisers. Operas such as Cinderella, pantomime dramas as Wept of the Wish-ton-Wish and the French Spy remained standards. Theatrical dancing included both fancy dancing and legitimate ballets, hornpipes, national dances, pas seuls, pas de deus and

56

Noah M. Ludlow, Dramatic Life As I Found It, gives a detailed account of his company's parody of the ballet.

57

medleys.

The average theatrical evening featured a full-length play, . . . After the play came the farce or short comic opera (afterpiece). There were also generally other types of entertainment to relish between the parts of the dramatic offerings--always orchestral music and commonly songs, dances or novelty acts. This pattern was dominant.⁵⁸

In the late 1830s Ludlow and Smith presented, among other "stars" in the St. Louis Theatre, Ellen Tree,
59

Edwin Forrest and Madame Celeste. The excitement of stars held a double-edged sword. Stars decreased interest in the regular stock company performances. Yet without the star system in the 1830s and 1840s; towns in the South and West would not have had the opportunity to see these great players in their most outstanding roles. "Audiences of the
60 period liked novelty and excitement . . ."

Ludlow and Smith set the stage for the later development of theatre in St. Louis as well as for the Western theatrical circuit. In their partnership of eighteen years, these innovators developed the professional theatre in St. Louis and Mobile and they contributed to

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Carson, pp. 309-10.

58

Grimsted, p. 99.

59

Carson, p. 285.

60

Grimsted, p. 93.

New Orleans theatre as well as many other southern cities.

The firm of Ludlow and Smith, with its reputation for fiscal reliability and its vigorous efforts to improve the quality of the theatre both on stage and in the audience, raised the standards of the early American theatre.⁶¹

Scene I: St. Louis in 1850

The decade of the fifties was a period of great prosperity. "King Cotton" was the source of fortunes for both the South and the North. In this decade, St. Louis was in the process of finding a new role as a metropolis of ⁶² 77,860 inhabitants. An 1852 engraving of the city of St. Louis from the Illinois shore captures a panoramic view of this newly emerging western city spreading along the shore of the busy Mississippi River (Appendix A). No longer a part of the southern economy, St. Louis, the Emporium of the West, was slowly gaining a place in the growing northern ⁶³ industrial system. The north-south passage of river transportation was well established, and by 1850, St. Louis had become the western terminus for the eastern railroads,

⁶¹

Sol Smith, Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years, 2nd ed. (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1968), p. x.

⁶²

"St. Louis Population," Official Manual of the State of Missouri, 1969-1970.

⁶³

Ryle, p. 22.

giving the city an independence from the South and specifically from New Orleans. St. Louis now had a direct means of communication with the eastern cities and the ⁶⁴ Atlantic coast.

In 1849, a Railroad Convention was held in St. Louis. The outcome of the Convention was that in 1851 ground was ⁶⁵ broken for the Pacific Railroad. "It was not until the idea of a railroad to the west coast came forth, that they perhaps realized that her [St. Louis] economic position did ⁶⁵ not depend upon the river alone."

Scene II: Theatres Old and New

St. Louis Theatre

The St. Louis Theatre was located on the southeast corner of Third and Olive Streets. The building of the theatre was funded by subscription. Colonel Meriweather Lewis Clarke and Colonel Keemle led the fund-raising drive. Subscribers invested over \$65,000 to build the first ⁶⁷ "temple of the muse" west of the Mississippi River. The

⁶⁴

Ryle, p. 56.

⁶⁵

Reavis, p. 66.

⁶⁶

Ross, p. 25.

⁶⁷

Noah M. Ludlow, Dramatic Life As I Found It, 2nd ed., Richard Moody (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1966), pp. 476-7.

foundation was laid during the fall of 1836 and building continued until winter. When the building which the company had been using for a theatre, known as the old salt house, burned in February 1837, Ludlow returned to St. Louis in April to personally supervise the work on the new theatre so ⁶⁸ that it might be ready for the summer season.

Ludlow described the St. Louis Theatre in his book, Dramatic Life As I Found It. The facade of the theatre had been designed to display "four magnificent Corinthian columns, intended to support a grand front portico." Colonel Clarke insisted upon having a "grand front to the ⁶⁹ building," to make it "an ornament to the city." He even proposed to pay for them himself. However, the theatre front was never finished as originally proposed. The columns remained stored in the basement of the theatre. An illustration of the St. Louis Theatre (in Appendix B) shows the theatre with the columns as it was originally designed.

The entrance to the theatre was through a large vestibule from which three large doors opened into a lobby on the first tier. In the lobby, stairwells on either side led to the second tier. Through the lobby and the center of

68

Noah M. Ludlow, Dramatic Life As I Found It, 2nd ed., Richard Moody (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1966), p. 475.

69

Ludlow, p. 476.

the first tier was a passage to the parquette. An outside entrance of winding stairs afforded passage to the gallery
70 tier.

On the first tier, a ladies retiring room was furnished with refreshments and conveniences suited to such visitors." On the second tier, a saloon was furnished for gentlemen. Both saloons closed before the end of the first
71 season in the theatre.

Little information exists about the stage house. The stage measured 45 feet deep. The scenery was a set of
72 eight pairs of center-scenes and wings or side scenes.

The stage lighting used spirit gas, since coal gas had not been introduced into the city. Footlights in square tin boxes lit the front of the stage. A similar device, but triangular in shape with reflectors, hung behind each
73 wing.

From the only available description of the St. Louis Theatre the interior seemed similar to others built in the early nineteenth century. The physical stage employed none of the innovations which developed during the first half of

70

Ludlow, pp. 476-477.

71

Ibid.

72

Ibid.

73

Ibid.

the century, but were not utilized until the latter part of the century.

The Bates Theatre

In 1851, John Bates of Cincinnati erected a theatre on Pine Street between Third and Fourth. Before coming to St. Louis, Mr. Bates had prospered in the confectionary and soda-water business, followed by a brief but flourishing partnership in the banking business. However, his foreign partner hastily departed, taking the assets with him, and was later found in comfortable circumstances in a distant country,⁷⁴ while Bates settled the accounts in Cincinnati.

After these two business experiences, Mr. Bates erected a theatre which he also managed in Cincinnati. Ludlow commented that Mr. Bates' new profession "proved unprofitable."⁷⁵ Undaunted by this business failure, Bates began inquiring in 1848 about building another theatre in St. Louis so as to compete with Ludlow and Smith and "reap a portion of the great harvest which was erroneously reported that they were making in that city."⁷⁶

The theatre, designed by Messrs. Peck and Barnett,

⁷⁴

Ludlow, p. 708.

⁷⁵

Ibid., p. 709.

⁷⁶

Ibid.

reflected a variety of architectural styles: Greek, Roman
 and French Renaissance.⁷⁷ A picture of the Bates Theatre
 appears in Appendix B.

Sol Smith wrote that Mr. Bates "took measurements
 freely at our house;"⁷⁸ therefore, it was not surprising
 that the new theatre had similar dimensions. The frontage
 measured 70 feet by 131 feet deep. The auditorium
 accommodated 2500 people.⁷⁹

The new theatre had three entrances: a center
 entrance led to the box office, a west entrance was for the
 dress circle patrons and the east entrance provided a
 passage to the second and third tiers or to the pit.
 Parlors were located on either side of these entrances for
 the audience's comfort and convenience.⁸⁰

The interior of the theatre "teemed with elegance
 and convenience excelling anything before seen in
 St. Louis."⁸¹ The theatre was carpeted and furnished with
 comfortable, cushioned seats. The seats were arranged in
 three tiers of boxes, each seven seats deep, "with a

⁷⁷
Herbstruth, p. 28.

⁷⁸
Smith, p. 223.

⁷⁹
Herbstruth, p. 28.

⁸⁰
Daily Missouri Republican, 13 October 1850.

⁸¹
Ibid., 10 January 1851.

splendid saloon on each tier, where parties, between the acts, were furnished creams, fruits, and all varieties of refreshments."⁸² On each tier, an anteroom served as a cloakroom for patrons.

Although sixty-three iron columns supported the tiers, there was no obstruction of the view of the stage.⁸³ A dome covered part of the auditorium; it measured 55 feet by 40 feet and rose 65 feet above the pit.

The stage measured 53 feet by 60 feet deep, large enough to accomodate the most spectacular productions. The drop curtain pictured a "splendid view of the City of Venice," painted by Mr. Leslie, the scenic designer for the theatre.⁸⁴ For the stage lighting, Bates introduced a series of gas jets in a trough. The stage house contained little backstage area and no private dressing rooms, except one for the star.⁸⁵

Bates opened his theatre on 5 January, 1851. Not enjoying the financial success which he had hoped, Bates offered the theatre for sale in 1853. When no bidders appeared, he remodeled and redecorated the building in hopes

⁸² Daily Missouri Republican, 10 January 1851.

⁸³ Ibid., 13 October 1850.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 9 January 1851.

⁸⁵ Herbstruth, p. 30.

of increasing patronage. In December of that year, after a heavy accumulation of snow, the roof and dome crashed down into the parquette. Sol Smith had predicted this calamity during the construction of the theatre.⁸⁷ Fortunately, the theatre was empty at the time of the catastrophe.

The cause of the accident was attributed to two knotted pine trusses which extended across the entire building without any direct support. An inspection of the remainder of the building assessed it to be structurally sound.⁸⁸

In 1853, the Bates Theatre was put up for sale. At that time, Benedict De Bar, actor and later manager, was interested in buying the theatre so he could open a summer season in St. Louis and then lease it out for the remainder of the year. Although Bates asked unreasonable terms for the theatre, De Bar and Bates had reached an agreement by 1855.

On June 21, 1856, "in consideration of \$45,000" De Bar purchased the land and the theatre. De Bar changed

86

Daily Missouri Republican, 26 September 1853.

87

Smith, p. 223.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 13 December 1853.

the name of the theatre to the St. Louis.

Varieties Theatre

After Ludlow and Smith's final season in the old St. Louis Theatre, the theatre re-opened in the fall of 1851 under the direction of Joseph M. Field who brought a company from the Varieties Theatre in New Orleans.

Joseph M. Field, born in England in 1810, came to the United States as a child. In 1836, he married Eliza Riddle, a popular actress on the New Orleans and St. Louis stage. Mr. Field made his debut at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia on September 7, 1843, as an actor. During his lifetime he was also an author, editor and theatrical manager. His management career was relatively brief, starting in 1851 and lasting until he died in
90
Mobile, Alabama, in 1856.

Mr. Field proposed to the theatre-going society of St. Louis that they build a theatre by subscription. The stockholders would be accorded certain privileges such as free admission to the theatre, reserved seats in the front of the house, box or parquette, use of an elegant clubhouse,

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Herbstruth, p. 37. "Benedict De Bar and the Grand Opera House in St. Louis, Missouri, From 1855-1879" provides an excellent study of De Bar's management career.

90

T. Allston Brown, Brown's History of the American Stage (New York: Burt Franklin, 1969; reprint ed.), p. 122.

and the right to sell their stock. By the end of ten years, Field would reimburse the stockholders the amount of capital stock with accumulated interest which would retain sole ownership of the property.

The Varieties Dramatic Association held its first formal meeting on June 10, 1851. The Association leased a lot on the south side of Broadway between Fifth and Sixth Streets. Architecturally, the Varieties Theatre was modeled after Barthelemy's Theatre in Paris. The front of the building was decorated in an early Italian style. The frontage of the building measured 72 feet by 140 feet. Three staircases ascended to the entrance of the theatre. The only available picture of the Varieties Theatre (Appendix B) is from the 1870s when it was operated as De Bar's Grand Opera House.

Inside the theatre, two stairwells, one on either side of the lobby, provided separate access to the tiers as well as the galleries. The interior of the theatre was

⁹¹

J. Thomas Scharf. History of St. Louis City and County From The Earliest Periods to The Present Day. Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts and Co., 1883), p. 979.

⁹²

Ibid.

⁹³

Daily Missouri Republican, 12 April 1852.

⁹⁴

Herbstruth, p. 54.

designed in an oval shape. The seating arrangement included three tiers and a parquette which easily accommodated 1600 people. Cushioned arm chairs furnished the theatre except in the galleries.

The parquette had the particular feature which permitted it to convert to the level of the stage floor, therefore creating a ballroom.

The act curtain, painted by Leon Pomarede, depicted the blissful periods of a whole lifetime. The painting entitled "Dream of Happiness" showed thirty-six figures employed in various tasks symbolic of Science, Love, Industry and Philosophy posed in the foreground of the Temple of Fame.

The theatre was elegantly decorated in gold and white. A ladies' saloon was located on the dress circle level. Off the saloon, several boudoirs allowed ladies to retire between the acts.

The Varieties Theatre opened under the management of J. M. Field on May 10, 1852, and the first season terminated

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Daily Missouri Republican, 12 April 1852.

⁹⁶

Ibid., 4 September, 1853.

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Scharf, p. 997.

⁹⁸

Daily Missouri Republican, 4 September 1853.

⁹⁹

Ibid.

on June 13, with Field having suffered a financial loss.

Ludlow attributed the loss to a combination of a very

expensive company, ill-assorted material "that proved

impractical and vexatious to it's [the theatre's]

¹⁰⁰

working." Charles Krone, a contemporary actor,

remembered that the people of St. Louis believed the

elaborate theatre was erected for only a "fashionable

audience," and that Field did not care to have a "man who

wore a check shirt inside." Soon word spread to theatre-

goers and the theatre emptied from the gallery on down to

the parquette. Despite the spectacular entertainment to

¹⁰¹

which Field resorted, the theatre remained nearly empty.

The Varieties Theatre closed for two years after

its 1853 season. In 1855, Dr. Henry Boernstein opened the

theatre, which presented German amateur talent by the

¹⁰²

Philo-Dramatic Society. After an unsuccessful season,

the theatre closed again and only periodically opened for

special visiting attractions and public balls.

In the 1860s, Messrs. George Deagle and George Martin reopened the theatre as Deagle's Variety Theatre.

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Ludlow, p. 729.

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Charles A. Krone, "Recollections of an Old Actor,"
Missouri Historical Society Collection, II (St. Louis:
Missouri Historical Society, 1906-1911), pp. 39-40.

¹⁰²

Krone, "Recollections," III, p. 66.

People's Theatre

On the site of Stokes' Amphitheatre, where circus and equestrian performances were held, Dr. G. T. Collins announced in the fall of 1852 that he would erect a new theatre. The People's Theatre was located on Olive Street between Third and Fourth.¹⁰³ The frontage of the building measured 76-1/2 feet with a depth of 128 feet, which made the theatre larger than any other in St. Louis.¹⁰⁴ A picture of the People's Theatre in 1852 appears in Appendix B.

The theatre seated 2500 people. On the ground floor, 1000 people could be accommodated in the parquette. The dress circle seated 500 patrons in arm chairs; and the gallery provided seating for another 1000 people.¹⁰⁵

No information could be found about the stage house except the house curtain. The act drop was painted by scenic artist Mr. Laidlaw of the theatre. The subject was set at ancient Messina near Rome and was enclosed in a gorgeous frame of carved work. Father Mississippi and the State of Missouri were represented as allegorical figures

¹⁰³
Scharf, p. 982.

¹⁰⁴
Daily Missouri Republican, 8 December 1852.

¹⁰⁵
Ibid.

surrounded with beautiful drapery.

The theatre opened on December 8, 1852. The proprietors announced a policy of lower admission prices than the other St. Louis theatres, in hopes of attracting the patronage of the working classes. Unfortunately, the low prices of admission proved to be a contributing factor in the theatre's failure.

The low prices appealed to the local rowdies and undesirable transients who looked upon theatre as a place to stroll in and out of at will, creating 107 disturbance and disrupting theatrical performances.

A rapid succession of theatre managers between 1852 and 1854 further added to the theatre's dissipation.

George Collins was soon relieved as manager by Dr. John R. Atkinson, about whom Ludlow quipped that the "gentleman 108 understood more about pills than he did about plays."

Atkinson was replaced by Miss Julia Bennet, who was succeeded in 1854 by George Wood. Mr. Wood had been a hotel owner; he reopened the theatre in 1854. Ludlow implied that Woods' wife, Eliza Logan, contributed her theatrical know-how 109 to his hotel managerial experiences. However, Herbstruth

106

Playbill, People's Theatre, Missouri Historical Society, 10 December 1852.

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Herbstruth, p. 22.

108

Ludlow, p. 720.

109

Ibid., p. 730.

contended that because of the reputation which the People's Theatre had acquired, Wood was only able to achieve a moderate success during the years he managed it. In 1860, the theatre was converted into a bowling alley and saloon.

The citizens of St. Louis had been able to enjoy theatrical entertainment most of the year at the St. Louis Theatre since 1837. When the theatre was torn down in 1851, almost immediately three new theatres replaced this first theatre west of the Mississippi. These imposing edifices offered a total seating capacity of 6000 seats to the public on a single evening in comfortable accommodations of the period. In these lavishly decorated surroundings, the patron could partake of equally fine theatrical entertainments which each of the theatres offered St. Louisians.

Divertissements

Some of the most prominent nineteenth century dance artists performed in St. Louis. These dancers often performed at more than one theatre and returned over a period of years for several engagements. What especial attraction did this young city and its theatres hold to entice these

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Herbstruth, p. 22.

accomplished stars to make the journey to St. Louis, which guarded the last vertige of culture on the edge of the vast western frontier?

The St. Louis Theatre 1850-1851

The Daily Missouri Republican, the St. Louis daily newspaper, issued the following:

It is respectfully announced to the public, that the ST. LOUIS THEATRE tastefully repainted and refitted will be opened for the Spring and Summer Season on or about Monday, the 8 of April.¹¹¹

The opening night at the St. Louis was Tuesday, April 9. The first performance of the season by the dramatic company did not include any dance. Throughout much of April, the company's stars, Miss Eliza Logan, Mr. Cornelius Logan, Mr. Joseph M. Field and Mrs. Field played dramas. On Sundays the theatre was dark. In May, the theatrical bills began to include songs and an opera troupe, supported by the resident company. The season ended on July 4, for which the ¹¹² Theatre billed a "Glorious Fourth--Great Attraction."

The fall season at the St. Louis opened on July 20. The management announced it had engaged, for a limited number of nights, Mr. Ben De Bar and Mademoiselle H. Valle [sic]. Vallée made her first appearance in the city in a

¹¹¹

Daily Missouri Republican, April 5, 1850.

¹¹²

Ibid., April 9- July 4, 1850.

grand pas seul of La Giselle and a "Caledonian Fling."

Benedict De Bar was an actor, manager and dancer in his youth. Born in England, November 5, 1812, he came to the United States in 1835 with his mother and sister Clementine, who later married Junius Booth, Jr. The New Orleans manager, James H. Caldwell, hired De Bar for the St. Charles Theatre company. De Bar became known on the New Orleans stage for his equestrian feats, low comic roles, burlesque and in the later years of his life for his interpretation of "Falstaff." After working several years for Caldwell and in New York, De Bar joined Ludlow and Smith at their American Theatre in New Orleans, and in 1841 he played his first season in St. Louis. De Bar's first wife, Mrs. Conduit, was an English singer, who died enroute from St. Louis to New Orleans.¹¹⁴ De Bar's second wife was ¹¹⁵ Henrietta Vallée.

Vallée made her debut with her two sisters, Julia and Eliza in the corps de ballet of the Chestnut Street

¹¹³

Daily Missouri Republican, 20 July, 1850.

¹¹⁴

Gayle Kassing, "Benedict De Bar and Henrietta Vallée: Portraits from Nineteenth Century St. Louis Theatrical History," paper submitted for Seminar of Theatrical Dancing in America Before 1900, University of Chicago, 1976.

¹¹⁵

A number of spellings have been used for this surname. Vallée will be used in this study, except for newspaper advertisements and articles which did not include an accent in the spelling of Vallée.

Theatre in 1836. Charles Durang, in his History of the Philadelphia Stage Between the Years 1749 and 1855, wrote that the sisters were "very pretty dancers and pretty looking girls, one especially so very sylphlike in appearance."¹¹⁶ Which sister he was referring to can only be a guess.

While dancing at the Chestnut Street Theatre, the sisters may have studied with P. H. Hazard, a dancer and teacher in Philadelphia who had been a member of the Paris Opera corps de ballet. Hazard staged the dances for the Chestnut Street Theatre.

When the Romantic Ballerina, Fanny Elssler, visited Philadelphia in the early 1840s, she engaged the three Vallée sisters and George Washington Smith as part of her corps de ballet. After dancing with Elssler, Vallée danced at various theatres in New York City. In 1843, she married De Bar. For the next sixteen years, their careers complemented one another on the boards of the New York, New Orleans and St. Louis stages. They often shared the same bill and even acted and danced in the same pieces of repertory. Not only did Vallée excel as a dancer, but also she performed pantomime drama and, in her later years,

¹¹⁶

Charles Durang, History of Philadelphia Stage 1752 to 1852 (New York: O. A. Roorback pub., 1852), p. 281.

walking ladies parts. A photographic portrait of Henrietta Vallée appears in Appendix C.

The second night of the fall season at the St. Louis, Vallée repeated the pas seul from La Giselle and joined her husband in The Dumb Girl of Genoa, De Bar playing the drunken corporal, "Stapado," and Vallée playing "Juliette," a dumb girl, performed in pantomime. Previously, De Bar and Vallée had played this piece in both Philadelphia and New York. The next evening, Vallée danced the celebrated Elssler favorite, "Cracovienne," and a "Spanish Bolero."¹¹⁸

The authenticity of Vallée's "Cracovienne" to that of Elssler's can only be surmised although she must have seen Elssler perform the dance first hand on numerous occasions. Wept of the Wish-ton-Wish, with De Bar as "Satisfaction Skunk" and Vallée as "Naramattah," appeared in the next performance.¹¹⁹ A pantomimic drama set in Puritan America provided a vehicle for the pantomimic actress who plays a Puritan girl captured by the Indians and who has lost her speech. Another standard of the couple's repertory, they had played in Philadelphia and New York. Durang

117

Kassing, "Benedict De Bar and Henrietta Vallée."

118

Daily Missouri Republican, 22-23 July 1850.

119

Ibid., 24 July 1850.

commented that Vallée played the role "with much excellence and affording great promise." It was, of course, "an imitation of the original, yet she gave many beauties of the ¹²⁰ naivete that demanded praise."

Finally, performing a pas seul from "La Tyrolean," perhaps similar to a version George Washington Smith had choreographed, and then a "Spanish Dance," Vallée vanished, neither dancing for De Bar's benefit on July 27 or for the ¹²¹ rest of his engagement which lasted until August 2.

Vallée's dancing had been influenced by dancing with Celeste, Elssler, George Washington Smith and others. She may have studied with Hazard in Philadelphia and even perhaps Sylvain, Elssler's ballet master, when the troupe toured. Vallée's repertory of ballet pieces interjected new life into the bills of the St. Louis and later at the Bates Theatre in her collaboration with Sallie St. Clair, another fine dancer.

During the remainder of the fall season, only a duet entitled "Comic Pas de Deux," performed by Mr. and Mrs. White was presented; the next month Mr. and Mrs. Chapman danced the same work, both couples members of the St. Louis Company.

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Durang, Philadelphia Stage, p. 287.

¹²¹

Daily Missouri Republican, 25 July-2 August 1850.

The St. Louis Theatre closed on October 28. The company left for New Orleans and for its season which opened in November.

When the ice began breaking up on the river and spring was on its way, the first announcement for the St. Louis Theatre in 1851 appeared in the Daily Missouri Republican on March 4:

We learn that it is the intention of Messrs. Ludlow and Smith to open this theatre sometime during the present month. We have not heard the names of any of their company, but presume it will embrace the old favorites. They will begin with the celebrated French ballet troupe, which has turned the heads of half the people at New Orleans. We are waiting patiently their arrival.¹²³

On March 29, an advance advertisement appeared which notified the public that for a few nights only Mademoiselle Celestine Franck from the Grand Opera in Paris and Monsieur Leon Espinosa, the distinguished Comic Dancer from the Theatre Porte-Saint Martin would appear. Other members of the troupe included Mlles. Victorine Franck, Christine Ludlan, Jenny Espinosa and Messrs. Zavistowski and Gredelise. The entire troupe was supported by an "efficient corps de ballet."¹²⁴ The troupe arrived on the

¹²² Daily Missouri Republican, 3 August-28 October 1850.

¹²³ Ibid., 4 March 1850.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 29 March 1850.

steamer "Iowa" and was engaged for nine performances.

Celestine Franck, who had appeared at the Paris Opera, made her American debut in the ballet Ondine with Leon Espinosa on September 23, 1850, at the Astor Place ¹²⁵ Opera House. "The occasion was the first American appearance of a French ballet company, which was imported by Max Maretzek, the leading operatic impresario of New York at ¹²⁶ that time."¹²⁷

Figaro, a theatrical journal, described Celestine Franck as

without doubt the most fascinating danseuse we have had in this country; she has not the talent as a dancer of Fanny Elssler, nor a pantomimist of Blangy, but she is young, fresh, fair and beautifully formed . . . and evidently been educated in the most modern French school. Her poses were beautiful, and the firmness of her step, the rapidity and aplomb of her pirouettes remarkable. . . .¹²⁷

Leon Espinosa was Franck's partner. He was born in the Hague, Holland, of Spanish parents on June 6, 1825. He trained at the Paris Opera with Coulon, Henri, Perrot, ¹²⁸ Coralli, Taglioni Père and Lucien Petipa. Espinosa,

¹²⁵ Lillian Moore, "Leon Espinosa in America," Dancing Times, March, 1951, p. 333.

¹²⁶

Ibid.

¹²⁷

Ibid., p. 334.

¹²⁸

Edouard Espinosa, "Leon Espinosa: The Story of a Great Dancer," Dancing Times, December, 1942, p. 104.

however, presented himself as from the Theatre Porte-St. Martin, a theatre which he joined later in his career. Espinosa's son recalled, "Theodore de Banville described him [Espinosa] in his "Cameos Parisiens" as 'A nose with a little man on the end of it and a dancer never equalled.'" Espinosa's description fit; his height was 4 feet 10 inches and his nose was large, as portrayed in one photograph. He has been "acknowledged as the most extraordinary danseur of his period" and even by today's standards; his elevation was 18 inches from toes to ground and he could execute 12
¹²⁹
entrechats and 12 pirouettes.

Espinosa performed in France, Italy, England, Russia and extensively in the United States. Later in his life he returned to England where he danced and staged some of the
¹³⁰
first Russian dances seen in that country.

On April 2, opening night at the St. Louis Theatre, the evening began with a dramatic piece by the company followed by the ballet Les Amours de Village, choreographed by J. B. Blache and originally produced at the Theatre de la
¹³¹
Porte-Saint Martin on September 15, 1821. The evening

¹²⁹

Edouard Espinosa, "Leon Espinosa: The Story of a Great Dancer," Dancing Times, December, 1942, p. 104.

¹³⁰

Ibid., p. 105.

¹³¹

Guest, p. 273.

concluded with a grand "Pas Tyrolienne," performed by
 132 Celestine and Victorine Franck and Espinosa.

The following evening, the company performed the same bill but substituted the concluding piece with a
 133 "Pas Sicilienne," performed by Celestine and Espinosa.

Les Willies, the subtitle for Giselle, which Coralli choreographed in 1841 with Celestine Franck as "Giselle," graced the next evening's performance, which concluded with a comic ballet, Les Meters (The Millers), perhaps a well-worn 134 version of Jean-Baptiste Blache choreography of 1787, with Franck and Espinosa as the principal characters. The company repeated this program the following evening, April 5.

Being complimentary, yet uncommitted to Franck's artistic talent, the press previewed her visit reporting that throughout the East and South, she "had invariably been 135 conceded a place at the head of her profession." After the performance of Giselle, the Daily Missouri Republican reported:

132

Daily Missouri Republican, 2 April 1851.

133

Ibid., 3 April 1851.

134

Ibid., 4 April 1851.

135

Ibid., 2 April 1851.

To see a handsome face, made striking attractive by its expression of spiritual intelligence; to admire an elegant figure, rendered a hundredfold more charming by the exceeding grace which regulates its every movement, to witness the combination of every natural gift--of every bewitching accomplishment necessary to the perfection of a danseuse--one must see the captivating genius . . . has by no means exaggerated the merits of this artiste.¹³⁶

Opening the week, Monday, April 7, the troupe performed Mazilier's ballet pantomime, Le Diable a Quatre (The Devil to Pay), followed by a "Grand Pas de Fare" or Dances of the King's Fair with Espinosa and all the ladies of the troupe. The evening's performance was a benefit for Franck. Again the newspaper extolled Franck's beauty and art, sharing its praise with Espinosa as "a marvel of activity and suppleness."¹³⁷ The next evening, another full evening of ballets included La Fete Des Roses, The Poisoned Goblet and Le Fils De L'Accaldo, a comic ballet starring Espinosa. On April 10, Espinosa took his benefit and the troupe offered "entirely new" ballets to the St. Louis audience: La Dupe De La Danse with the "Goddess" danced by Franck; Jeannette by Espinosa and supported by the whole ballet company. Un Marriage Chinois followed, the evening ending with La Jota Arragonnaise, danced by the principals

¹³⁶

Daily Missouri Republican, 5 April 1851.

¹³⁷

Ibid., 7 April 1851.

of the troupe--Celestine and her sister Victorine,
¹³⁸
 Christian Ludlan and Espinosa.

The last appearance of the troupe was coupled with Franck's farewell benefit on April 11. The program comprised works from the repertory. The following evening the troupe appeared yet another time, for Mr. Eytinge's benefit. Mr. Eytinge was a member of the St. Louis company which the Daily Missouri Republican pronounced "an exceedingly agreeable comedian." The newspaper commended the Parisian Ballet Troupe for volunteering to perform an evening of new ballets--Grand Ballade Oriental, Pas de Jou
¹³⁹
Pas Sicillienne.

Although the press wrote that members of the troupe "have waited in town one day longer expressly to volunteer
¹⁴⁰
 their valuable aid for the talent beneficiary," perhaps another reason was to await for a steamer to depart down the river.

The St. Louis company continued to play their dramatic repertory through the months of April and May. In the middle of June, Benedict De Bar and his wife, Henrietta Vallée returned to St. Louis for a week. Their

¹³⁸ Daily Missouri Republican, 8-10 April 1851.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 11-12 April 1851.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 12 April 1851.

opening night, Vallée danced a popular dance from La Bayadere. De Bar and Vallée performed the Wept of the Wish-ton Wish. During the remainder of their short engagement, Vallée danced La Giselle, "Caledonian Fling" and played in the Dumb Girl of Genoa with De Bar.¹⁴¹

The St. Louis Theatre closed for the last time on July 10, 1851. The building was to be demolished and in its place to be built a new customs house for the city. Smith wrote about the last season in the first theatre west of the Mississippi:

I fully expected this, our last season in St. Louis, would be a sad failure, in view of the opposition of the new theatre [Bates]; but I was greatly surprised to find, upon our opening, all seemed to desert the new house and come to the old one. Celestine Franck and troupe (with Espinosa), the Bateman children, C. Burke, Collins, Mrs. Farren, Miss Davenport, Macallister, and De Bar, all played to paying business, while the new theatre lingered through a miserable season, playing to a 'beggarly account of empty boxes.'¹⁴²

Before the theatre was wrecked, Joseph M. Field, a member of Ludlow and Smith's company leased the St. Louis as a temporary theatre until the new Varieties Theatre was completed. The Daily Missouri Republican reported on September 15, 1851, that Mr. George Holland, from the New Orleans Varieties, and J. M. Field had restored the

¹⁴¹

Daily Missouri Republican, 12 April 1851.

¹⁴²

Smith, p. 224.

St. Louis Theatre and would open for a short season that evening which lasted through October 18.¹⁴³ When the Old St. Louis Theatre closed its doors for the last time, an era of St. Louis theatrical history ended. The pioneer spirit of determination to bring theatre to the West had been accomplished by the often daring exploits of two men, Noah Ludlow and Sol Smith, whose efforts made an important contribution to American theatrical history. The partnership of Ludlow and Smith had come to represent a standard of excellence, artistically and managerially, that enabled them to engage many of the finest stars to play in their theatres for almost thirty years in St. Louis and throughout the South and West.

The Bates Theatre

1851

The formal opening of the Bates Theatre was January 10, 1851. The Daily Missouri Republican reported "the performance gave satisfaction as evidenced by the marked attention and order which prevailed throughout." On the opening night, Mlle. Oceana, the principal dancer of the theatre, danced between the acts. The press described her as "a beautiful girl, endowed with every grace to ensure her

143

Daily Missouri Republican, 15 September-18
October 1851.

success as an artist."

The Spirit of the Times, a New York newspaper of the period, carried this extract from a private letter dated Fort Leavenworth, July 26, 1844:

. . . To an attentive and highly gifted corps were united about two weeks alone, Mr. and Mrs. Bennie, Pantomimists and Dancers, who have displayed their powers (the Mrs. at least), at the St. Charles (New Orleans) and the other Western theatres. But the 'Bright-particular star' is La Bella Oceana (Miss Smith) daughter of Mrs. Bennie. She has danced herself right into our affections, and produced such an excitement as Leavenworth has never known, nor never will forget. The dancing is excellent, graceful and captivating--she appears in all the 'divine Fanny's' favorite dances, and it is no flattery to say, the comparison is very respectable. She is a precocious genius, uniting with the dancing facilities, very fair comic abilities.¹⁴⁵

The Bennies had performed both in New Orleans and in St. Louis and were part of the troupe which played the first year in the St. Louis Theatre, 1837.

In 1845, La Belle Oceana and Mr. Bennie performed a grand pas de deux at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia.

In November, 1846, Mlle. Oceana performed The Gazelle [sic] with Mademoiselle Blangy, Mons. Hazard and Oceana as Myrtha.¹⁴⁷ By 1848, Oceana and Bennie appeared at the

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Daily Missouri Republican, 12 January 1852.

¹⁴⁵

Spirit of the Times, 31 August 1844, Lillian Moore Collection.

¹⁴⁶

Carson, p. 185.

¹⁴⁷

Durang, Vol. 5, p. 264.

Bowery Theatre in New York. The Spirit of the Times
 reported, "Mlle. Oceana is indeed a graceful danseuse."¹⁴⁸

After dancing in the East, La Bella Oceana returned to St. Louis where she danced at the Bates and the People's Theatres from 1851 until the spring of 1857. According to Brown's History of The American Stage, La Oceana married Charles Petire in St. Louis on January 26, 1863.¹⁴⁹ The following year, she appeared at the Varieties Theatre in New York, acting in Mazeppa and the French Spy on Horseback.¹⁵⁰ In 1869, she left for California.¹⁵¹

Mlle. Oceana continued to perform "Dancing" between the dramatic fare at the Bates Theatre. On January 18, the press continued to criticise the lack of acoustics in the theatre but in the same article "payed a merited tribute to Mlle. Oceana, she owes her rapid rise in popular favor to her artistic accomplishments but ever without her savoir faire as an experienced danseuse, her charming figure would alone have been all sufficient to secure the warm admiration of her audience. Miss Oceana is a valuable member of our

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Spirit of the Times, 13 March 1847.

¹⁴⁹

Brown, p. 268.

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George C. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, Vols. IV, V, VI, VII (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), Vol. VII, p. 185.

¹⁵¹

Brown, p. 268.

¹⁵² theatrical troupe." Throughout January and February, Oceana appeared nightly. On February 24, a trio of dancers from New Orleans joined the Bates company: Monsieur Bouxary, Miss Julia Vallée and Monsieur Canne.

Bouxary's first appearance in Philadelphia in February 1848 was in the role of "Prince Albert" in the ¹⁵³ ballet Giselle at the Walnut Street Theatre. In the summer of 1848 a Miss Vallée returned to Philadelphia to play at the Walnut Street Theatre. In the fall of that year, Miss Vallée, Bouxary and Madame Augusta toured the South and West, playing in St. Louis in October. Durang described Bouxary as "a clever dancer and pantomimist," who married one of the Misses Vallée. Obviously it was not Hattie who Bouxary married, which left Julia or Eliza. Durang confessed, "Which of them Bouxary married we do not know, but after their professional peregrination throughout the Union, Bouxary and wife located themselves in New Orleans and taught the accomplishments of private ¹⁵⁴ dancing [sic]" It is almost certain that Julia was the sister Bouxary married, since both their names appear as dancing artists at New Orleans theatres.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 13-18 January 1851.

¹⁵³

Brown, p. 42.

¹⁵⁴

Durang, p. 281.

Oceana joined the group in a "Terpsichorean Melange" on February 27. The press reviewed the dancing as a "pleasant relief to the other parts of amusements."¹⁵⁵

The Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind, who was performing in St. Louis at Wyman's Hall, drew audiences from all the theatres. Although the press was interested in her every move, the newspaper still found room in the Amusements column to write:

The dancing by Monsieurs Bouxary and Canne and Mademoiselles Valle [sic] and Oceana is nightly welcomed with decided zest. Oceana, by the by, has grown to be a universal favorite among play-goers. Everybody appears to admire her for the exquisite grace of her dance and not a few have fallen in love with her for her bewitching smile. She is certainly a very accomplished danseuse, and in the popularity she enjoys finds only her just deserts.¹⁵⁶

On March 15, the ballet dancers performed the Magic Trumpet which they played until April 12. The billing, which advertised Bates' Theatre, implied that Bouxary, Vallée and Canne had been hired as part of the resident stock company. Bates may have used the dancers merely as a drawing card for the opening season of his theatre, and when he began to lose money as Smith contended, may have had to let the dancers go.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 27 February 1851.

¹⁵⁶

Ibid., 4 March 1851.

¹⁵⁷

Ibid., 5 March-12 April 1851.

Oceana appeared infrequently when the next attraction, the Sequin Opera Troupe played at the Bates Theatre. From May 1⁴ until June 2, Oceana did not appear. On June 4 she took her benefit playing Don Juan or The Liberties Destroyed, performing the title role of "Don Juan." The season continued to dwindle away with scattered performances by Oceana until June 29, when she performed two favorite dances before the theatre closed for the summer.

158

Bates Theatre

1851-1852

When Bates reopened the theatre in October, the fare
159 was strictly drama. In the new year of 1852, Bates began offering more variety than dramatic entertainment at his theatre. In the middle of January Mr. T. L. Booth performed a medley of songs and dance which caricatured such celebrated dancers as Fanny Elssler, Mlle. Blangy and Mlle. Augusta. His performance ended with a "solo on the
160 Bones."

Except for Mr. Booth's entertainment, dancing did

158

Daily Missouri Republican, 12 April-29 June 1851.

159

Ibid., 15 October-31 December 1851.

160

Ibid., 23 April-3 May 1852.

not appear on the board until April when Mlle. St. Clair, billed as "the celebrated Danseuse," performed the ¹⁶¹ "Jenny Lind Polka." The following Monday, April 26, she performed a "Hungarian Polka." From her balletic repertory, St. Clair performed dances entitled "La Gitana" and "La Vivandiere," before returning to fancy dances on subsequent evenings such as "Ethiopian Medley," "Polka Nationale" and ¹⁶² "Scotch Pas Seul."

Sallie St. Clair was born in England in 1831 and was ¹⁶³ brought to the United States as an infant. In 1844 she played the Park Theatre and Palmo's Opera House in New York. She joined the Monplaisir Troupe as a first dancer in 1847 and toured as far west as New Orleans. After dancing in St. Louis in the early 1850s, she began playing dramatic roles. In 1857 she returned to New York's Burton's New Theatre and the Bowery. Miss St. Clair's range of dramatic fare was wide. In Odell's opinion, "if she were Julia Dean and Celeste rolled into one, she could not have attempted a ¹⁶⁴ more versatile exhibition." In 1860 she married

¹⁶¹

Daily Missouri Republican, 23 April-3 May 1852.

¹⁶²

Ibid.

¹⁶³

Bud Barbee, "St. Louis Drama in 1861 and 1862." (M.A. dissertation, Washington University, 1949), p. 87.

¹⁶⁴

Odell, VII p. 41.

165

Charles Barras, author of The Black Crook. She died in
 Buffalo, New York, on April 9, 1867. A picture of
 Sallie St. Clair appears in Appendix C.

Until early June, St. Clair performed dances such as "Cracovienne," "La Sylphide," "La Bayadere," "La Sylvia," "Bolero in Cadiz" and "La Griselle or Gizelle" after which the Local News column contained the item "a fine dance, by a
 166
 finer dancer."¹⁶⁷ Whatever resemblance these dances had to the original ballets must be conjecture. Nevertheless, the fact remains that St. Clair had performed with the Monplaisir Troupe and in the New York theatres where she came in contact with the ballets and dances which became the nucleus for her repertory when she joined the Bates Theatre as its principal dancer. These dances from ballets were interspersed with fancy dances on national themes such as "La Espaniola," "Ethiopian Medley," "Irish Medley" and a "Sylvian Hornpipe."

Throughout the month of June, 1852, and well into July, a rivalry seemed to exist between the Varieties Theatre and the Bates Theatre as recorded in the Daily Missouri Republican. On June 9, the newspaper reported:

165

Odell, VII p. 41.

166

Francis S. Wemyss, Scrapbook (University of Chicago) III, n.p.

167

Daily Missouri Republican, 5 May 1852.

Mr. De Bar and Mlle. H. Vallée [sic] we are glad to see, have entered late into an agreement with Mr. Bates, and will make their first bow to the St. Louis public tonight . . . Mlle. H. Vallée [sic], is a danseuse of acknowledged talent and celebrity. Her dancing and that of Miss St. Clair will diversify each entertainment and give us an agreeable variety.¹⁶⁸

Vallée and Miss St. Clair performed the "grand pas de deux" of La Gizelle [sic]. On June 12, Vallée performed "several dances" while St. Clair contributed her "Ethiopian Medley" to the evening's entertainment. A few days later, Vallée and De Bar played The French Spy,¹⁶⁹ in which Vallée portrayed the customary three roles of "Mathilde," "Hamet," a wild Arab boy, and "Henri St. Alme," a French dancer also sometimes played as "Lancer." De Bar played "Tony" in the production.

On June 17, Vallée and St. Clair performed the "grand pas de deux" from La Bayadere, also billed as "a Grand Trial Dance," which they repeated for three consecutive performances. No playbills have been found for these evenings; possibly the two danseuses played the roles they had previously filled, St. Clair as "Fatima" and Vallée as "Zoloe."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸

Daily Missouri Republican, 9 June 1852.

¹⁶⁹

Ibid., 10-16 June 1852.

¹⁷⁰

Ibid., 17-19 June 1852.

The season ended at the Bates Theatre on June 18, but St. Clair, De Bar and Vallée remained for a post-season through June in which they performed "the grand, romantic and fairy spectacle" of Cherry and Fair Star or the Children of Cyprus.¹⁷¹

The summer season at the Bates began with "the beautiful operatic ballet of action and dialogue entitled 'The Mountain Sylph,'" with Vallée as the "Sylph."¹⁷² The next evening, "the bewitching little danseuse," Mlle. Vallée took a benefit. The program for the occasion was the fairy spectacle, Cherry and Fair Star, and the operatic ballet, Mountain Sylph. "Miss Vallée is not a stranger to the St. Louis public. She has been here several times and, on every occasion, strengthened the favorable impression which she created at her introduction."¹⁷³

Later that same week, Miss St. Clair took her benefit, "on which occasion, she will have the honor of appearing for the first time in this city in a speaking character, Victoria Rival Pages." The Daily Missouri Republican of July 5 records that in the evening performance

¹⁷¹ Daily Missouri Republican, 20-30 June 1852.

¹⁷² Ibid., 1 July 1852.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 2 July 1852.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 3 July 1852.

Vallée would dance with a corps de ballet, which had never been mentioned before in the theatre's advertisements.¹⁷⁵

How long this corps de ballet had been part of the theatre's company is difficult to determine since it was never mentioned again. The mention of this group leads one to believe that its members were more than possible the regular stock company dancing. Did Vallée or St. Clair arrange the dances for the corps de ballet? The remainder of the extended summer season at the Bates Theatre continued with the production of Cherry and Fair Star and various standard repertory pieces added to the bill nightly.¹⁷⁶

Bates Theatre

1852-1853

The Bates Theatre, repainted and renovated, opened for its fall season of 1852 on September 11. For almost a month Sallie St. Clair repeated her repertory of standard fancy and balletic dances. Only two new titles appeared "La Major Sevia" [probably Seville] and "Pas de Danube."¹⁷⁷

In October, De Bar and Vallée returned to St. Louis

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Daily Missouri Republican, 4 July 1852.

¹⁷⁶

Ibid., 11 September 1852.

¹⁷⁷

Ibid.

from an engagement in Chicago. The couple performed at the Bates Theatre. They brought the spectacle of Peter Wilkins of the Flying Islanders, which ran for three nights and then alternated with a longer run of Cherry and Fair Star. Additional pieces and dances were substituted nightly to fill out the bill. Vallée and St. Clair repeated the "grand pas de deux" from La Bayadere, The Mountain Sylph¹⁷⁸ and added the "grand pas de deux" from La Giselle.

Vallée introduced a dance entitled "Esmerelda" on October 22 and 23. The final evening of her engagement¹⁷⁹ Vallée and St. Clair performed a "Grand Pas de Folies."

For the remainder of the year, St. Clair performed alone at the Bates, drawing mostly from her repertory of fancy dances, only three new titles interjected the regime of "favorite," "beautiful" or "popular" dances advertised in¹⁸⁰ the newspaper.

Sallie St. Clair opened the new year of 1853 with a "New Scotch Dance." For the months of January, February and the beginning of March, she repeated her repertory of fancy dances. After March 12 and until the end of the season on April 23, her dancing did not grace the boards of the Bates

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Daily Missouri Republican, 4-21 October 1852.

¹⁷⁹

Ibid., 24 October 1852.

¹⁸⁰

Ibid., 26 October-31 December 1852.

181

Theatre.

The short season was due to the lack of patronage at the theatre. Bates offered the theatre for sale or lease. Benedict De Bar was interested in leasing a theatre in St. Louis in order to present a summer season with his company from the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans. However, Bates' demands for the lease of his theatre were excessive and unrealistic. He wanted \$100 rent a week and a number of professional services gratis from De Bar. De Bar and his wife were to perform for no pay, and De Bar was to assume the duties of engaging stars for the theatre, as well as, being stage manager for the productions.¹⁸² Obviously, De Bar did not accept the offer.

Finding no other parties interested in purchasing the theatre, Bates renovated and repainted the house, hoping to attract patrons for the following season.

Varieties Theatre

1852

For over a week, St. Louis theatre-goers were tantalized by an advertisement in the Amusements column of the Daily Missouri Republican which promised a gala event,

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1852.

Daily Missouri Republican, 1 January-23 April

182

Herbstruth, p. 22.

the formal opening of the new Varieties Theatre on May 5, 1852. The announcement read:

The St. Louis Dramatic Varieties Association, under the exclusive direction of Mr. J. M. Field . . . respectfully announced to the public that the opening performance . . . Wednesday, May FIFTH be given without fail. The company was to be of unusual strength, both as regards numbers and talent.¹⁸³

The advertisement named the important persons of the production organization: Mr. August Waldauer, the orchestra leader, Mr. Leon Pomareda, the interior designer of the theatre, Mr. S. B. Stockwell, the scene designer. The advertisement continued, the company embraced distinguished names, regardless of expense, from the best theatres of the country and listed the "Principal Ballet Ladies:" Mlle. Ciocca, Mde. C. Winther, Mlle. E. Baron, C. Baron, with a full corps of aides. "The Principal Gentlemen of the Ballet" included Monsieur Leon Espinosa, Charles Winther,
¹⁸⁴ Leon Javelli, Carne and with a full corps.

Following the announcement made in the Daily Missouri Republican, the Theatre column noted that "Everything was in train for an early start in their new and splendid establishment . . . The celebrated Leon Espinosa, Leon Javelli, Charles Winther . . . Mlle. Ciocca and

¹⁸³

Daily Missouri Republican, 22-26 April 1852.

¹⁸⁴

Ibid., 10 May 1852.

were busy with their exercises."

The opening night did not occur on May 5, as originally advertised, but did take place on May 10. The following day the newspaper carried a short note about the performance. "The opening last evening was an event in the history of theatricals in St. Louis . . . the pretty and graceful Ciocca, the accomplished Baron, the irresistible Espinosa were enthusiastically received." The evening opened with a "Brilliant Divertissement Terpsichorean" in which the troupe performed a "Mazurka," a "Grand Pas de Deux" by Ciocca and Carrese; "Pas de Matelots" by La Petite Winther; a pas de deux from Paquita by Baron and Carrese; "La Gitana" by Ciocca; "La Cracovienne" by Mademoiselle Baron, and finally "La Zingarella" by Ciocca
 186 and Espinosa.

Leon Espinosa was no stranger to the St. Louis stage, having performed with Celestine Franck and company at the old St. Louis Theatre. He now directed this new company and acted as its Maitre de Ballet. His company included Giovanni Ciocca, a pupil of Carlo Blasis and one of his
 187 first pupils to appear in America.

185

Daily Missouri Republican, 30 April 1852.

186

Ibid., 11 May 1852.

187

Lillian Moore, "George Washington Smith," Dance Index Vol. 4, p. 101.

Ciocca had been Premiere Danseuse at the Teatro La Scala at
 188 Milan and Naples. Ciocca made her debut in the
 United States at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in
 January, 1847; she performed in a mythological ballet,
 189 Diana and Endymion, a fable about the study of astronomy.

In 1847, Madame Augusta, Ciocca and a Signor Murra played an engagement in St. Louis. Ludlow wrote that "their style of dancing though artistic, did not suit the taste of the St. Louis audience; consequently, the engagement was a
 190 failure." By 1852, the St. Louis audiences' may have developed a more sophisticated appetite for ballet.

The Spirit of the Times described Ciocca:

The Signora is a beautiful dancer, her figure is not tall, but well rounded; her expression lively and pretty, and her motion remarkable for easy quickness and grace . . . those limbs which it is the art of her profession to accustom to attitudes conventionally recognized as elegant. Her pantomime is not expressive, but in the mere act of dancing, she is perfection itself.¹⁹¹

Leon Javelli had toured with the Ravel company as early as 1841. In 1846 he married Miss Wells, who was also

¹⁸⁸
Durang, Chapter 88.

¹⁸⁹
Ibid.

¹⁹⁰
Ludlow, p. 666.

¹⁹¹
Spirit of the Times, 6 February 1847. (Lillian Moore Collection).

a member of the Ravel troupe. He doubled both as a circus performer and pantomimist.

The Charles Winther family included Madame Winther, Jerome Winther and Josephine Winther (known as La Petite Winther), who had performed with the Ravel company. Giuseppi Carrese, Ciocca's partner in danseur noble roles, also listed as from Paris. The other dancers of the troupe who appeared in minor supporting and corps de ballet roles included Mlle. Jenny Espinosa, possibly Espinosa's sister, Mlle. Olivia, Ann Baron, Emilie's sister,
192
Messrs. Duncan, Gredula, Jacobi and Morrison.

Perhaps the most interesting solo dancer in the troupe was Mlle. Emilie Baron, a sylph from New Orleans.
193
Originally born in Bayonne, France, Mademoiselle Marie Pascaline Emilie Dreville dite Baron, studied at the Grand
194
Opera in Paris and advanced to second dancer there.

Thomas Placide, manager of the Varieties Theatre in New Orleans recruited Mlle. Baron for his theatre. At Placide's Theatre, Baron's jealousy of Mademoiselle Hilariot, a Spanish dancer, led to a feud with Placide himself, over dancing a polka in a comedy. Placide dismissed

192

Daily Missouri Republican, May-July 1852.

193

Ibid., 21 December 1852.

194

Ibid.

Baron whereupon she filed a claim in district court against him. She sued Placide for violation of contract, damages and for services rendered. The judge decided in favor of the plaintiff. Baron readily accepted Field's offer to join
 195
 the Varieties company.

Having repeated the opening night program the following evening, on May 15, the troupe performed a new program, which included "La Jota Arrogonesse," billed as a popular characteristic dance and concluded the evening with "elegant dancing and daring achievements on the tight
 196
 rope."

Espinosa produced the comic ballet Monsieur Deschaliemeaux, a standard of the Ravel repertory, on May 17, which played for several evenings. Perhaps this work contained more dancing than the Ravel version, by the same name, which Espinosa as part of the Ravel troupe must have performed. Espinosa took the leading role, supported by Javelli and Carrese. The production included a "Grand Pas de Deux" danced by Ciocca and Carrese and a "Comic Pas
 197
 Styrien" danced by Baron and Espinosa.

On May 20, the troupe repeated "La Jota Arragonesse"

¹⁹⁵ Spirit of the Times, 21 June 1851 (Lillian Moore Collection).

¹⁹⁶

Daily Missouri Republican, 15 May 1852.

¹⁹⁷

Ibid., 18 May 1852.

and concluded the evening with the petite pantomime, the "Italian Brigands," and a series of "Splendid Tableaux,
 198
 brilliant and animated."

Mlles. Ciocca, Baron and Messrs. Espinosa and Carrese supported by the corps de ballet performed "Brilliant Dances" on May 21. The next several performances the troupe presented Fete Champte [sic], a pantomime, and a "double tight rope" exhibition in which Monsieur and
 199
 Madame Winther danced on the rope.

Mlle. Baron then danced Elssler's signature pieces, "La Cachucha", a Spanish dance, and the Polish "Cracovienne." Both evenings the troupe presented the popular comic ballet Godenski which included a Mazurka, comic dance and skating scenes by Espinosa presumably on roller skates. The Daily Missouri Republican reviewer described the ballet as "irresistible" and tried to recall its various performances
 200
 in the city by the Ravels and the Franck company.

The reporter then compared Espinosa's pantomimic ability to Gabriel Ravel, in the character of "Godenski:" "Indeed, one cannot look at him Espinosa and fail to be amused. He does not excite smiles--he creates a roar, from the beginning to the end of the performance. In a

¹⁹⁸

Daily Missouri Republican, 18-20 May 1852.

¹⁹⁹

Ibid.

²⁰⁰

Ibid., 22 May 1852.

word, he is an original. . . ."

The first ballet spectacle Kim-Ka produced at the Varieties appeared on May 28, 1852. A Ravel revival, the production was directed by Espinosa who was described as
202 "indefatigable in his drill." Kim-Ka the press commended was "extravagant enough, we presume and full of those effects which French ingenuity knew so well how to
203 contrive," referring of course to the Ravel family.

Kim-Ka took place in a "Chinese Pavillion, with a view of Nankin [sic], and terminated with a picturesque effect, illustrating Crimson and other fires." Within the ballet the following dances were performed: a "Grand Pas de Trois" by Ciocca, Baron and Carrese; "Le Mandarin," a comic pas de trois by Espinosa, Javelli, and La Petite Winther; and a finale, "an Oriental Complex, Symbolical
204 Dance," rendered by all principals and corps de ballet. The ballet continued to play until June 1, when Espinosa took his benefit. That evening, a new divertissement performed by Baron, La Petite Winther and Espinosa was
205 coupled with another performance of Kim-Ka. Kim-Ka

201

Daily Missouri Republican, 27 May 1852.

202

Ibid., 28 May 1852.

203

Ibid.

204

Ibid.

205

Ibid., 1 June 1852.

continued as the major divertissement of the evening, with other dances completing the entertainment. La Petite Winther danced a "Cracovienne," Mlle. Ciocca and Monsieur Espinosa, "La Sicilian," Mlle. Baron, La Petite Winther and Monsieur Carrese danced a "splendid dance," and Baron, Espinosa and La Petite Winther repeated their "Grand
206
Divertissement."

On June 8, the company performed "The Painter's Illusion," with Ciocca and Carrese in the principal roles. The following evening the principal dancers presented Young Bacchus or Spirits and Water advertised as a burlesque
207
with splendid dancing. The Barber's Trouble, a comic ballet, was the offering for the next two evenings. Baron performed a polka and danced a comic pas with Espinosa.
208
Baron, Ciocca and Carrese ended with a "Pas Styrene."

By the middle of June, the troupe began to repeat its repertory. The newspaper extolled the talent at the Varieties, writing:

. . . such names as these Holland, Chippendale, Field, Espinosa, Wright, Javelli, Winther, Smith, Miss Reeves, Miss Lousdale, Miss Ciocca and Mrs. Drufield will seldom be found embraced in a single troupe. The dramatic company exceeds any

206

Daily Missouri Republican, 28 May 1852.

207

Ibid., 1 June 1852.

208

Ibid., 2-7 June 1852.

of its kind who have appeared in the city and not one of our old play-goers will say that he has seen a ballet troupe to compare with that of Espinosa.²⁰⁹

June 24, Mlle. Ciocca and Monsieur Carrese danced "La Manola," a new addition to the on-going repertory.

The following evening Baron and Espinosa danced
²¹⁰

"La Tyrolienne." On June 26, the troupe participated in a "fairy extravaganza," Fortuneo or the Seven Gifted Servants, performing a "Polka Nationale" danced by Ciocca and Espinosa and a pas seul by Baron. The evening's curtain raiser was a "Hornpipe" danced by La Petite Winther.²¹¹ Until July, the troupe returned to standard dances from its repertory.

On July 1, Ciocca and Carrese danced "La Smolense" and the next evening Ciocca joined Espinosa in a new "Grand Pas de Deux." That same evening, Baron and Carrese performed the "Grand Pas de Deux Waltz" from Giselle which
²¹² the advertisement stated Baron arranged.

Kim-Ka returned to the boards on July 5, and on July 7, Ciocca danced "American National Dance," that same evening Baron and Espinosa performed a "Comic Dance Boeton."

²⁰⁹

Daily Missouri Republican, 8 June 1852.

²¹⁰

Ibid., 11-12 June 1852.

²¹¹

Ibid., 14 June 1852.

²¹²

Ibid., 26 June 1852.

For Mlle. Ciocca's benefit performance on July 9 the troupe performed the first act of Giselle, Ciocca dancing the part of "Giselle;" "Duke Albrecht" by Carreese and "Hilarion" by Leon Javelli. The following evening, Javelli took his benefit which began with a "Grand Tight Rope Performance" by Javelli and Winthers, a new comic pantomime, a "Grand Divertissement," the ballet, The Milliners, and "the whole to conclude with a terrific ascension from the stage to the gallery."²¹³

Espinosa took his benefit on July 14. The theatre bill for the evening included the pantomime The King's Fool, The Jolly Millers, a comic ballet in which Espinosa was supported by the full strength of the ballet troupe.

La Petite Winther took her benefit the next evening. Besides dancing feats on the tight rope, Jocko or the Brazilian Ape with Espinosa in the leading role was performed.²¹⁴ The final benefit of the season was for Monsieur Carreese, on July 21, the last night the troupe appeared.²¹⁵

²¹³ Daily Missouri Republican, 2-9 July 1852.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 15 July 1852.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 21 July 1852.

Varieties Theatre

1852-1853

After a vacation of almost a month, the Varieties Theatre opened for its fall season on August 14. Espinosa prepared a "Grand New Pas de Trois" for the occasion featuring M^{lle}s. Ciocca, Baron and himself. The next evening, Ciocca and Espinosa performed a "Characteristic German Dance" and "National Polka."²¹⁶ Espinosa composed another new pas de trois for Ciocca, Baron and himself entitled "L'Oriental" which they repeated at the next two performances. On August 21, "L'Oriental" was coupled with Kim-Ka or the Adventures of an Aeronaut which included some of the dramatic company as characters. Sol Smith's son, Mark Smith, a versatile young actor, played one of the leading roles, "Kim-Ka."²¹⁷

The ballet company continued playing the same repertory it had presented in the spring, however, without some of its members, the Winther family, Javelli and Carrese.

On September 3, the Daily Missouri Republican carried the advertisement, "several young ladies wanted for the Ballet La Bayadere." The article continued that "no

²¹⁶Daily Missouri Republican, August 15, 1852.²¹⁷Ibid., 21 August 1852.

pains, we understand, will be spared to make this celebrated
²¹⁸
 musical ballet all that the public will look for."

September 20, the "Grand Operatic Ballet" [La] Bayadere opened. The newspaper wrote a detailed description of the scenery, because of its immense appeal to audiences of that period, noting that "a series of the most brilliant changes took place in rapid succession through the seven
²¹⁹
 spheres, finally terminating with the Indian Paradise."

The ballet dramatized the Goethe ballad in which a Bayadere dancer, Zoloe, who did not speak the Indian tongue, is pardoned by a judge for a misdemeanor in return for a favor. The Bayadere, repelled by the judge's age, was then arrested only to be saved by a stranger, the Unknown. She falls in love with the unknown stranger, a wanted man, who the Bayaderes smuggle to Zoloe's cottage. The judge finds the two lovers and tears down her shack, making a funeral pyre for Zoloe. As the flames leap above her the Unknown appears as the God Brama who takes her in his arms as they
²²⁰
 rise to the Indian Paradise. Ciocca danced "Zoloe" while

218

Daily Missouri Republican, 3 September 1852.

219

Ibid., 20 September 1852.

220

Beaumont, Cyril W. Complete Book of Ballets: A Guide to The Principal Ballets of Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1938), pp. 77-78.

Baron danced the other Bayadere role of "Fatima"; the
 dramatic company performed the other roles. ²²¹ La Bayadere
 played until October 6. That evening, Espinosa appeared in
 a new pas de trois, "La Calabraise" which he had composed
 for Ciocca, Baron and himself.

October 8, La Bayadere had its final performance,
 but as was customary in the nineteenth century; the
 following evening, the burlesque of it was produced,
 entitled Buy It Dear -- Tis Made of Cashmere. Mlle. Baron
 portrayed "Mlle. Solo," the caricature of "Zoloe" in the
 original ballet. Mark Smith played "Mlle. Tatume,"
 J. M. Field played "Lord Knows Who," a version of the
 "Unknown" and the dramatic company was cast in the other
²²² roles.

On October 12, the ballet pantomime, Nicodemus, was
 presented, Espinosa taking the lead role by the same name;
 Monsieur Gredeuse played "Mother Simon," and Mlle. Baron
 playing the maid's part of "Lisette." During the ballet's
 performance, a terrible accident took place. Mlle. Baron
 crossed the stage and entered the cottage door of the set.
 While she was waiting in the wings for her next entrance,

²²¹

Daily Missouri Republican, 21 September-6
 October 1852.

²²²

Ibid., 9 October 1852.

her ballet skirt caught on fire from one of the open gas jets which were attached to the wings. The ballet stopped with her screams as dancers rushed to help her. Panic spread through the audience, and Field had to assure them that the company had the situation under control before lowering the curtain.

Baron's injuries were at first considered minor in the newspaper reports. But as days passed, the newspapers carried reports of a longer period of convalescence for the young dancer. On November 19, 1852, she died. Her obituary appeared on November 21 in the Daily Missouri Republican. She was barely eighteen and was survived by a mother and two
 223 sisters whom she supported.

On October 16, Mlle. Ciocca took her benefit with a performance of La Bayadere. Two days later, the theatre presented a benefit for Baron, as had been previously scheduled. Espinosa and Ciocca danced the "Great Trial Dance" [sic] from La Bayadere, and the comic ballet of Nicodeme. The newspaper advertisement stated that "it was the opinion of her friends that it should not be postponed
 224 although unhappily she will not be able to appear."

223

Daily Missouri Republican, 12 October-21
 November 1852.

224

Ibid., 18 October 1852.

The following evenings, Espinosa and Four Gentlemen performed a "Chinese Divertissement" and staged the ballet Jeanette and Jeannot for his benefit on October 21, with Ciocca and Espinosa in the title roles. La Bayadere appeared again on October 26 but "Fatima," originally danced by Baron was now danced by La Belle Oceana. Perhaps Oceana substituted for Baron at Ciocca's benefit earlier.

225

The ballet troupe continued to perform until November 5. The season ended at the Varieties Theatre on November 10.

226

In the Amusements column of the March 10 Daily Missouri Republican, it was reported that "J. M. Field Esq. and theatre troupe on the Steamer 'Martha Jewett' was passed by the Steamer 'L. M. Kemmett' on the fourth turn below Vicksburg heavily laden and slowly coming up from New Orleans."²²⁷ Meanwhile at the Varieties Theatre, S. B. Stockwell was whitening walls and laying new carpets to refurbish the theatre.²²⁸

Until the stock company arrived in St. Louis, Lola Montez opened the theatrical season. Her reputation

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Daily Missouri Republican, 20-26 October 1852.

226

Ibid., 27 October-10 November 1852.

227

Ibid., 10 March 1853.

228

Ibid.

preceded her which increased the admission price from \$.75
 229 to \$1.00 to see this "world renowned celebrity."

Lola Montez was of British and Spanish descent. Her proposed liaison with the King of Bavaria which incited the Revolution of 1848 proved to be publicity which only added intrigue to her performances. When she came to the United States, George Washington Smith accompanied her as partner on tour. He choreographed three ballets and several
 230 divertissements for her. Lillian Moore in her article about George Washington Smith commented on his one-time partner,

Besides Montez's shortcomings in balletic technique, Smith had to put up with her complete lack of the slightest sense of rhythm, and since he was a sensitive musician this must have been particularly painful.²³¹

Although Miss Montez cannot be considered a dancer of reputation other than her own misalliances, she did perform "El Ole Bull Dance," and "The Spider Dance or the Spanish Tarantella" with her other repertory of dramatic
 232 works, especially the play Lola Montez.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 23 March 1853.

²³⁰

Lillian Moore, "George Washington Smith," Dance Index, June-August 1944, p. 111.

²³¹

Ibid.

²³²

Daily Missouri Republican, 24-28 March 1853.

During the spring, Field's Varieties company performed a dramatic repertory. The company performed the burlesque extravaganza of Buy It Dear. The dramatic company took the roles except of "Mlle. Solo" danced by Sallie St. Clair and Mark Smith performing en travesti the part of "Mlle. Fatima," with Field portraying the
 233 "Unknown."

De Bar and Vallée arrived for their yearly visit to St. Louis, this time at the Varieties Theatre on March 17. The burlesque took on even a larger dimension when De Bar, a heavy man and a genius at travesty parts, took the role of "Mlle. Solo." De Bar and Smith performed the "Grand Match Dance"--"the two ladies (Mark Smith and Ben De Bar) 500 lbs. per side." The press predicted the event "will be a side-splitting contest and lovers of the poetry of motion
 234 will avail themselves to it."

The press also acknowledged Vallée's performances by commenting that "Mlle. H. Vallee took her benefit on May 21, performing La Bayadere;" Vallée danced "Fatima," the Bayadere with La Belle Oceana in the role of "Zoloe." This was a switch in roles from when St. Clair and Vallée had performed the ballet previously. From June 1 until June 10,

²³³

Daily Missouri Republican, 13 May 1853.

²³⁴

Ibid., 21 May 1853.

Vallée continued her "fancy," "characteristic," and "grand
 235 pas seuls." The theatrical season had been an impressive
 one, filled with some of the finest foreign artists
 performing in residence at the Varieties. The theatre
 236a closed for the summer on June 15.

People's Theatre

1852-1853

The People's Theatre opened December 8, 1852. The Daily Missouri Republican advertised that the resident stock company was "one of unusual strength, both in regards to numbers and talent . . ." The principal dancer for the
 236 theatre was La Belle Oceana.

The opening night, La Belle Oceana performed a dance from La Sylphide. On December 9, the Daily Missouri Republican observed ". . . Oceana, the favorite danseuse, is also permanently engaged and will lend her full share of attraction." That evening Oceana danced "Columbia's
 237 Gem." Her repertory increased nightly until the year ran out; "Hungarian Polka," "Swiss Medley," "Indian Faun," "Pas Village," "Ethiopian Medley," "Highland Fling,"

²³⁵ Daily Missouri Republican, 2-10 June 1853.

^{236a} Ibid., 15 June 1853.

²³⁶ Ibid., 8 December 1852.

²³⁷ Ibid., 9 December 1852.

"La Tyrolean," "La Cracovienne," and "La Manola."

During the month of January and until the middle of February, La Belle Oceana performed fancy dances nightly at
239 the People's Theatre.

On March 1, the Daily Missouri Republican reported a change of management at the theatre. Miss Julia Bennent had leased the property; the Republican also reported that the
240 theatre was to be redecorated.

La Belle Oceana continued dancing nightly and was joined on March 9 by Mlles. Elise and Emma with a "Highland Fling." The newspaper called them "wonderful little
241 dancers." On March 10, "The Children," referring to Mlles. Elisa and Emma, danced a "Double Hornpipe" which they repeated, the next evening for the benefit of the Missouri Fire Company. The Children and La Belle Oceana shared the
242 programs for a few evenings.

On March 17, the People's Theatre advertised "the first night of a 'Splendid Pas de Deux' by the

238

Daily Missouri Republican, 10-31 December 1852.

239

Ibid., 1 January-14 February 1853.

240

Ibid., 1 March 1853.

241

Ibid., 9 March 1853.

242

Ibid., 11-16 March 1853.

Misses St. Clair and La Belle Oceana." In the Amusements column the following day, Miss St. Clair's successful debut in The Rival Pages was reported.²⁴³ The press predicted St. Clair possessed "abilities which with proper cultivation would place her in a high position in her profession."²⁴⁴

La Belle Oceana took a new partner, or rather renewed an old partnership with Mr. Bennie. They performed a "Tambour Major Jig" on March 20, and a "Neapolitan Pas de Deux" the following Monday.²⁴⁵ La Belle Oceana, Mr. Bennie and Miss St. Clair alternated dancing in a variety of pas de deuxs until Macbeth opened.²⁴⁶ "The Children" continued to perform on some evenings during that time. St. Clair was performing less frequently as a dancer and accepting more roles as an actress. The press wrote that St. Clair "was rapidly becoming a favorite with fashionable audiences." She also began playing roles en travesti such as the "Boy King" in the Faint Heart. The press proclaimed St. Clair as

²⁴³

Daily Missouri Republican, 16 March 1853.

²⁴⁴

Ibid., 17 March 1853.

²⁴⁵

Ibid., 18-20 March 1853.

²⁴⁶

Ibid., 20 March-17 April 1853.

"a young lady of no unordinary talent"

Mr. Bennie added a "Pas Comique" to the repertory of attractions at the People's and La Belle Oceana and St. Clair presented the "Grand Trial Dance" from the ballet La Bayadere; together the three danced the Conscription, a ballet d'action. The ballet included a "well disciplined corps de ballet" with two dancers enlisted from the city, a
248 Miss Clarke and Susan.

Durang commented that:

Mr. Bennie was an Irishman. As a ballet director he had fancy and intelligence. . . but as a dancer he had a certain stuffiness of balance that did not assimilate with the graceful gyrations of the art. He taught much better than he executed. He had been bred in the English style, but found it policy to imitate the French opera manner. In this he, of course, failed²⁴⁹

Throughout most of May, La Belle Oceana, Mr. Bennie, The Children and less and less often St. Clair performed a
250 limited repertory of dances.

In early June, La Belle Oceana took her benefit. Henrietta Vallée from the Bates Theatre performed a "Pas
251 Seul" for the occasion as did St. Clair. Until the

²⁴⁷

Daily Missouri Republican, 18 April 1853.

²⁴⁸

Ibid., 23 April 1853.

²⁴⁹

Durang, p. 264.

²⁵⁰

Daily Missouri Republican, 28 April-18 May 1853.

²⁵¹

Ibid., 7 June 1853.

middle of June, the resident dancers sustained the nightly dancing entertainments, during which time Mr. Bennie offered one new dance, a "Pas de Matalox."²⁵²

On June 17, the Daily Missouri Republican carried a large advertisement offering the People's Theatre for sale. The advertisement was repeated for several days adding that only \$10,000 would be required in cash, the balance could be paid on time.²⁵³

June 10, the newspaper printed a "Special Notice" to the readers and patrons about the People's Theatre. For patrons' comfort during the warm summer months [the investigator is sure that the newspaper was underestimating the heat], a large and commodious wind sail had been erected in the dome of the theatre.²⁵⁴ The resident dancers continued their performances through July 4.²⁵⁵

The summer season began and Miss St. Clair took her first benefit in eleven months. The newspaper recounted her career at the Bates Theatre as a "charming and finished danseuse" and that her joining the People's Theatre had offered her a "wider field upon which to exercise her

²⁵² Daily Missouri Republican, 8 June 1853.

²⁵³ Ibid., 16-17 June 1853.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 20 June 1853.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 21 June-4 July 1853.

256

dramatic talents."

Miss St. Clair continued to dance through July and a Miss Maggie Scanlan took La Belle Oceana's place. Scanlan performed mostly fancy dances, pas seuls and some pas de deuxs with Mr. Bennie.²⁵⁷ St. Clair danced the "Pas de Deux" from La Giselle with Mr. Bennie. A Miss Richardson and pupils made a short series of appearances that summer.²⁵⁸ La Belle Oceana, with Sallie St. Clair and Mr. Bennie, had provided the mainstay of the dancing entertainments presented at the People's Theatre during this season.

Bates Theatre

1853-1854

Bates opened the theatre for the fall season on October 17, and at this time St. Clair was not the principal dancer. A rather unsteady economic condition must have obligated Bates to engage a couple whose talents included equally acting and dancing. Monsieur and Madame Gilbert danced nightly through the short fall season which ended November 24.

Bates announced in the newspaper that the theatre would close for a few nights to prepare for the Ravel

256

Daily Missouri Republican, 12 July 1853.

257

Ibid., 20 July-24 August 1853.

258

Ibid., 8-12 August 1853.

259

Troupe.

The Ravel Family was practically an institution in nineteenth century theatre. The family performed for three decades throughout the United States with side trips to South America and Cuba. The family troupe was built on the talents of four brothers: Gabriel, Jerome, Antoine and Francois. The Ravels made their first appearance at the Park Theatre in New York in 1832. All the brothers danced on the tight rope and also performed in acting, dancing and pantomime which was the staple of their entertainment. The family became so large with its numerous intermarrying among other families which travelled with the Ravels as part of the company that it often split up and played several cities at the same time. "Critics and audiences alike generally expressed great admiration for their talents and for the . . . well-rehearsed, self-sufficient ensemble."²⁶⁰

Grimsted in his book Melodrama Unveiled cannot be disputed when he claims the Ravels to have been "America's most universally enduring popular novelty."²⁶¹ The family was an immediate success at the Park Theatre and continued to play a repertory of well over 100 works over the years.

259

1853. Daily Missouri Republican, 17 October-24 November

260

Grimsted, p. 101.

261

Ibid.

In 1853, the Ravel Family brought from France, the Martinetti Family which performed similar circus and dance genre of works. The Martinetti Family specialized in tumbling, acrobatics, some rope walking and feats of strength, as well as contributing to pantomime and ballet presentations. The two families augmented and complimented each other.

The Ravel and Martinetti Family opened at the Bates Theatre on December 2. Their first performance was Kim-Ka or the Adventures of the Aeronaut, "a Chinese Pantomime Fete."²⁶² Earlier in 1853, Espinosa had staged this work with his company at the Varieties. Now the originator of the role, "Kim-Ka," would take the stage--Gabriel Ravel.

Gabriel Ravel was born in 1810 and made his first stage appearance at the age of four. His early appearances with the Ravel Family were in the principal cities of Germany and later in France before coming to America. Gabriel was the star performer in pantomime. He was also the head of the family organization and its treasurer. The troupe included "no less than forty people, all stars in different line, but working together with admirable precision."²⁶³ So successful were the Ravels that they

²⁶²

Daily Missouri Republican, 2 December 1853.

²⁶³

John S. Kendall, The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), p. 297.

played an average of 300 days a year and cleared between one hundred and three hundred dollars a night.

The Ravels travelled with their own scenery, machinery and costumes, so the production was probably less elaborate than Espinosa's staging at the Varieties.

On December 5, the Ravels presented The Elopement or the Return to the Village, with Gabriel playing the leading role. The Martinetti Brothers performed grand athletic ²⁶⁴ feats. Although no names are listed as performers, the brothers, Paul, Julian probably performed.

Mlle. Zoe, another member of the troupe, who performed leading roles in the ballets, danced "La Cracovienne." Mlle. Zoe was a dancer and pantomimist. ²⁶⁵ She was born in Havana, Cuba in 1840. Perhaps when the Ravel Troupe played Cuba in 1850, Mlle. Zoe joined them.

The evening ended with a popular comic pantomime M. Dechalumeau or the Triumph of Gabriel. The subtitle of this standard work was often changed throughout the years. The pantomime combined the following dances: "Grand Fete Dance" by the corps de ballet, "Villagious [sic] Pas de Deux" by Mlle. Capel and Mons. Colet, recently from Paris, and a "Comic Pas Styrion" by Gabriel Ravel and Mlle. Desire.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 5 December 1853.

²⁶⁵

Brown, p. 405.

The Ravel corps de ballet comprised the wives, sisters, brothers and children of the troupe, which was customary in theatrical families. The Ravel and Martinetti families with their numerous members and intermarriages provided additional talent and perpetuation of the troupe.

The Ravel repertory of pantomimes continued to unfold: Vol Au-Vent or a Night's Adventure, Magic Trumpet, Jeannette and Jeannot, The Green Monster or The Dream Accomplished. The dancers included Mlles. Frances, Zoe, Capel and Desire; Messrs. Collet, Wiethoff and the corps de ballet who danced a "Pas de Tambourine," La Maja de Seville by Mlle. Frances and La Gazelle [sic] danced by Mlle. Zoe. Other dancing included national dances as well as legitimate
²⁶⁶
ballets. Because of its popularity during the 1840s and 1850s, ballet became an important part of the Ravel repertory. The Ravel troupe included first class ballet stars mostly from the Paris Theatres.

By Saturday, December 17, enough snow had accumulated on the roof of the Bates Theatre to make the roof
²⁶⁷
collapse. The accident occurred when the theatre was unoccupied. Obviously, the Ravel scenery must have been

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Daily Missouri Republican, 7-17 December 1853.

²⁶⁷

Ibid., 19 December 1853.

unharmed for the troupe moved immediately to the vacant Varieties Theatre.

During the troupe's stay at the Varieties, Gabriel performed The Three-Faced Frenchmen which was billed as a vaudeville. Gabriel played five speaking parts in English as "Raphael," an artist, "Mr. Paine," a glazier, "Plum Pudding," a dancer, "Muscade," a musician and "Coliquet," a Chinese. That same evening Gabriel danced a "Hornpipe" on the tightrope and performed in the pantomime, The Coopers. The evening concluded with La Gizelle [sic].

The Bates Theatre remained closed during the spring and summer of 1854. Bates repaired the roof of his theatre. The theatre reopened for the fall season of 1854.

Varieties Theatre

1853-1854

The Varieties' fall season opened September 1. On September 20, the celebrated Spanish danseuse, Senorita Pepita Soto and her partner George Washington Smith appeared. A play bill announcing their arrival in St. Louis acknowledged Senorita Sota as being from the Royal Theatres of Madrid and Paris and recently from Niblo's Garden, New York. George Washington Smith received less attention, noting he had been a principal dancer from Niblo's and other

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leading eastern theatres.

Soto came to this country as a member of a troupe of French and Spanish dancers which made its debut at Niblo's Garden in 1852. "Soto was by birth a Spanish woman, and in several of her dances evinced the natural vigor characteristic of Spain," wrote W. W. Clapp.²⁶⁹

Her partnership with Smith became successful. In 1853, he choreographed La Maja de Seville a favorite of his ballets for her. The ballet later had numerous revivals with various ballerinas.

Their opening night, Soto and Smith performed "La Zingerilla" then Soto danced a pas seul, El Jaleo Xeres. On subsequent evenings, Senorita Soto danced "La Gitana," El Bolero de Cadiz, "El Ole," the grand national dance, which Smith had previously choreographed for Lola Montez; however, there must have been a difference in the pas considering the diversity of these two performers' technical accomplishments.

For her benefit, Soto danced with Smith "El Zapateado" or "The Spider Dance" and then "La Napolitaine." The evening concluded with the ballet pantomime La Maja de Sevilla. Smith contributed to the

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Daily Missouri Republican, 20 September 1853.

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Moore, "George Washington Smith," p. 114.

evening with a "Pas Comique." Solo danced a new Cachucha,
270
 "El Zapataeso" as the final offering of the evening.

The press described Soto as a "beautiful woman and fascinating danseuse. . . . Her expressive gestures, flashing eyes and raven hair complete the charms of the
271
 wild daughter of Spain."

Soto and Smith were engaged to dance at the Varieties between the acts from September 27 through October 17. Spanish dancing must have been quite a novelty for St. Louis theatre-goers. So it was not surprising that the newspaper wrote that "La Maja de Sevilla which was received with such rapturous applause on Saturday evening,
272
 is to be repeated." Continuing with their engagement Soto and Smith brought out The Painter's Illusion, which may have been similar to the Perrot ballet Le Delire du
273
 Peintre, which Elssler danced, and La Felle delair.

For her farewell benefit on October 20, Soto and Smith performed La Belle de L'Andalusia or the Daughter of the Tanga which was simply La Fille de Danube transported from Germany to Spain with appropriate changes in the

²⁷⁰ Daily Missouri Republican, 21 September 1853.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid., 27 September 1853.

²⁷³ Ibid., 6 October 1853.

incidental variations.

After Soto and her partner Smith departed, Sallie St. Clair resumed dancing, but only spordically until the
275 season ended on November 10.

The Ravel engagement that had moved to the Varieties from the Bates Theatre extended into the new year for only a few performances. Gabriel Ravel took his benefit on
276 January 4.

The theatre did not advertise any entertainment until February 9, when the theatre opened for "a complimentary benefit" for Mrs. Clarke--being aware of her ill health--for which Miss St. Clair danced a "Grand Pas de Deux" with
277 probably someone from the dramatic company. February 10 carried no advertisement for the Varieties, but other news indicated that St. Louis was having a servere winter, the
278 river being frozen over down below Cairo, Illinois.

On March 14, the Varieties Theatre announced W. De Gray Bennie, formerly of the Italian Opera, was the new Director of the Ballet. The next evening when the

274

Moore, "George Washington Smith," p. 115 includes a synopsis of the ballet.

275

Daily Missouri Republican, 21 October-10 November 1853.

276

Ibid., 1-4 January 1854.

277

Ibid., 9 February 1854.

278

Ibid., 10 February 1854.

theatre opened with Charlotte Crampton as the chief attraction; the evening included the "beautiful dancing" of the Theorean Children performing a "Grand Pas de Trois" with
 279 an effective corps de ballet.

The children danced nightly until March 23, when Miss Maggie Scanlan took the stage, performing pas seuls
 280 until April 12.

The regular season opened April 20 announcing
 281 J. M. Field as manager and lessee of the Varieties. Field brought the celebrated Pougaud Ballet Troupe from Niblo's New York to the Varieties. The troupe included Mlle. Pougaud, a member of the troupe of French and Spanish dancers in which Soto had also danced. Mlle. Lavigne, another member of the original troupe, Mlles. Belan, Stephan; Mssrs. Mege, Corby, Le Martie, Adolphe and a full
 282 corps de ballet.

The Pougaud Troupe performed on their first evening at the Varieties Mons. Dechalmeaux, La Maja de Sevilla, advertising the ballet as performed with "all the original

279 Daily Missouri Republican, 15 March 1854.

280 Ibid., 16 March-12 April 1854.

281 Ibid., 18 April 1854.

282 Ibid., 25 April 1854.

dances" and "El Zapateados or the Spider Dance."

283

Mlle. Pougaud and the Troupe repeated the same program the following evening and substituted for the final dance Frisac or The Duellist. The French Ballet Troupe, the newspaper reported, drew a splendid house its opening night and the ballet admirers were in the "seventh heaven of enjoyment."²⁸⁴ The newspaper complimented the members of the company one by one:

M'lle. Pougaud is a lovely and graceful woman and her movements are as bewitching as her artistic skill is admirable. M'lle. Lavigne also presents the attractive combination of youth, grace and beauty. Corby must be seen to be appreciated . . . he is unrivaled, the same may be said of Mege in his . . . line.²⁸⁵

The enviable production of La Bayadere appeared, sharing the program with a "Grand Divertissement" in which Lavigne and Corby danced "Liviana", and Pougaud and Mege "La Viennoise." The following day the Daily Missouri Republican announced that La Bayadere had not been performed because Mlle. Lavigne had a foot injury, and instead The Pearl of the Arragon had been substituted which the press assured "gave great satisfaction."²⁸⁶ April 28, the troupe

283

Daily Missouri Republican, 25 April 1854.

284

Ibid., 26 April 1854.

285

Ibid.

286

Ibid., 28 April 1854.

opened with a "Grand Divertissement," and the comic ballet pantomime, Robert Macaire with Mege in the title role.

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On Saturday evening the troupe performed La Bayadere and the "Grand Divertissements." Pougaud took a benefit on 288 May 2. The newspaper writer quite eloquently wrote of her dancing, "Since Blangy we have had no danseuse who equals Pougaud, or who excels Lavigne." Had he forgotten about or not seen Ciocca or Franck? Continuing, he compared Pougaud and Soto:

The style of these two dancers, however, has nothing in common. De Soto is far below mediocrity, except in Spanish dances, while Pougaud is a finished artiste, whose execution is characterized by grace, ease, and powers. In her amours de force, she . . . astonishes by the velocity and precision of her pirouettes.²⁸⁹

The writer finished by suggesting that Field should re-engage the French ballet troupe to alternate with the 290 Italian opera troupe which was to appear next.

Mlle. Pougaud's benefit night was the night following the first night of the opera. She chose the ballet The Queen of the Stars, the principal parts taken by the four leading dancers, Pougaud, Lavigne, Mege and Canne,

287

Daily Missouri Republican, 28 April 1854.

288

Ibid., 29 April-2 May 1854.

289

Ibid., 2 May 1854.

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Ibid.

substituting for Corby.

The evening of May 4, the ballet troupe performed a full evening of ballet with La Bayadere and La Maja de Sevilla. The press reported the growing popularity of the troupe. "Mlle. Pougaud and her sister artiste Lavigne, are fairly carrying the town by storm--every night their popularity increases."²⁹² The ballet played again on May 6, presenting La Giselle or Les Willies. Of course, Pougaud danced "Giselle," Lavigne the "Queen of the Willies;" "Albert" by Mege and "Wilfred" by Corby. Three evenings later the ballet was repeated.²⁹³

The ballet troupe presented a Spanish program of Roseta and The Pearl of Arragon before the benefit for the company.

The farewell of the French Ballet was a benefit for Monsieur Corby. That evening for the "first and only time in St. Louis," the romantic ballet Katarina or the Queen of the Brigands was performed. The ballet included "romantic incidents, marches and martial exercises of the Amazons,²⁹⁴ Brigand and Picturesque dances."

291

Daily Missouri Republican, 2 May 1854.

292

Ibid., 4 May 1854.

293

Ibid., 6-9 May 1854.

294

Ibid., 13 May 1854.

After the excitement created by the French Ballet, Little Laura, "Laura Carman, a child of really wonderful ability," danced for the remainder of the season. She performed only a few evenings, taking a benefit on June 19. The final night at the Varieties for the season was
 295 June 27.

People's Theatre

1853-1854

The People's Theatre opened its new season on August 29. Mr. Bennie, Miss Scanlan and Miss St. Clair returned to
 296 the stage. Early in September, Maggie Scanlan performed a "Cachucha" as taught by Mr. Bennie, and he performed a "Pas de Quaker." St. Clair played the dumb role made famous by the French dancer, Madame Celeste, "Miami" in The Green Bushes, a pantomimic drama. From time to time during
 297 September, Mr. Bennie danced in a "Pas Extravaganza."

The last of September, the Daily Missouri Republican carried a notice that Professor De Gray Bennie of the Italian Opera secured the Odd Fellows Hall, on the corner of Fourth and Locust for teaching "the theory of his art [dance]." Classes were to commence October 18, programs of

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Daily Missouri Republican, 14 May-27 June 1854.

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Ibid., 29 August 1853.

297

Ibid., 1-28 September 1853.

the fashionable dances and his qualification could be obtained at music stores, Mr. Rimmer's Saloon and the Odd Fellows Hall.

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It is almost certain that the Mr. Bennie who danced nightly at the People's Theatre and the Mr. De Gray Bennie dancing master were one and the same person.

Dancing continued to be performed nightly at the People's Theatre until October 17. The theatre reopened for a winter season with ". . . a corps de ballet under the direction of Mr. Bennie," and introduced Mr. Bennie's Four Terpsichorean Sisters as members of the company. The sisters were never identified by name, perhaps they were Mlles. Elise, Emma and two other children. The Four Sisters performed a "Fancy Tambourine Dance," a "Grand Pas Catre [sic] La Sylphide," and Grand Fancy Dances until November 23,
299 when Sallie St. Clair took her benefit. Miss St. Clair chose an evening of dramatic entertainment for the occasion. In November, she only appeared twice as a dancer and was consistently billed as an actress. A novelty was performed at the end of November when for one performance, the Bearded Lady danced the "Grand Trial Dance." Could this bearded lady have been Mr. Bennie trying his skill

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Daily Missouri Republican, 29 September 1853.

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Ibid., 1 November 1853.

300

en travesti?

On November 30, St. Clair played "Coralle" and Mr. Bennie "Jaco" in the Shell Spirit of the Fisherman of Naples which could have been similar to Ondine or La Naiade, choreographed by Jules Perrot. The press described the ballet as "new and entertaining;" the scenic effects "striking," and "the dances and groupings designed by Mr. Bennie . . . were picturesque and imposing."³⁰¹

In December, Sallie St. Clair took the stage performing in dramatic fare and dancing. Mr. Bennie and the Four Terpsichorean Sisters only appeared twice. The year ended with Mr. Bennie and Miss St. Clair dancing a "Grand Oriental Dance."³⁰²

January 1854, Sallie St. Clair made a single appearance dancing the "National Polka" while Maggie Scanlan danced a "Sailor's Hornpipe." The next two performances,³⁰³ Scanlan continued to perform fancy dances. Drama filled the following evenings and after January 18, no advertisements appeared for the People's Theatre.

On March 5, 1854, The Daily Missouri Republican

³⁰⁰ Daily Missouri Republican, 2-23 November 1853.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 30 November 1853.

³⁰² Ibid., 1-29 December 1853.

³⁰³ Ibid., 11-13 January 1854.

carried an announcement that Wood and Johnson were the lessees of the theatre; George Wood the manager and L. E. Johnson the treasurer. The new operators had engaged a "most excellent Stock Company, the principal members of it from the first class New York and Southern Theatres."³⁰⁴

The People's Theatre was being renovated for its opening on March 6. The press explained that ". . . the new lessees were well known business men and the energy they have already exhibited was a sure indication that nothing would be spared to make it agreeable to the public."³⁰⁵

The opening performance, March 6, St. Clair performed a "new dance." The weather must have been inclement for the press mentioned "the very disparable state of the weather . . ."³⁰⁶

St. Clair played dramatic roles and only danced an "Irish Medley," "a Spanish Fandango," and a "Medley Dance." On March 20, a Miss Eliza Freeman made her debut as a dancer; her infrequent performances may have been only on evenings when St. Clair's dramatic roles became too demanding.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Daily Missouri Republican, 5 March 1854.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 8 March 1854.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 9 March-11 April 1854.

On April 13, the drama Esmeralda or the Hunchback of Notre Dame played at the People's Theatre. St. Clair danced "one of her prettiest dances," in the production which was also her benefit night. The remainder of April, St. Clair danced nightly; neither the advertisements nor the Amusements column indicated more than "Dance."

During the month of May, Miss Freeman returned to the stage appearing nightly in a "Dance" and St. Clair made four brief appearances near the end of the month as the season came to a close. The season had incorporated a moderate amount of dancing entertainment sustained by Mr. Bennie and assisted by Maggie Scanlan, Sallie St. Clair and other artists.

Bates Theatre

1854-1855

Bates reopened his theatre after repairing the roof which had collapsed the previous December. The winter season of 1854 opened on October 5, with "The Unrivaled Gabriel Ravel and his highly talented Ballet Troupe." The Martinetti family appeared with the Ravel Troupe.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 13 April 1854.

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Ibid., 14-26 April 1854.

³¹⁰

Ibid., 1-31 May 1854.

³¹¹

Ibid., 5 October 1854.

The season began with Gabriel Ravel as "Jocko" in The Brazilian Ape, the dramatic pantomime about an ape in the Amazonian forest. The troupe had played this work since their first season in America in 1832. The other offering that evening was the ballet Satanita, a grand ballet in four tableaux. "Satanita," the Demon's daughter was danced by Mlle. Zoe.

312

On October 7, the Ravels performed La Fete Champster [sic] or the Metamorphose of the Two Ages in which most of the laughable pantomime took place on the double ropes. The other piece that evening was Mons. Dechalumeau. The Martinetti Brothers, Julian and Phillippi performed La Lutte du Pugatit and the evening ended with a "Polka Nationale" by Miss Frances and Mr. Wiethoff.

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The next two evenings the Ravels played Kim-Ka and The Magic Trumpet while the Martinetti Brothers and Mr. Lehman performed on two perpendicular ropes.

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The Ravels continued their engagement producing old favorites, Four Lovers, The Coopers or the Enchanted Flute and Vol-Au-Vent. For the next performance Gabriel

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Daily Missouri Republican, 5 October 1854.

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Ibid., 7 October 1854.

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Ibid., 8-9 October, 1854.

315

Ibid., 10-13 October 1854.

arranged a grand spectacle Helene or the Shipwreck on the Indian Coast. Miss Frances and Gabriel Ravel took the leading roles with support from Young America, a young danseuse. Although the latter's name seems a bit strange, it must be remembered that a great many of the Ravel family were born in America.

The Daily Missouri Republican wrote

. . . the Ravel Troupe are generally admitted to be the best pantomimest and 'lofty tumblers' on the stage; the continued success with which they have performed in all the cities of the United States is the best guarantee for this excellence.³¹⁶

The reporter went on to extol the virtues of the pantomimic art:

Pantomime is a great relief to the legitimate, melodramatic and the farcical, the mind is not taxed to following out plots, and the fancy left free, is constantly startled by comic incidents and rapid changes . . .³¹⁷

The first ballet the company performed this engagement was Diana or the Triumph of Love, the leading role of "Calisto" danced by Mlle. Zoe and "Endymion" by Monsieur Collet. Sharing the evening, Gabriel starred in a perennial favorite, The Green Monster, "a grand fairy pantomime with splendid scenery and machinery."³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Daily Missouri Republican, 12 October 1854.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 16 October 1854.

The next evening the ballet ensemble presented La Maja de Seville. The troupe began to repeat the part of their repertory previously presented during this St. Louis engagement. New pieces interjected included only The Milliners, Robert Macaire, with a title and plot parallel to the play by the same name, Soldier for Love and The Magic Pills. The entire company cooperated in the spectacle The Bedouin Arabs, a novelty Gabriel had arranged after seeing a group of Arabs on his last trip to Paris. During the remainder of their engagement, the only new works from the Ravel ballet repertory presented were The Judgment of Paris originally choreographed by Jules Perrot in 1846 and featuring three of the great Romantic ballerinas: Taglioni,
 319
 Grahn and Cerito, and the "Grand Divertissement of The Seven Nations." The Martinetti Brother continued their varied tight rope and gymnastic skits, but Gabriel Ravel, "The Emperor of Pantomimists," with his startling tricks and
 320
 transformations, held the stage.

The final performance of the Ravels with the Martinetti Family on November 1, was also the final
 321
 performance at the Bates Theatre. A personal tragedy,

319 Beaumont, p. 266.

320 1854. Daily Missouri Republican, 17 October-1 November

321 Ibid., 1 November 1854.

the death of his son, probably added incentive for Bates to put his theatre up for sale.

Varieties Theatre

1854-1855

The advertisement for opening night, Saturday August 26, 1854, did not include dance. After the season got underway, Sallie St. Clair returned to her dancing, performing mostly character dances. St. Clair took a benefit on October 13. During the rest of the month an Italian Opera Troupe complete with its own ballet troupe had a brief engagement. The season ended early on October 19 with a grand divertissement as part of the ending festivities entitled "The Two Grisis." St. Clair danced "Carlotta Grisi," the famous, romantic ballerina, and Mark Smith played "Carrotty Grisi," a prima donna.³²²

J. M. Field opened the Varieties for its spring season, Monday, March 26. The following evening, Sallie St. Clair performed a "Grand Pas Seul." For the rest of March and the month of April, she only appeared in farces,³²³ now often taking leading roles.

For almost the entire month of May, the Ravel Troupe

³²² Daily Missouri Republican, 26 August-19 October 1854.

³²³ Ibid., 24 March-30 April 1855.

billed as "Niblo's Ravel Troupe," played the Varieties. This engagement, the troupe was directed by Francois Ravel and Mlle. Yrca Mathias, his new wife, who was the leading ballerina. Other members of the troupe included Mlle. Victorine Franck, Celestine's sister, Madame and Flora Lehman, Nathalie Theiman, Madame and Monsieur Martette, Messrs. Paul Brilliant, Leopold Theiman and Mangin plus a corps de ballet. ³²⁴ Francois played the lead roles in the pantomimes, sharing some roles such as "Jocko" with Monsieur Martette. Yrca Mathias was the principal dancer, ³²⁵ supported by Victorine Franck.

Yrca Mathias has a somewhat veiled past. It is almost certain that she studied in France with Mazilier and danced as a guest artist in Russia. Mathias made her ³²⁶ American debut in New York in 1851. She married Francois Ravel and toured with the troupe.

Paul Brilliant was a dancer and ballet master. His debut in America was with the Ravel Troupe in the ballet ³²⁷ Urielle at Niblo's Opera House in 1849. He performed danseur noble parts with the various leading ballerinas of

³²⁴

Daily Missouri Republican, 7 May 1855.

³²⁵

Ibid., 9 May 1855.

³²⁶

George Chaffee, "Three or Four Graces," Dance Index, September-November 1944, p. 39.

³²⁷

Odell, V, p. 56.

the Ravel Troupe and also acted as ballet master staging and choreographing new ballets. In the 1860s, he directed 328
ballets at various music halls in New York City. Durang
described Brilliant as a "very agile and graceful
329 dancer." He died in New York City on May 15, 1864. 330

Monsieur Blondin, born Emile Gravelot, a French rope
331 dancer, was brought to this country by Gabriel Ravel in
332 1851. He travelled with the Ravel Troupe and later with
a circus company. His lasting claim to fame is that on
June 30, 1859, he crossed Niagara Falls on a tightrope at a
height of one hundred and fifty-one feet above the water. 333

The troupe brought many of the old Ravel favorites
and also some new works: Robert and Bertrand, The Magic
Flute, Asphodel of the Magic Horn, the beautiful ballet
Isle of the Nymphs, Pas de Quatre and Media or Dream of
334 Reality. The press reviewed the last work saying "the

328 Odell, VII, pp. 353, 415, 432.

329 Durang, Vol. 5, p. 303.

330 Robert L. Sherman, Actors and Authors with Composers and Managers Who Helped Make Them Famous: A Biography of Theatrical Celebrities from 1750 to 1950 (Chicago: Robert L. Sherman, 1957), p. 80.

331 Brown, p. 34.

332 Odell, VI, p. 69.

333 Brown, p. 34.

334 Daily Missouri Republican, 7-11 May 1855.

scenery and tricks are new and brilliant. . . ."

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Mathias did not appear with the troupe until May 1⁴, when she played "Uriel," a demon sent by the Devil who falls in love with Count Frederic, in La Diable Amoureaux. The ballet choreographed by Mazilier in 1840 also starred Paul Brilliant, Francois Ravel, and Victorine Franck in this production.

336

On the following evenings the bill was coupled with old favorite pantomimes and dancing. On the evening of May 18, Yrca Mathias took her benefit. The newspaper called her "magnificent" and "unrivalled to grace of limb and her 'poetry of motion' is of the most bewitching character."

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For her benefit, Mathias repeated La Diable Amoureaux, the troupe also performed Asphodel or the Magic Pen starring Francoise Ravel and La Guarache featuring Franc Marette. The evening ended with "El Ole" a grand Spanish dance by Mathias.

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The last night of the Ravel's engagement was also the last night of the season. The ballet of Paquita opened the evening, Mathias playing "Paquita" an orphan reared by gypsies in a ballet choreographed by Mazilier in 1846 which

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Daily Missouri Republican, 10 May 1855.

336

Ibid., 14-15 May 1853.

337

Ibid., 18 May 1855.

338

Ibid.

originally starred Carlotta Grisi. The second offering of the evening was The Red Gnome and White Warrier featuring Martette and Francois Ravel. The evening ended with a "Grand Spanish Divertissement" which included all the principal dancers. During the engagement of Francois and his troupe,
340
 Gabriel and his troupe played at the St. Louis Theatre.

At the end of the 1854-1855 season, a "Farewell Testimonial" was held for J. M. Field on May 31. For the occasion, Vallée danced a "Grand Pas."
341
 Field left St. Louis for Mobile, Alabama, where he died the next year. In his lifetime, J. M. Field had a successful theatrical career in several areas, except as a theatrical manager at the Varieties Theatre.

After the testimonial, the Varieties Theatre closed. However, the theatre was to reopen several times in future decades of St. Louis theatrical history.

People's Theatre

1854-1855

When the People's Theatre opened for its fall season on October 3, George Wood was sole lessee and manager. October 11, La Belle Oceana made her "first appearance (in a

³³⁹ Beaumont, p. 183.

³⁴⁰ Daily Missouri Republican, 15 May 1855.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 31 May 1855.

year)" dancing La Sylphide. Oceana performed the French Spy, a new addition to her repertory, on October 14. The press complimented the danseuse as "one of the most attractive features of the establishment."³⁴³ Oceana presented another new dance, "La Fleur Andalusia" and danced the "Grand Trial Dance" from La Bayadere with St. Clair on another evening. Then, Oceana returned to familiar titles from her previous repertory.³⁴⁴

When the spectacle, The Last Days of Pompeii opened in late November, Oceana joined in the production with a dance.³⁴⁵ After that brief interlude, she returned to performing a dance each evening between the play and the farce well into March of the new year.³⁴⁶ After March 12, she no longer appeared. At the end of the season, in May,³⁴⁷ St. Clair performed one evening a "Sailor's Hornpipe." At the People's Theatre this season, the emphasis was decidedly upon dramatic fare, with very little dancing included in the season.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 3-11 October 1854.

³⁴³

Ibid., 14-16 October 1854.

³⁴⁴

Ibid., 17 October-18 November 1854.

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Ibid., 22-23 November 1854.

³⁴⁶

Ibid., 24 November-12 March 1855.

³⁴⁷

Ibid., 13 March-31 May 1855.

St. Louis Theatre

1855

The new St. Louis Theatre, which had previously operated as the Bates Theatre, had been purchased by Benedict De Bar. He planned to offer a summer season and then lease the theatre out the rest of the year.

The St. Louis Theatre opened on May 1, "with a full and efficient company and Grand Orchestra" under the direction of Mr. August Waldauer, who was not only a talented musician, but also a playwright and translator.

For the first half of May, Vallée performed her standard repertory of favorite dances and twice performed
The Dumb Girl of Genoa with De Bar.³⁴⁸

The next week "Gabriel, Martinetti Family and Troupe" performed a "new," new to St. Louis, ballet pantomime, The Captive. This piece starred Mlle. Celestine Franck and Monsieur Collet. Gabriel Ravel and the Martinetti Family continued to perform their same repertory
as in previous visits to St. Louis.³⁴⁹ It did not matter that the Ravel's played the same pieces, the press reported,
"the St. Louis Theatre was crowded last night . . ."³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸Daily Missouri Republican, 1-15 May 1855.³⁴⁹Ibid., 15-16 May 1855.³⁵⁰Ibid., 16 May 1855.

The reporter from the Daily Missouri Republican commented that the Martinetti Family was a "great feature of the company," that it had been four years since Celestine Franck had been in St. Louis, and complimented Miss Frances, who shared some of the leading roles with ³⁵¹ Franck, as "grace itself."

Several days later, after Miss Frances performed the leading role in La Maja de Seville with Gabriel Ravel as her partner, the press reported ". . . Miss Frances, the young American danseuse is nightly gaining in new larels [sic]." ³⁵²

After the Ravel engagement, the resident stock company provided the dramatic fare and Vallée danced nightly. On June 18, the company trotted out in its entirety La Bayadere; Vallée danced "Zoloe" and Miss Scanlan from the ³⁵³ People's Theatre danced "Fatima." In all probability, Vallée, St. Clair or Oceana taught Scanlan the role of "Fatima," since the ballet was not seen as part of Scanlan's previous repertory.

St. Louis theatre-goers still appreciated the ballet and crowded to see it. The press praised the production and Vallée's "graceful performances and exquisite dancing in

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Daily Missouri Republican, 16 May 1855.

³⁵²

Ibid., 19 May 1855.

³⁵³

Ibid., 18-21 June 1855.

this ballet."

After several performances of the ballet, a burlesque of it entitled The Dutch Broom Girl followed which starred De Bar, a master in burlesque and travesty, as "Fatima" and Vallée as "Zoloe."³⁵⁵

On the final night of the regular summer season, July 4, Vallée performed a "National Dance," and it was announced that "De Bar was leaving for New York to engage the stars"³⁵⁶ for what could be anticipated as a promising fall season at the St. Louis Theatre.

St. Louis Theatre

1855-1856

The fall season at the St. Louis opened on August 6, but Vallée did not appear until August 20. Early in September, Vallée and De Bar repeated the burlesque Little Dutch Broom Girl and two nights later Indian Girl.³⁵⁷ The Daily Missouri Republican described the over 200 lb. De Bar as the "Broom Girl" in rather a tongue-in-cheek manner "the delicate sylph-like form . . . will be seen gliding through

³⁵⁴

Daily Missouri Republican, 20 June 1855.

³⁵⁵

Ibid., 22-23 June 1855.

³⁵⁶

Ibid., 24 June-4 July 1855.

³⁵⁷

Ibid., 6 August-5 September 1855.

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the maze of the dance." The press paid an equal compliment, but in seriousness, to Vallée. "It is a pleasure to see the acting of this charming lady. She is also remarkable for her admirable taste in dressing, being
359
always correct in her costume."

The French Spy was produced the following evening, and on September 13, Beauty and the Beast opened, which was billed as a musical piece, maybe a burletta, with De Bar and
360
Vallée.

Vallée danced nightly through September 27 and made a final appearance that fall on October 24 for Mr. Waldauer's benefit. The fall season at the St. Louis Theatre closed on November 1, so that the company had time
361
to travel to New Orleans.

H. L. Bateman, who had managed several theatres
362
during his career and several at one time leased the St. Louis Theatre. He opened it on November 5, 1855. During that month, Senorita Soto appeared one evening and a Mme. Olinza danced the "Redowa blindfolded on the tight

358 Daily Missouri Republican, 21 September 1855.

359 Ibid., 6 September 1855.

360 Ibid., 7-14 September 1855.

361 Ibid., 15 September-1 November 1855.

362 Ludlow, p. 527.

rope." Throughout November and December, the theatrical entertainment resembled a variety bill.

363

On January 7, 1856, the first night of Miss Matilda Heron's engagement, the Musard Family shared the program. They performed a serio-comic ballet entitled The Vine Dressers or the Imp of the Orackeafels. The entire Musard Family appeared in the ballet including La Petite Musard and aided by an efficient ballet company of the theatre.³⁶⁴ The Musards played the ballet for the next three evenings. The press called it a "charming" ballet. "It is just the thing after the tragedy [the major dramatic offering of the evening] to drive away the sadness."³⁶⁵

Madame and Jean Musard performed a pas de deux on January 11; Monsieur Henri Carlos and Omar Musard performed a comic "Pas de Froix."³⁶⁶ The following evening, Mr. Henri Musard displayed his versatility by dancing a "Comic Clog Dance," and the evening concluded with "La Globe Perche" performed by Carlos and O. Musard. For the next few evenings, the Musards repeated their pas de deuxs and pas de trois. The evening before their final

363

Daily Missouri Republican, November-December 1855.

364

Ibid., 7 January 1856.

365

Ibid., 8 January 1856.

366

Ibid., 11-19 January 1856.

appearance, Henri Musard introduced a "Terpsichorean
 367 Extravaganza." Barely a month later, the St. Louis
 Theatre presented Monsieur Monplaisir, billed as "the
 Greatest Male Dancer in the World" and Madame Ciocca.
 368

Hippolyte Monplaisir had been a pupil of Carlo Blasis in Milan. He and his wife, Adele, had danced in France, Spain and Italy where they had been leading
 369 dancers at La Scala for three seasons. The couple formed a ballet company of French and American dancers which toured extensively in the United States during the 1840s. Monsieur Monplaisir and his ballerina wife had since separated. It is ironic that Monsieur Monplaisir chose as his partner Ciocca and Madame Monplaisir chose as her partner Espinosa.

At their first performance at the St. Louis, they performed an original ballet divertissement, "Young America" which included a "Pas de Matelox" by Monplaisir, "Dances (Genius of America)" by Ciocca; "Grand Pas de Deux," by the couple, and a "Sailor's Hornpipe" by Mr. Harry Matthewman of the troupe. Monplaisir composed and danced with Ciocca the

367 Daily Missouri Republican, 11-19 January 1856.

368 Ibid.

369 Lillian Moore, "Esmeralda in America," Dance Magazine, October 1954, p. 32.

final offering in the divertissement, the original
 370 "Bohemian Polka."

The press complimented Bateman's managerial skill in engaging such high caliber performers. The reporter then became a romantic or maybe just a bit amoured with Ciocca. He described her as:

One of those sentimental danseuses who can convey more poetry in a pas than is contained in Bailey's mystic or imagined by any ordinary poet. There is a fine fancy in her bounds, a soft voluptuousness in her movements and a graceful grandeur in her tread, that combine to render her one of the most accomplished and fascinating dancers on the stage.³⁷¹

In spite of the weather, fine audiences assembled as the company performed their opening bill another two evenings. The press praised "Monplaisir's brilliant execution of dances" and stamped him as a great artist.³⁷²
³⁷³

The reporter also complimented

the corps dramatique of this theatre who deserve praise for the taste and neatness they displayed in their costumes, and efforts in support of the Monplaisirs. Both the ladies and gentlemen of the company appeared to advantage in the scenes and contributed to complete the picture of which Madame Ciocca and Monsieur Monplaisir form the foreground.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ Daily Missouri Republican, 11 February 1856.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 18 February 1856.

³⁷² Ibid., 10 February 1856.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

The next evening Monplaisir and Ciocca danced The Artist's Illusion, the title being the English translation of the ballet originally known as L'illusion de Peintre and the pas de deux "La Tarantella". Whomever the newspaper chose to cover the St. Louis Theatre obviously was knowledgeable about ballet. He wrote that "never either in Europe or in this country, had he seen any man who could approach him [Monplaisir] in execution or in grace."³⁷⁵ The writer must not have seen Espinosa.

The following evening the couple repeated the ballet and added the divertissement entitled "Young America" to the evening's program in honor of George Washington's birthday. The anonymous reporter lauded honors on Monplaisir and Ciocca rhetorically questioning "what terms can be employed to describe the superb dancing . . ." The reporter continued to offer a romantic image that the couple's 'poetry of motion' lulled the beholder into a dreamlike trance as if participating in a mystic experience of watching the Fairy Court dance on haunted moors.³⁷⁶ The Artist's Illusion played another evening and Monplaisir and Ciocca concluded the evening with The Spanish Smugglers'

³⁷⁵

Daily Missouri Republican, 21 February 1856.

³⁷⁶

Ibid., 22 February 1856.

Theatre.

On February 25, Ciocca and Monplaisir danced a "Grand Sicillian Character Dance." For the next two evenings, the troupe performed the mythological ballet, Diana and Endymion. On February 28, the couple repeated their "Sicillian Character Dance."³⁷⁸

On Leap Year evening, the couple took a benefit and only performed a single work each evening until March 4, when Diana and Endymion was repeated. The next evening the Capricious Widow or Still Waters Run Deep . . . opened. The ballet included a number of dances, a Waltz, a pas de trois by Mr. and Mrs. Mathewman and Madame Angelina, "De Gitana," "Mazourka" and finally "the highly popular Zingarilla" by Monplaisir and Ciocca. The ballet was repeated the next evening; but on March 8, the couple repeated the "Grand Characteristic Dance."³⁷⁹

The Payne and Harrison Opera Troupe began an engagement at the St. Louis on March 10. Monplaisir and Ciocca remained and performed a "Bohemian Polka," a pas de deux in the second act of the opera The Bohemian Girl. Until March 24, the couple either danced in the opera

presented or their pas de deux was an afterpiece.

The opera troupe performed Cinderella and Monplaisir and Ciocca performed a pas de deux as part of the Ballroom scene. The opera was repeated for five more performances. April 1 was the last appearance of Monplaisir and Ciocca. ³⁸¹
The St. Louis season continued, but without any dance.

A short summer season opened on June 5 with The French Spy or Arab Boy. Instead of Vallée playing the three part role, St. Clair performed it. On June 12, St. Clair played opposite Vallée in a farce, Good For Nothing. The ³⁸² season ended July 1. Undoubtedly the high point of the entire St. Louis Theatre season in dance had been the engagement of H. Monplaisir and Ciocca. Their long engagement provided an impressive contribution to the season as a whole, and their fine dancing added artistically to the prestige of the new theatre.

People's Theatre

1855-1856

The People's Theatre opened only briefly in the fall of 1855. For several evenings, Miss Louisa Pray who had

³⁸⁰ Daily Missouri Republican, 9-23 March 1856.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 24 March-1 April 1856.

³⁸² Ibid., 5 June-1 July 1856.

383

danced in Philadelphia and then at the Olympic Theatre in
 New York as an entr'act dancer, performed as part of the
 entertainments. After October 1, the theatre did not
 advertise in the Daily Missouri Republican.

384

January 1856, the People's Theatre again began advertising in the Daily Missouri Republican. George Wood, sole lessee and manager, presented on January 8, a group of Spanish Dancers in "A Grand Military Divertissement," The Siege of Sarragossa, "Nautical Spanish Dance" by six dancers, "Characteristic Dances" and "Jota Arragonnais." The troupe repeated the bill the following evening. In addition, Miss Louisa Pray danced "The People's Medley."³⁸⁵

The Spanish Dancers kept the first two pieces from their previous programs and substituted for the latter two, Zapreteado De Cadiz [sic] and "The Golden Farmer." The next two evenings, The Spanish Dancers took a benefit for Signora Cabara. They performed an entirely new program, "Divertissement of Linda Malagnia" and the ballet Therese or The Orphan of Genoa. Their final performance was a series of three divertissements: "La Macarena," "Un Reoreo en

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Brown, p. 295.

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Odell, VI, p. 57.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 8-9 January 1856.

Triano," and "El Agan [sic] Va." Little information about the troupe of Spanish Dancers has been discovered. The next two evenings they made a brief appearance at the Varieties Theatre and then disappeared. St. Louis may have been a stop over while they were waiting for either a train or a steamer.

A number of dancers appeared at the People's Theatre throughout the winter and spring. Until May 4, Miss Louisa Pray performed fancy dances. On one occasion, her sister, Frances, danced with her. Miss Maggie Scanlan performed
387 only one evening.

On May 26, after the fares for the last year had been quite mediocre, the theatre announced that Madame Monplaisir and Leon Espinosa had been engaged. The couple's first three performances were a grand ballet spectacle, performed for the first time in St. Louis, Beatrix or the Pet of the Fairies. Following the ballet,
388 Espinosa and Monplaisir performed a "Grand Comic Dance."

Adele Monplaisir had been premier danseuse and first pantomimist assoluta of the Imperial Theatre La Scala of

389

Milan. She and her husband, Hippolyte, came to this country and formed the Monplaisir Ballet Troupe which toured extensively in the 1840s. Madame Monplaisir left the United States and returned seven years later in 1856. She was now separated from her husband and toured with Espinosa. The New Orleans Daily Picayune reported that Monplaisir, Espinosa and Gredelue had arrived from California for an engagement at the Gaiety Theatre.

390

The Daily Missouri Republican reported that

the Espinosa and Monplaisir Ballet Troupe made an immense hit last night at the People's Theatre.

. . . Mons. Espinosa and Monplaisir are unequalled as pantomimists and have succeeded in securing an admirable troupe, embracing several of our favorite dancers.³⁹¹

After three performances, the press reported that although the company planned to present a new ballet, "we doubt not but the change will be fully appreciated by the public."³⁹²"

The new ballet was really a revival of an old one,
Deschalumeaux with Gredelue playing the title role and

389

New York Evening Post, 19 October 1847.
(Lillian Moore Collection).

390

Daily Picayune, 18 March 1856. (Lillian Moore Collection).

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Daily Missouri Republican, 27 May 1856.

392

Ibid., 29 May 1856.

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393

Monplaisir as "Ninette." Gredelue, like Espinosa, had come from the Porte-St. Martin Theatre, and had joined the ranks of the Ravel ballet in 1851.
394

On June 1, Espinosa produced a comic ballet The Trials, Troubles and Tribulations of Espinosa which played for three consecutive performances. 395 "A grand Terpsichorean Festival" followed the next evening featuring Monplaisir and Espinosa and Mlle. Adelaide, Maggie Scanlan and a full corps de ballet. The evening concluded with the "grand Spanish dance," "El Contrabandista" danced by Monplaisir. The next evening the troupe played the same bill.
396

The final grand ballet which the troupe presented was L'Almee or The Oriental Dream. In its first performance in St. Louis, Espinosa portrayed the young sultan, "Radhib" 397 and Monplaisir took the part of "Haydee."

It is ironic that Espinosa and Madame Monplaisir's engagement at the People's Theatre followed Monsieur Monplaisir and Ciocca's engagement at the St. Louis.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 30-31 May 1856.

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Odell VI, p. 7.

395

Daily Missouri Republican, 1-3 June 1856.

396

Ibid., 4-5 June 1856.

397

Ibid., 7-8 June 1856.

Espinosa had danced in St. Louis for several engagements with different partners. This was his first appearance at the People's Theatre and his last appearance in St. Louis. Espinosa and Monplaisir continued to dance at the People's Theatre performing pas de deus and divertissements between the plays until nearly the end of June when the theatre
 closed for the summer.

398

Varieties Theatre

1856

The Varieties Theatre opened for two performances of the Spanish Dancers after they had left the People's Theatre on January 13. The six dancers performed Las Boleras Del Popuiri between the acts of the Country Girl, a play performed by the Philodramatic Society, an amateur German drama group. La Macarena followed the play and the evening concluded with the divertissement of "El Agua Va" by the entire company of six dancers. The dancers performed the
 same program the next evening.

399

The Varieties opened on November 19 and 20 for the production of The Seven Ages of Woman with Emma Stanley. After a two night engagement of "grand lyric entertainment,"

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Daily Missouri Republican, 9-27 June 1856.

399

Ibid., 13-14 January 1856.

she moved to the St. Louis Theatre.

St. Louis Theatre

1856-1857

The fall season at the St. Louis Theatre began on August 6. Vallée's first performance on August 13, was a dance entitled "Medley of Nations." She continued to dance her repertory of pas seuls and alternately played the pantomimic dramas of Wept of the Wish-ton-Wish and The Dumb Girl of Genoa with De Bar. During the month of August, the
401 St. Louis was the only theatre open.

In September, De Bar and Vallée performed the burlesque of the Dutch Dancing Girl, yet another parody of La Bayadere. The next evening, Vallée and De Bar presented their other staple of pantomimic drama, The French Spy. Vallée danced "favorite dances" between the dramatic fare until the burlesque of Beauty and the Beast opened on
402 September 22. On October 29, the last night of the
403 season, Vallée made her final appearance.

Within a few days of the end of the fall season, the

400 Daily Missouri Republican, 19-20 November 1856.

401 Ibid., 1-31 August 1856.

402 Ibid., 1-22 September 1856.

403 Ibid., 1-30 October 1856.

St. Louis Theatre opened for its winter season with Mr. Cartlick as manager. A Miss King danced the first two evenings of the season performing fancy dances. She was followed by a single appearance by a Mrs. Davis. On November 14, La Belle Oceana appeared for a company member's benefit.

In December, La Belle Oceana played The French Spy in which she participated in broad sword combat. La Belle Oceana appeared twice more in December, first performing the original "Fireman's Hornpipe" and later that week "La Zingrilla [sic]."⁴⁰⁴ During the week between Christmas and New Years Day, the theatre offered the Fairy in the Grotto--a Christmas pantomime.⁴⁰⁵

On January 6, La Belle Oceana appeared as "Lemnot," the gypsy boy in Flowers of the Forest or the Gypsies of Wolf's Glen. That same evening, Lurline or the Naiads of the Rhine,⁴⁰⁶ a three act musical fairy spectacle was performed. Later that week, January 10, the members of the St. Louis company presented several evenings of pantomimes. The Red Gnome and the White Warrior, their first offering, introduced Monsieur Jarding from the Academie Royal, Paris,

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Daily Missouri Republican, 10-13 December 1856.

⁴⁰⁵

Ibid., 27-31 December 1856.

⁴⁰⁶

Ibid., 6 January 1857.

in the title role. "The White Warrior" was played by Mr. D. W. Leeson and "Alphonso" by La Belle Oceana.

The Daily Missouri Republican recalled the production as originally performed by the Ravel company and now by "a talented corps of pantomimists engaged by the theatre."⁴⁰⁷ The press went on to describe the talents of the principal pantomimist and director, "Mr. Leeson, the clever pantomimist . . . La Belle Oceana and Monsieur Jarding, the celebrated gymnast"⁴⁰⁸

The Red Gnome alternated with another pantomime, The Crock of Gold, and spectacle followed spectacle until the opening of the "grand, legendary, romantic spectacle of Faustus." Faustus opened February 14 and played throughout the month.⁴⁰⁹ Most likely as a member of the dramatic company, La Belle Oceana participated in these pantomimes. She returned to her dancing on March 3 in "La Zingrilla" and the following evening performed a "Pawnee Indian Dance" and a "Highland Fling."⁴¹⁰

On March 12, Lola Montez advertised as "the celebrated danseuse and actress" arrived at the St. Louis.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 6 January 1857.

⁴⁰⁸

Ibid., 10 January 1857.

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Ibid., 14 February-2 March 1857.

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Ibid., 3-11 March 1857.

Her repertoire this engagement was mostly dramatic, however she did perform her "Spider Dance," "El Ole" and a French Sailor's "Hornpipe" dressed as a cabin boy followed by Mr. Leeson performing an "English Sailor's Hornpipe."⁴¹¹

After the Montez engagement, for only two evenings in March a Mlle. De Clancey performed a "Dance."⁴¹²

The spring season opened on April 15.

Mlle. H. Vallée was not listed as the principal dancer, but as a member of the dramatic company. However, Vallée appeared once that season in a favorite dance.⁴¹³

Near the end of May, The Marsh Juvenile Troupe comprised of thirty-one girls and two boys appeared. During their extended engagement from May 25 through June 18, Little Jeanie performed a fancy dance for a week and Miss Louise danced on two occasions.⁴¹⁴ In December 1855, the Marsh children had made their debut at the Broadway Theatre in New York.⁴¹⁵ Their repertory was dramatic in nature with dancing performed by several of the children.

The dancing for the season seemed to be little more

⁴¹¹ Daily Missouri Republican, 12-21 March 1857.

⁴¹² Ibid., 21, 24 March 1857.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 10 April-24 May 1857.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 25 May-19 June 1857.

⁴¹⁵ Odell, VI, p. 426-427.

than a perfunctory exercise. Vallée performed in the fall season and La Belle Oceana danced and played in pantomimes during the winter until Vallée returned in the spring.

People's Theatre

1856-1857

The People's Theatre, managed by W. G. Wood, opened for a single evening on December 15, 1856. Later in the month, the theatre reopened for several performances. Miss Milly Peters performed a dance between the dramatic fare. On December 29, the Keller Troupe opened its
 engagement.
 416

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Keller had recently come from Europe.
 417 Their entertainment, though not dance, was closely related to the art and quite unique. The troupe created "representations in living pictures of the legends
 418 of Greek mythology and scenes from the Old Testament." Charles Krone, an actor of the period, recounted that Mr. Keller was a German sculptor. The troupe included his wife, her two sisters, two other women and two men, "Spaniards also possessed of rare physical beauty," and five

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Daily Missouri Republican, 15-31 December 1856.

417

Brown, p. 202, some authors have spelled Mr. Keller's first name as Louis.

418

Charles A. Krone, "Recollections of an Old Actor" III, p. 62-63.

other people who took supporting roles. The troupe engaged in each city quite a number of children and youths to play angels, nymphs and satyrs. An English stage manager preceded the troupe to rehearse the neophytes for a week
 419
 in advance.

On Friday, January 4, the People's Theatre
 420
 advertised the "second week of the Keller Troupe." The next week, the troupe began taking benefits, Mr. Keller, then Wilhelmina, Julie and Amelie. Their final piece,
Washington Crossing the Delaware tableaux played for
 421
 the week.

Early in February an English Opera Company played the People's Theatre. During February, March and until the middle of April, Miss Milly Peters danced a pas seul between the play and the farce. On April 13, the Keller Troupe played a return engagement which lasted until May 2. Milly Peters returned to her pas seul each evening until June 25. During the last week of the season, Miss Llewelyn
 422
 performed instead of Miss Peters.

In the 1856-1857 season at the People's Theatre,

⁴¹⁹ Charles A. Krone, "Recollections of an Old Actor" III, p. 62-63.

⁴²⁰ Daily Missouri Republican, 4 January 1857.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 4-17 January 1857.

⁴²² Ibid., 13 April-25 May 1857.

dramatic fare dominated the season with dance being only a pas between the play and the farce.

Summary

The St. Louis Theatre, operated by Ludlow and Smith since 1837 was the first theatre west of the Mississippi River. The pioneer work of Ludlow and Smith in St. Louis established a permanent theatre with a regular season and a professional standard of productions. The St. Louis Theatre after serving the community for nearly fifteen years was demolished and replaced by a customs house in 1851.

During the 1850s, several theatres were built which expanded the amusements available to St. Louisians. In 1851, Mr. John Bates, a theatre owner from Cincinnati, opened The Bates Theatre. The next year, Mr. J. M. Field as director of the Varieties Dramatic Association, a group of stockholders, erected the Varieties Theatre. At the end of 1852, the People's Theatre opened its doors offering much the same high quality of theatrical entertainments but at lower admission prices. In December 1852, after a heavy accumulation of snow, the roof collapsed at the Bates Theatre.

After several seasons and repairs to his theatre, Mr. Bates became disenchanted with the theatrical business and offered his theatre for sale. Finally in 1855, Benedict De Bar, an actor and New Orleans theatre owner, came to a financial agreement with Bates. De Bar bought the property and renamed the theatre the St. Louis. That same year, J. M. Field left the Varieties Theatre which had proved to

be a financial failure. The theatre was then used by the Varieties Dramatic Association or leased to various community groups. The People's Theatre had undergone a series of managers and was finally leased by George Wood in 1854. Wood was a one time hotel owner, whose leadership provided some stability to the theater's operation.

During the theatrical seasons of 1850 through 1856, St. Louis theatre-goers saw an array of American and foreign stars and companies. At the old St. Louis Theatre, Benedict De Bar, an actor whose talents lay in low comedy, burlesque and travesty, sang and danced with his wife, Henrietta Vallée in their repertory of pantomimes. Vallée, one of three sisters from Philadelphia, had danced with Fanny Elssler. In addition, Vallée performed a repertory of romantic ballets and fancy dances.

In 1851, Leon Espinosa, one of the most talented dancers and technical virtuosos of the nineteenth century, made his debut in St. Louis with Celestine Franck, an excellent French dancer. Their company whetted St. Louis theatre-goers' appetite for the ballet stars which would play in the following seasons.

When the Bates Theatre opened in 1851, La Belle Oceana was the principal dancer of the theatre. She soon became a favorite to St. Louis audiences. Monsieur Bouxary,

Mlle. Julia Vallée and Monsieur Canne from New Orleans joined La Belle Oceana during the season.

In 1852, De Bar and Vallée played an engagement at the Bates Theatre, and Vallée often danced with the principal dancer for the season, Sallie St. Clair. St. Clair had danced with the Monplaisir Troupe in the 1840s. She was a popular danseuse on the St. Louis stage, but in her later career she became an actress in St. Louis and New York.

In 1853 and 1854, the famous Ravel Family of tight-rope performers, pantomimists, and dancers appeared at the Bates Theatre.

In 1855, Benedict De Bar purchased the Bates Theatre and renamed it the St. Louis Theatre. Of course, De Bar and Vallée appeared in pantomime and she as principal dancer. Maggie Scanlan also performed her fancy dances and a few balletic roles. The Gabriel Ravel Troupe with the Martinetti Family played the St. Louis Theatre that year. At the Varieties Theatre, Francois Ravel's Troupe played an engagement. St. Clair began playing more dramatic roles and occasionally dancing during this time.

In 1866, a lesser known family theatrical troupe, the Musards, presented pantomime and dance. The most impressive stars of the season were Hippolyte Monplaisir, a French dancer who had toured with his wife in the United States in the 1840s. His excellent dancing had accorded him

a remarkable reputation as one of the finest male dancers in the nineteenth century. His partner was Ciocca who had earlier appeared at the Varieties with Espinosa in 1852. La Belle Oceana joined the St. Louis dramatic company performing in pantomimes and occasional dances.

When the Varieties Theatre opened in 1852, Leon Espinosa and Ciocca appeared as part of the outstanding dramatic company. Ciocca was one of the first pupils of Carlo Blasis to appear on the American stage. In the fall of 1852, Emilie Baron, a dancer of the company suffered a fatal accident and La Belle Oceana took over her roles.

In 1853, De Bar and Vallée played an engagement at the Varieties. Sallie St. Clair and La Belle Oceana were the principal dancers, with St. Clair playing in farces. That year, the notorious Lola Montez performed both dramatic works and dances. Another Spanish ballerina, Pepita de Sota and her partner, George Washington Smith appeared at the Varieties in some of the ballets which he composed. George Washington Smith had been a member of Fanny Elssler's American troupe.

In 1854, the Pougaud Ballet, featuring Pougaud, Lavigne, Mege and Canne provided a repertory of romantic ballets and divertissements. The Ravel Troupe played the Bates Theatre in 1854, and when the roof of the theatre collapsed under an accumulation of snow, the troupe moved to

the Varieties. After performing fancy dances at the Varieties, Maggie Scanlan joined La Belle Oceana, Sallie St. Clair and Miss Freeman as a dancing member of the dramatic company at the People's Theatre.

Only one attraction appeared at the Varieties Theatre in 1856, a group of Spanish dancers who played two nights after an engagement at the People's Theatre. At the People's Theatre, Louisa Fray and Maggie Scanlan were the resident dancers. The attraction that year besides the brief appearance of the Spanish troupe was Espinosa and Adele Monplaisir, who was Hippolyte's estranged wife.

From 1850-1856, St. Louis was emerging as a city in the new West, on the edge of a vast frontier. St. Louisians could point with pride to four theatres in the community, three of which had been built during the first years of the 1850s. It was during this time, that many dancers, recognized stars in foreign capitals who had come to America to perform, visited the St. Louis theatres. Often, these stars were attracted to return to the city for more than one engagement.

Theatrical Seasons

1850-1856

	St. Louis Theatre	Bates Theatre	Varieties Theatre	People's Theatre
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1850	De Bar/Vallée*			
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1851	Espinosa/Franck* De Bar/Vallée*	Bouxary/Vallée/ Canne* La Belle Oceana		
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1852	--CLOSED--	De Bar/Vallée* Sallie St. Clair	Espinosa/Ciocca* La Belle Oceana	La Belle Oceana
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1853	Ravel Troupe*	De Bar/Vallée* Lola Montez* Pepita de Sota/ G. W. Smith* Sallie St. Clair La Belle Oceana	La Belle Oceana De Gray Bennie Maggie Scanlan Sallie St. Clair Terpsichorean Sisters Hattie Vallée*
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1854	Ravel Troupe* (Gabriel)	Pougaud Troupe* Ravel Troupe* (Gabriel) De Gray Bennie Sallie St. Clair Maggie Scanlan	La Belle Oceana Sallie St. Clair Maggie Scanlan Miss Freeman
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St. Louis Theatre

Bates Theatre

Varieties Theatre

People's Theatre

1855 --CLOSED--

renamed the
St. Louis Theatre

Ravel-Martinetti Troupe*	Ravel Troupe* (Francois)	La Belle Oceana
Gabriel	Sallie St. Clair	Sallie St. Clair
De Bar/Vallée	Louisa Pray	Louisa Pray
Maggie Scanlan		

1856

Musard Family*	--CLOSED--	Espinosa/A. Monplaisir*
H. Monplaisir/ Ciocca*	Spanish Dancers*	Spanish Dancers*
La Belle Oceana		Louisa Pray
Hattie Vallée		Maggie Scanlan

1857
(Jan.-
July)

La Belle Oceana	
Leeson/Jarding*	
Lola Montez*	

Keller Troupe*
Miss Llewelyn
Millie Peters

*Designates a visiting star or company

CHAPTER III

ACT II: ST. LOUIS STAUNCH IN THE PANIC OF 1857 BUT WITH DIVIDED SYMPATHIES IN THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

Entr'act

In 1857, St. Louis was the largest city in the
⁴²³ nation west of Pittsburgh. The city was an economic and cultural center in the new West. The wave of prosperity which so many business men had ridden in the 1850s was about to spend its energy and recede, leaving in its wake a financial crisis.

The financial Panic of 1857 first closed the banks in New York on October 13 and in Boston on the next day. The citizens of St. Louis became obviously uneasy as the Panic began to spread in the East. Considerable Eastern capital had been invested during the fifties in railroads,
⁴²⁴ banks and manufacturing in the city.

In this economic situation, "Missouri's financial life was highly centralized in the banking institutions of
⁴²⁵ its great metropolis St. Louis." Also, "Missouri's

⁴²³

St. Louis City Planning Commission, p. 17.

⁴²⁴

Ryle, p. 46.

⁴²⁵

Ibid.

finance was controlled largely by a few St. Louis bankers
 426 backed by Eastern capital." Ryle contended that Missouri
 and St. Louis were not affected as severely as the Eastern
 cities by the Panic and especially in the years that
 427 followed, 1858-1860.

Although St. Louisians enjoyed some measure of economic security above that of other Americans during the crisis, like all Americans they became more prudent in their attendance at the theatre. From an actor's point of view, Charles Krone remembered

the great financial crisis of 1857 burst in upon us the fatal results of the financial crisis became more apparent each day. Bank failures followed each other in rapid succession, so that notes and bills that were good one hour were mere waste paper the next.⁴²⁸

Business was bad and the theatrical business was no exception. Krone recalled that "many were the stars that failed to draw the expense; . . . the depression and misery increased; . . . the season threatened to be a losing
 429 one."

Emerging from the depression, St. Louis and Missouri faced an even greater issue. For many years, Missouri had

⁴²⁶

Ryle, p. 46.

⁴²⁷

Ibid.

⁴²⁸

Krone, III, pp. 172-173.

⁴²⁹

Ibid., p. 175.

been a slave holding state, with an economy resembling
⁴³⁰
 non-slave holding sister states. "The apprehensiveness
 and extreme sensitiveness of proslavery Missouri manifest
⁴³¹
 itself in the winter of 1859-1860"

When the southern states seceded in 1861, Missouri
 contemplated leaving the Union. Because the ethnic
 population in Missouri was anti-slavery, the extreme
 controversy called for the question to be put to a vote. As
 a result, Missouri remained in the Union.

When the War Between the States broke out, a
 member of the St. Louis Planning Commission described
⁴³²
 St. Louis as "the most important City in the West." The
 city's population had risen 106.5 percent from what it had
⁴³³
 been in 1850; the total inhabitants numbered 160,773. In
 St. Louis, Camp Jackson had been under the command of
 Southern sympathizers, but in May of 1861, it was captured
⁴³⁴
 by United States troops. This incident has been
 considered by many historians as the first real blow struck

⁴³⁰

Ryle, p. 50.

⁴³¹

Galusha Anderson, A Border City in the Civil War
 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1908), p. 11.

⁴³²

St. Louis Planning Commission, p. 19.

⁴³³

Official Manual of the State of Missouri, 1969-70.

⁴³⁴

St. Louis Planning Commission, p. 19.

for the North during the war.

During the period of the war, the river traffic came to a virtual standstill. However, when strangers and troops began pouring daily into St. Louis, it improved the city's morale as well as business.

On August 14, 1861, Major-General John C. Fremont declared martial law in St. Louis. Under the Provost Marshall's command a closing law came into effect. All amusement places had to close at 10:30 p.m. on weekdays and they were prohibited from operating on Sundays; however, this order was not stringently enforced.

In September of 1861, the St. Louis Theatre was the only legitimate theatre operating in St. Louis. Other places of entertainment included music halls, minstrel shows and a German theatre. In the early years of the war, many stars were unwilling to travel even to St. Louis, which was too close to the war to be considered absolutely safe. By early 1862, the public wanted entertainment of a light nature which would take their war-weary minds from the drama of everyday life. The Daily Missouri Democrat carried this article in its January 28, 1862, edition:

435
J. A. Devory, History of St. Louis and Vicinity
(St. Louis, 1898), p. 50.

It is gratifying to know that, despite the peculiar position of the time, our citizens seem determined to enjoy themselves. Our public places of amusements are all well patronized --better so perhaps than in any other city of the Union.⁴³⁶

As the war became a part of everyday life, the last romantic mists cleared and a new sense of realism began emerging. St. Louisians, like all Americans, became captured by the vogue of variety entertainment.

Ballet, Pantomime and Tendu Corde

St. Louis Theatre

1857-1858

De Bar opened the renovated and enlarged St. Louis Theatre on August 4, 1857. The first stars of the summer season were Gabriel and Francois Ravel. The ballet d'action Katty the Vivadour opened the season. "Katty" was, of course, played by Yrca Mathias, "Hans," her lover, by Paul Brilliant and "Mr. Albert Robintace" by Francois Ravel. The pantomime which shared the bill that evening was
⁴³⁷
M. Deschaluneau.

On August 6, a new ballet Rose and Papillon was introduced with Mathias as "Le Papillon." In addition to one of the old pantomimes presented nightly, there were the "Grand Evolutions" and tight rope feats by the

436

Daily Missouri Democrat, 28 January 1862.

437

Daily Missouri Republican, 4 August 1857.

Martinettis.

The next new ballet, a "magnificent scenic ballet" The Isle of Nymphs opened on the same evening with the pantomime The Secret Marriage on August 8. Parquette, a comic ballet, and Polichinelle or the Venetian Carnival followed. The troupe played "an entirely new comic pantomime," The Conscript with the ballet The Bouquet in which Yrca Mathias, Miss Frances and Zoe Gilbert
439
appeared.

The Ravel presentation of a new fairy pantomime Asphodel played for several evenings which the newspaper considered "remarkable for the number of exceeding
440 cleverness of its transformations and delusions. . . ." Sharing the program during the run of Asphodel was a new divertissement "La Prima Donna" featuring Mlles. Mathias,
441 Gilbert, Frances and Monsieur Albert.

On August 20, the Martinetti Family took their benefit. The brothers, Phillips, Julian and Paul, with their sister Mlle. Desire ascended on the rope from the back of

438

Daily Missouri Republican, 5-7 August 1857.

439

Ibid., 8-15 August 1857.

440

Ibid., 19 August 1857.

441

Ibid.

the stage to the gallery.

Concluding the third week of their engagement on August 22, the troupe presented The School Master, an entirely new pantomime, and "Parquretta" an elegant divertissement. On August 26, the Ravel Troupe performed The White Cat, a comic pantomime. The press commented that ". . . their resources seem to be exhaustless as they present, even at this late period, new tricks and new wonders, and the unrivaled ballet corps please as freshly as ever with new graces."⁴⁴³

The Ravels had an instinct for playing their repertory of old favorites and introducing new tricks, performers, and works to keep the audiences returning to the theatre when they played.

Before ending their lengthy engagement at the St. Louis Theatre, the troupe introduced yet another new pantomime, Simon's Mishaps and a new ballet, A Day in Cadiz.⁴⁴⁴

The first night of the dramatic season at the St. Louis opened on August 31. The only dancing which appeared during the season was in the burlesque The Dutch

⁴⁴²

Daily Missouri Republican, 20 August 1857.

⁴⁴³

Ibid., 26 August 1857.

⁴⁴⁴

Ibid., 27-29 August 1857.

Dancing Girl produced in late September. De Bar played
 "Fatima" and La Belle Oceana appeared as "Zoloe."⁴⁴⁵

The St. Louis Theatre announced at the beginning of 1858 that its managing and production staff included Waldauer and Fuller as lessees and managers, Mr. Hilton, stage manager and Mr. G. T. Collins as acting manager, the latter had been instrumental in the building and at one time manager of the People's Theatre.⁴⁴⁶

The major attraction that winter was the Ronzani Ballet Troupe which opened on February 8. The troupe had opened in New York City at the Broadway Theatre in 1857 with numerous artists, eighty coryphees and nearly one hundred ⁴⁴⁷ dancers. The director, Domenico Ronzani had been first mime at La Scala and Milan or ^M pimo ballerion per le parti.⁴⁴⁸ He was born in Italy in 1800 and during his career he performed mime, choreographed and later acted as an impresario in bringing his company to the United States. He directed and restaged ballets not only in Italy, but in

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Daily Missouri Republican, August-September 1857.

⁴⁴⁶

Ibid., 1 January 1858.

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Odell, VII, pp. 2-3.

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"Ronzani File," Lillian Moore Collection at The Dance Collection of The New York Library of The Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, New York, New York.

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449

other European capitals. Marian Hannah Winter wrote that Ronzani's "association with [Augusta] Maywood [the American dancer] as a director, agent and impresario gave him the essential experience to undertake his American tour
450 a decade later." The troupe which visited St. Louis
451 numbered thirty-four artists. The galaxy of stars included Louise Lamoureux, Phillippe Baratti, the Pratesi
452 sisters and brothers, Cesare and Pia Cecchetti with their
453 seven year old son, Enrico and many other dancers.

The Daily Missouri Republican compared the visit of the Ronzani Ballet in generating excitement in the community to when Edwin Forrest, the eminent tragedian, had played St. Louis. The newspaper reported the troupe from the theatres of Turin and Milan and recalled the ballet's first American triumphs in Philadelphia and New York. The press went on to say the company had also performed in Boston,
454 Providence, Baltimore, Cincinnati and Louisville.

449 Marian Hannah Winter, "Theatre of Marvels." Dance
Index 7 (January, February 1948): p. 13.
450

451 Ibid.
452

Daily Missouri Republican, 8 February 1858.

453 Lillian Moore, "George Washington Smith," p. 121.

454 Daily Missouri Republican, 7 February 1858.

Ibid., 8 February 1858.

On its first appearance in St. Louis the Ronzani Ballet presented the Golden Horse which the theatre billed in the newspaper as "the new, grand, fantastic, fairy ballet and gorgeous spectacle, in three acts and four tableaux composed by Signor Domenico Ronzani" ⁴⁵⁵

The Golden Horse, or in the newspaper synopsis of the ballet "to give it its . . . liquid pronunciation, Il Cavallo d'Oro . . . is founded upon the old story of the loves of Bertha and Ruth and the adventures of the Scottish Knight Prince Glenawan. The action commences in Scotland ⁴⁵⁶ and concludes in Fairyland. . . ."

After the opening night, the newspaper reported that "the appearance of the Ronzanis henceforth will be recalled as one of the most remarkable in the theatrical history in St. Louis." ⁴⁵⁷ Later in the week, the newspaper reported that "Il Cavallo d'Oro attracted another crowded and brilliant audience last night, including the most fashionable portion of the deletanti of the city. . . .inaugurating a season which . . . must be regarded as one of the most prosperous ever known at a place of public amusement in this

⁴⁵⁵ Daily Missouri Republican, 8 February 1858.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 9 February 1858.

458
city."

On February 10, the Daily Missouri Republican ran a detailed "sketch of the plot and leading situations" of the ballet The Golden Horse which they noted would run until further notice.

Each day the newspaper was filled with a new article extolling the Ronzani Ballet. On February 11 the theatre wrote the corps de ballet was "the fullest, finest, and most effective devoted to the pure ballet that has ever crossed the Atlantic."⁴⁵⁹ Later in the same article he wrote that at least half a dozen of the corps would rank as a premiere danseuse.⁴⁶⁰ This was the first time St. Louis had seen Italian ballet on such a scale. Before most of the artists who had travelled and performed in St. Louis, besides Ciocca, had been trained in the French school of dancing.

The theatre reporter considered Mlle. Lamoureux, who he called

the chef of the corps, was a fair wonder and executes every possible complication of her art with the precision of a piece of mechanism, varying them at ease, . . . with the infusion of

458

Daily Missouri Republican, 10 February 1858.

459

Ibid.

460

Ibid., 11 February 1858.

461

Ibid.

all the life and animation necessary to a full and brilliant effect.⁴⁶²

The Pratesi sisters, he commented, "closely resembled each other in style as in person"⁴⁶³ as he continued writing about their singularity of appearance, one speculates if the sisters might not have been twins.

Next the reporter covered the "qualification of the male adjuncts" of the troupe: Signor Baratti was "a worthy peer of the brilliant Lamoureux and each of the graceful sisters Pratesi had a proper vis-a-vis in the ranks of the male members."⁴⁶⁴ The reporter probably was referring to Signors Cecchetti and Santolini. At another time a reporter wrote in more detail about Baratti's artistry in The Golden Horse:

Signor Baratti exhibited, in an astonishing degree, immensity of power combined with the highest proficiency in the school of art. It appeared at times while executing his mercurial flights, as if he did not again intend to touch the ground.⁴⁶⁵

On February 12, the Ronzani Troupe presented a new ballet or grand fantasia Esmeralda staged by Ronzani. The Perrot ballet from the story by Victor Hugo premiered in

⁴⁶²

Daily Missouri Republican, 11 February 1858.

⁴⁶³

Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴

Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵

Ibid., 18 February 1858.

London in 1844; the ballet was brought to the United States
⁴⁶⁶ four years later by the Monplaisirs. A comic divertissement entitled L'Alleggio Militaire or Military Quarters followed in which Lamoureux, Cecchetti, Pratesi Sisters, Santolini and Baratti appeared.

The last piece on the evening's performance was "the grand ballet divertissement with clever tableaux" entitled "L'Illusione D'Un Pittore" or "Artist's Illusion." In the Ronzani production of "Artist's Illusion," Baratti played "Alfredo;" Lamoureux played "Jenny." The Pratesi sisters, Cecchetti, Santolini and a full corps de ballet appeared.
⁴⁶⁷

On February 12, the management of the theatre published an advertisement for fifty young ladies for the grand ballet of Faust. Applications would be taken by Mr. Rullman, manager of the Ronzani Troupe at the
⁴⁶⁸ theatre.

The ballet performed the same bill the following evening before the advertised opening on February 15 of Domenico Ranzani' ballet, Faust. Signor Pratesi played "Faust," Lamoureux played "Margherita," betrothed to

⁴⁶⁶ Lillian Moore, "Esmeralda in America," Dance Magazine, October 1954, p. 31.

⁴⁶⁷ Daily Missouri Republican, 12 February 1858.
⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

469

Valentio. The additional corps members did not include the fifty young women that were advertised, but rather "fifteen or twenty fascinating nymphs."⁴⁷⁰

Despite the "rain, cold, sleet, wet, ice, mud and every possible phase of weather that could be disagreeable over head or under foot"⁴⁷¹ St. Louisians ventured out to see the troupe.

In the Local News column of the Daily Missouri Republican of February 16, it was reported that Faust did not open on February 15, as previously advertised since Lamoureux had been ill for several days and that the production would open that evening.⁴⁷² St. Louisians registered their approval as "hundreds of appauding hands and feet thundered forth . . . from the pit to gallery." The performance of the troupe "with their musical tableaux,⁴⁷³ scena and danza," dazzled the audience. The ballet, Faust, played nightly until Monday, February 27, when the Ronzani Troupe presented The Brigand, a ballet in three acts and four tableaux composed by Signor Checchetti [sic], the father of

469

Daily Missouri Republican, 14 February 1858.

470

Ibid.

471

Ibid., 19 February 1858.

472

Ibid., 16 February 1858.

473

Ibid., 20 February 1858.

young Enrico. In the ballet, Signor Pratesi played "Spandolino," Brigand of the Alps and Lamoureux played his daughter, "Faustina."⁴⁷⁴ The Brigand played three consecutive performances before the company repeated "Artist's Illusion" which was followed by the second act of ⁴⁷⁵ The Golden Horse and the ballet Military Quarters.

On February 25 and 26, Faust returned to the boards by popular demand. The last performance of the company was on February 27, with the Golden Horse. The Ronzani Troupe was considered successful in St. Louis not only artistically but also financially for the St. Louis theatre. The press reported that

the Ronzani Ballet Troupe, since their appearance at the St. Louis Theatre have more than restored its fortunes which, owing to the powerful attractions brought to bear against it during two or three months past, have been sensibly waning . . . the St. Louis held twenty-three hundred people, and a money total of over nine hundred dollars--a sum exceeding any ever received at one time.⁴⁷⁶

However, on a national scale, the Ronzani tour was unsuccessful, financially. Many of the troupe remained in the United States to perform with other companies. The initial impact of the Ronzani ballet and its technical skill

⁴⁷⁴ Daily Missouri Republican, 27 February 1858.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 24 February 1858.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 14 February 1858.

and artistry was to have far-reaching influences in the years to come. The Italian schooled dancers' style was to rival and surpass the existing French school which had so long dominated dance on the American stage.

Immediately following the Ronzani Ballet, The Martinetti and Blondin Troupe (late Ravel) opened at the St. Louis Theatre. The first pantomime this troupe performed was Raoul or the Magic Star on March 1. Mr. Blondin shared the evening with his feats on the tight rope and the evening concluded with the ballet Isle of Nymphs an old Ravel favorite seen earlier in the season. The leading dancers were Mlle. Zoe Gilbert and Monsieur Toledo.

After Gilbert and Toledo danced a pas de deux the press wrote "the audience received it with a vigor of applause which reminded us of the tumults lately excited by Lamoureux and Baratti's extraordinary salutatory feats."⁴⁷⁷ The Martinetti and Blondin Troupe played Ravel pantomimes often the titles were identical or with a few minor changes, perhaps the same was true for the execution of the pantomimes. Blondin and Paul Martinetti shared the leading pantomimic roles.

⁴⁷⁷

Daily Missouri Republican, 1 March 1858.

⁴⁷⁸

Ibid., 4 March 1858.

The premiere danseuse of the troupe was Mlle. Zoe Gilbert supported by Leontine Capel, Desire Martinetti and Paul Martinetti and the corps de ballet. Leontine Capel shared pantomime leads with Gilbert and supporting ballet roles. Desire Martinetti, a versatile performer, danced, played leads in the pantomimes and performed on the tight rope. Paul and Julian Martinetti were versatile artists like their sister.

On several occasions the dance, "Tyrolian Echoes" was repeated with several variations to it. First it was performed by a pas de deux, soon afterwards as a ballet with Zoe Gilbert supported by the corps; finally it was presented as a pas de trois ⁴⁷⁹ danced by Zoe Gilbert, Desire and Julian Martinetti.

On March 9, Paul Martinetti and Leontine Capel performed the Secret Marriage, the same evening the troupe presented the ballet Calisto or the Triumph of Love with ⁴⁸⁰ "Calisto" played by Gilbert and "Diana" by Capel. The mythological ballet continued for several evenings joined with the pantomime The Magic Trumpet. The newspaper noted "in the dance, Zoe Gilbert smiled and frisked and capered and whirled and pirouetted as fascinating as ever and even

⁴⁷⁹

Daily Missouri Republican, 4-8 March 1858.

⁴⁸⁰

Ibid., 9 March 1858.

achieved fresh laurels." The article went on to comment that "M'lle. Desire was extremely pleasing as she is indeed 482 in all the parts we have yet seen her undertake"

On March 15, the ballet troupe presented a new divertissement, "Aurora," and the evening concluded with a popular pantomime, Soldier for Love. The Daily Missouri Republican commented on the change in entertainment that was being offered at the St. Louis Theatre:

Pantomimes, tricks, metamorphoses, ballet, tight rope evolutions, graceful attudinizing [sic] and posturing, gymnastic exercises, feats of strength . . . is the sort that takes with the amusement-seeking public and full houses will greet the performers every night they stay.⁴⁸³

Since the only other full-time theatre operating besides the St. Louis was the Wood's Theatre which was running only straight dramatic bills, the newspaper comment could have been a suggestion to the management of Wood's Theatre and a comment on the changing tastes of St. Louis audiences.

Spectacle and novelty were important diversionary entertainments to keep the public's minds off the economic problems and rising tension of the issue of slavery.

The last new pantomime production presented by the troupe opened on March 16, The Magic Pills or the Conjurer's

481

Daily Missouri Republican, 11 March 1858.

482

Ibid.

483

Ibid., 15 March 1858.

Gift. Paul Martinetti played "Dandy-Grinaldo," a comic suitor, to "Elvina," played by Desire Martinetti. One evening Zoe Gilbert set aside for her benefit she starred in the ballet d'action Rosita or the Valley of Aran. One evening Capel performed a "Tambourine Dance." The last night of the troupe's engagement coincided with the last night of the dramatic season, April 3.

De Bar played a spring season at the St. Louis from the end of April to the beginning of the month of July. During July 1858, Sanford's Ethiopian Opera Troupe specializing in "minstrelsy and terpsichorean display" played at the St. Louis Theatre. The Wood's Theatre was closed for the month. The season at the St. Louis Theatre had been a memorable one. The Panic had dealt hard times to theatre as a business, but despite this fact, the engagement of the Ronzani Ballet had been both an artistic and financial success for the St. Louis Theatre.

⁴⁸⁴ Daily Missouri Republican, 16 March 1858.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 26 March 1858.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 22 April-3 July 1858.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., July 1858.

Wood's Theatre

(formerly People's Theatre)

1857-1858

For a brief period beginning July 1 and ending July 10, the People's Theatre opened as the Wood's Theatre. George Wood was still sole lessee and manager with J. McVicker as acting stage manager. McVicker would later leave St. Louis and become influential in the development of Chicago theatres.

On July 15, Wood's Theatre opened to present the Campbell Minstrels, a popular group which visited St. Louis annually. The group played until the end of the month.

When the theatre reopened on August 21, for the "First Night of the Season" the theatre presented only dramatic offerings, without even a dance between plays.

On January 15, 1858, Miss Maggie Scanlan appeared in a dance and on February 1, Mrs. Leighton danced "La Polka." Throughout the winter and spring of 1858, the theatre was open and presenting only drama. The season as a whole had been negligible as far as dance was concerned.

488

Daily Missouri Republican, 1-11 July 1857.

489

Ibid., 15-30 July 1857.

490

Ibid., August-December 1857.

491

Ibid., January-June 1858.

St. Louis Theatre

1858-1859

The St. Louis Theatre opened its fall season on August 16 with the regular stock company. On October 4, the Keller Troupe played a return engagement at the St. Louis. The troupe had earlier appeared in the winter of 1857 at the People's Theatre. A ballet corps, the Young American Ballet Corps, had joined the troupe for this tour.

The troupe opened its engagement with the romantic drama of The Last Days of Pompeii, a Scotch Ballet, and the evening concluded with a "Grand International Picture of America and England."⁴⁹² The following evening, the ballet corps substituted The Captive Sylph, a new comic pantomime, and added Lucie de Lammermoor, a new ballet. The last presentation of the evening was "the famous new international picture--The Atlantic Cable; or England and America's Bond of Friendship."⁴⁹³

The Young America Ballet Corps presented another new ballet, The Enchanted Bower on the following evening. For Madame Keller's benefit, a "new National tableaux" entitled ⁴⁹⁴Columbian was introduced. The Sunday Daily Missouri

⁴⁹² Daily Missouri Republican, 4 October 1858.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 5 October 1858.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 6 October 1858.

Republican referred to the Keller's tableaux as
 495
 "entertaining."

The second week of the Keller's Troupe engagement,
 the ballet performed Sailor's Dream and near the end of the
 week, they introduced Penthesilea or Queen of the Amazons.
 496
 Their engagement ended the evening of October 16.

De Bar played the rest of the month with the stock
 company and then the theatre closed for the season.

January 1, the St. Louis Theatre announced that
 Mr. B. Farren was lessee and manager, G. T. Collins acting
 manager. The dramatic company opened the new year with
Puss in Boots or Harlequin and the Fairy of the Cat Kingdom.
 Later in January, Miss K. Llewellyn and J. J. Peck performed
 497
a pas de deux.

On March 24, Mlle. Louisa Wells of the Louisa Wells
 Equestrian and Dramatic Troupe danced a grand "Pas de
 National." In April she played The French Spy. The
 troupe's performances "have been of a varied and interesting
 character combining Terpsichorean, dramatic, gymnastic and
 498
 equestrian" entertainment, the newspaper reported.

495 Daily Missouri Republican, 10 October 1858.

496 Ibid., 11-16 October 1858.

497 Ibid., January 1859.

498 Ibid., 24 March-2 April 1859.

On April 15, De Bar returned to the St. Louis stage. G. T. Collins remained manager with H. Corri, as acting manager, who was De Bar's longtime friend from
 499
 New Orleans.

In May, the Ravel Troupe opened at the St. Louis Theatre with the pantomime, Kim-Ka. On its second performance the newspaper complimented Yrca Mathias

...their charming chief d'ballet steps nimbly, archly and gracefully as she did of yore, and boasts even a riper and more captivating beauty of face and figure. 500

The reporter further complimented Miss Frances as "improved with practice and is pleasing and proper in manner and
 501 action." The remainder of the report lists new lady members of the troupe: Miss Shaw, formerly of the Ronzani Troupe, Lina Windel and Mlle. Chiarini of "the tight rope
 502 department."

On the third evening of the Ravel's engagement, a new ballet Acalista opened with Mathias in the title role as
 503 the favorite pupil of the Queen. The ballet was repeated on May 16 with the Secret Marriage or Whose Child Is It?

499

Daily Missouri Republican, 15 April 1859.

500

Ibid., 11 May 1859.

501

Ibid.

502

Ibid.

503

Ibid., 12 May 1859.

Two evenings later, Fleur de Marie and Abeilles opened with Mlle. Zanfretta sharing the leading roles with Mathias. The following evening the ballet Abeilles played with Biano or
the Magic Sword.

Marietta Zanfretta not only was an accomplished dancer but also a tight rope artist. The press called her "charming and daring." In a new performance of the ballet Prima Donna which opened on May 24, Mathias and Zanfretta were joined by Miss Frances in the leading parts.

On May 30, the ballet presented La Bonquetiege or Rose of the North, a ballet composed by Paul Brilliant. During the beginning days of June, the troupe continued to introduce new pantomimes and ballets. The Schoolmaster and The Hungarian Rendezvous were presented; the ballets La Fete de la Dance and The Belle of Madrid. The latter ballet was performed the evening of Gabriel Ravel's benefit and the final performance of the Ravel engagement.

After the Ravel's engagement, the St. Louis dramatic season continued through the month. Miss Scanlan who had

⁵⁰⁴ Daily Missouri Republican, 13-23 May 1859.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 18 May 1859.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 24 May 1859.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 30 May 1859.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 1-11 June 1859.

danced at the People's Theatre, now appeared in comediettes as a member of the resident stock company at the St. Louis
 509
 Theatre.

Wood's Theatre
 (formerly People's Theatre)

1858-1859

In the fall of 1858, a variety of stars played at the Wood's Theatre. The theatre did not announce a principal dancer as part of the resident company. Among some of the visiting stars was Lucille and Helen Western, who played in Three Fast Men or the Female Robinson Crusoes. Another group, the Female Minstrels, added a new slant to an old favorite entertainment, featuring "fourteen young ladies
 510
 in an Oila Podrian of Ethiopian Medley."

At the end of January 1859, the pantomime, the Golden Axe was presented by members of the company. Mlle. Haydee played "Harlequin," Ada Maginjey, "Columbine;" and "Giles Clump," a clown, by Sidney Smith. The pantomime
 511
 ran through February 5. When the Golden Axe appeared on March 12, the newspaper reported that Mlle. Haydee "is one

509 Daily Missouri Republican, June 1859.

510 Ibid., 5 October-December 1858.

511 Ibid., 31 January-February 1859.

of the most pleasing and spirited dancers we have ever
 met." After the comedy that evening, Our American
Cousin, Miss Flora Weekley performed a dance.
 512 513

The Daily Missouri Republican reported on April 2, that the acting manager of the Wood's Theatre was now George F. King. On April 11, the Martinetti and Blondin Troupe opened. The year before, the troupe had played at the St. Louis Theatre. Blondin appeared in new evolutions on the tightrope and he joined the Martinetti Brothers performing on the perpendicular ropes.

The principal dancer of the company was Madame Pratesi Di Carlo, originally a member of the Ronzani Ballet. Quite often Mme. danced with Ignacio Martinetti, but in pas de deuss such as "La Smolenska," "La Zingarella," and "Pas de Bouquet" she was partnered by Signor G. Pratesi, her husband. The Pratesi family: father, mother and children, two sisters and two brothers had all been members of the Ronzani Ballet Troupe.

The Martinetti and Blondin Troupe performed the old Ravel pantomimes. The press considered Blondin's performance of "Jocko" "fully equalled to the best efforts

512

Daily Missouri Republican, 13 March 1859.

513

Ibid.

514

of Gabriel Ravel in the same part." Ignacio Martinetti
 was marked by grace and elegance Madame Pratesi
 . . . during the engagement of the troupe, won the
 admiration of the public by her graceful and artistic
 516 dancing"

The Martinetti Brothers presented a new pantomime, Ester, which they had composed. Another offering which had not been among the Ravel presentations of other years was the Enchanted Rose with the subtitle, The Eruption of Mount Vesuvius, a grand fairy pantomime. The Pratesis' danced the ballet, Les Etoiles or The Stars during the troupe's engagement. Signor Pratesi played the role of "Saturn" and Signora Pratesi danced the "North Star."

The Martinetti-Blondin Troupe was re-engaged for a third week, during which time no new works were presented; however, Jocko, the Brazilian Ape was presented under the new title of Pongo the Intelligent Monkey. The newspaper reported that in spite of "forbidding weather" that audiences were "uncomfortably large" and the Martinettis

514 Daily Missouri Republican, 13 April 1859.

515 Ibid.

516 Ibid., 19 April 1859.

517 Ibid., 25 April 1859.

518 Ibid., 30 April 1859.

"have even exceeded the old Ravels in drawing crowded houses
 and has eclipsed every other amusement in town." ⁵¹⁹ The reporter continued

. . . no one can excel Julian and Philip [Martinetti] in their classic poses, their gymnastic feats or their pantomimic ability. Pratesi has exhorted universal admiration by the neatness, precision, power and elegance displayed in her dancing which has been on a great measure shared by her skillful professional companion M. Ignacio.
 [Martinetti]⁵²⁰

Although the Panic of 1857 was still in full stride, apparently the appearance of the Martinettis attracted large crowds to the People's Theatre. Part of the drawing power of the troupe can be attributed to the dancing of the Pratesis and Ignacio Martinetti. The troupe provided the only respite to the mundane dramatic fare presented at the theatre that season.

St. Louis Theatre

1859-1860

Drama filled the bills exclusively at the St. Louis Theatre for its fall season until the end of December. The St. Louis Theatre did not have a winter season in 1860 and reopened in April on an inconsistent performing schedule.

In June, the Ravel Troupe with the Martinettis

⁵¹⁹ Daily Missouri Republican, 15 April 1859.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

returned to the St. Louis Theatre. One by one, the troupe's familiar repertory appeared The Magic Trumpet, "Le Diable Quatre" a ballet divertissement, La Fete Champetre, Jocko, The Contrabandist, The Conscript, Simon's Mishaps, Godenski, The Elopement, Robert Macaire, Jeanette and Jeannot, The Definance by Jullian and Phillips Martinetti--a new pantomime, "La Prima Donna" a ballet divertissement, Kim-Ka, Punchinello or a Day in Venice, a comic ballet, Nicodemus or the Unlucky Fisherman, Pongo or the Mischievous Ape [who had been "the Intelligent Ape" the year before]. The Coopers, La Sylphide, starring Miss Frances, Asphodel, Biano or the Magic Sword, Vol-au-Vent, The Secret Marriage or Whose Child Is It? "Tyrolean Echoes," The Green Monster, The Three-Faced Frenchman, La Belle Madrid.

During this engagement, Gabriel and Francois shared the leads in the pantomimes and on a few occasions Mr. Lehman, an old member of the Ravel company, took leading roles as well as perform on the tight ropes with the Martinettis. Miss Frances was now the principal dancer with the troupe. Mlle. Desire still played pantomimic roles and shared them with Miss Frances.

The Sanford Opera Troupe followed the Ravel Troupe, and then the theatre closed for the summer. The St. Louis

Theatre did not open for a fall, winter, or summer season during 1860-1861. Times were bad financially and were getting worse politically.

Wood's Theatre

1859-1860

George Wood opened the Wood's Theatre on September 5, with an Italian Opera Company. After which the theatrical fare returned to the offerings of the resident stock company. On September 30, the theatre ran its last advertisement for a performance in the Daily Missouri
Republican for a performance by the company.
522

The theatre then closed, opening for a week in December for the Antonio and Wilder's Circus before closing its doors and being renovated into a bowling alley in 1860.
523

St. Louis Opera House

1859-1860

The St. Louis Opera House was formerly the Varieties Theatre. After Field had closed the Varieties Theatre, Henry Boernstein leased the theatre which he opened September 8, 1859, as an opera house. The bill of fare was

522

Daily Missouri Republican, 5-30 September 1859.

523

Ibid., 17-21 December 1859.

to be German opera. In December 1859, the St. Louis Theatre and the St. Louis Opera House were the only theatres operating in St. Louis.

The St. Louis Opera House presented Siegrist and Zanfretta, a ballet and pantomime troupe. The Zanfrettas, Marietta and Alexander performed "grand evolutions on the tightrope" followed by a "grand divertissement dansant,"⁵²⁴ "Mountebank Wedding."⁵²⁵ The company opened on Friday, May 26 and repeated the same program on Monday, May 28.⁵²⁵

Odell wrote in Annals of the New York Stage that Marietta Zanfretta was from Franconi's in Paris, and that "this lady's extraordinary performances on the tight rope are famous even unto our own day. Aided by Young America,⁵²⁶ she made the tightrope actually an instrument of art."⁵²⁶ Odell mentions that Alexander Zanfretta, Marietta's brother,⁵²⁷ performed pantomime and feats on the tightrope. Rosita Zanfretta, a sister, performed both on the tightrope and in ballet.

On May 31, the evening opened with the ballet Italian Brigands featuring Annetta Galletti and

⁵²⁴ Daily Missouri Republican, 26 May 1860.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 26-28 May 1860.

⁵²⁶ Odell, VII, p. 55.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., pp. 474.

August Siegrist; the couple then danced a "Mazurka". The second half of the program included a Grand Medley danced by
 528
 Mlle. Rosa and the pantomime, The Coopers.

Annetta Galletti made her debut at the Imperial Theatre of Milan with Lamoureux. Galletti was a Prima
 529
ballerina while still a pupil in the ballet school. She came to the United States with the Ronzani Troupe. Odell wrote that Annetta Galletti "took a high and enduring place
 530
 among the dancers best liked in New York."

For their opening performance in June, the company performed a "Grand Divertissement Dansante" which consisted of six dances: "La Uota [sic] Aragonaise [sic]" by Marietta Zanfretta, Mme. Auguste, Alexander Zanfretta and August Siegrist; "La Polonaise" by Annetta Galletti and E. Velarde; "Cachucha" by Mlle. Rose; Waltz by the corps de ballet; Pas de Trois by Annetta Galletti, Marietta Zanfretta
 531
 and E. Velarde; Final Galop by the corps de ballet.

Galletti and Velarde had been partners in New York when they had appeared at the Melodeon Music Hall. Odell commented that "Galletti and Velarde were what 'vaudeville'

528

Daily Missouri Republican, 31 May 1860.

529

Galletti File, Lillian Moore Collection, Dance Collection.

530

Odell, VII, p. 17-18.

531

Daily Missouri Republican, 1 June 1860.

today calls 'head-liners', [from] the great Ronzani Troupe, Galletti and Velarde--really a remarkable offering for so
 532 cheap a hall".

On June 4, the Daily Missouri Republican noted the "equisite dancing of the charming and beautiful Annetta Galletti," in the same article, that the corps de
 533 ballet was efficient and had no superior in the Union.
 The next evening, August Siegrist danced in Le Touneau, followed by the ballet Carnival of Venice and a Fancy Dance by Mlle. Rosa. The evening ended with the pantomime Magic Trumpet. As the troupe's engagement continued their repertory began resembling that of the Ravel troupe more and more, and the pantomimes even had the same titles. The ballets seemed to be gleanings from both the Ravel and Ronzani repertory of titles. An evening's bill was a mixture of pantomime, dance and tight rope or other circus feats.

On June 8, The Illusion of a Painter and the pantomime Robert Macaire made up the bill. The following evening, and also their final performance, Esmeralda was
 534 presented with Galletti in the title role. The light

532 Odell, VII, p. 436.

533 Daily Missouri Republican, 4 June 1860.

534 Ibid., 5-9 June 1860.

entertainment of the Siegrist and Zanfretta troupe provided a contrast to the German opera and the rising political issue of slavery beginning to obsess St. Louisians at this time.

St. Louis Opera House

1860-1861

Members of the Siegrist and Zanfretta Troupe returned as the only visiting dancing stars to the St. Louis Opera House in September, and in fact, for the entire season. Although their repertory remained much the same, the troupe seemed to emphasize tumbling, circus and tight rope exhibitions as they performed: "New Gymnastic Feats of the two clowns"--the Siegrist Brothers, "La Trapeze," "Two French Jesters," "New Tightrope Chef D'Oeuvres." The press commented that "these evolutions have never by anyone been performed before, and are decidedly the best part of the programme."⁵³⁵ After one appearance of the Siegrist and Zanfretta Troupe, the theatre conformed to present German opera until closing in spring of 1861.

St. Louis Theatre

1861-1862

On April 8, 1861, the St. Louis Theatre reopened

with the dramatic company from the St. Charles Theatre in
New Orleans, under the direction of Benedict De Bar.⁵³⁶

When the guns fired at Ft. Sumter, the St. Charles closed
that April. The theatre which De Bar owned and operated was
to remain dark during the four war years.⁵³⁷

In April, St. Louis was placed under martial law.
The proclamation closed all public amusements, theatres,
concerts, Negro minstrels and the like on Sunday and at
10:30 p.m. on all week-days. If any disturbances occurred
during regular performances, the military could close these
public assembly halls permanently.⁵³⁸

De Bar and his company were Southern sympathizers,
which was reported to the St. Louis Provost Marshall, and
the company was then kept under a careful eye by the
Marshall's office. Every male resident of St. Louis who was
of proper age and physical requirements was compelled to
join the Home Guard. Consequently the actors from the
St. Louis and other theatres and music halls were included
in this order. The actors joined the same company and
petitioned to be excused from duty.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁶ Daily Missouri Republican, January-April 1861.

⁵³⁷ Kendall, pp. 298-299.

⁵³⁸ Herbstruth, p. 90.

⁵³⁹ Krone, IV, p. 112.

The theatre opened on July 3 only to close for the remainder of the month, all of August and the first week in September. No other place of amusement presented dramatic entertainment.

In the fall of 1861, De Bar opened his first regular dramatic season in St. Louis. The season opened on September 9. The smallness of the company was due to economic reasons. With the war, however, the daily increase of troops and strangers arriving in the city, the theatrical business improved.

In October, Ada ^h^{*} Issacs Menken played the St. Louis. Menken, like Montez, was an intriguing stage personality. She was "a dancer, student of languages and classics, expert equestrienne, poet, painter, sculptor and actress of international reknown."⁵⁴³ Her performances at the St. Louis Theatre included dancing a "Hornpipe" en travesti, acting breeches parts, and on one occasion playing nine characters, singing seven songs and performing three dances and a bone solo.⁵⁴⁴

540

Daily Missouri Republican, July-8 September 1861.

541

Ibid., 9 September 1861.

542

Krone, IV, p. 112.

543

Barbee, "St. Louis Drama," p. 85.

544

Daily Missouri Republican, 31 October-23 November 1861.

In March 1862, Menken returned for another engagement from March 3 through 22. In May, La Senorita Isabel Cubas supported by Señor Ximenes and with a corps de ballet was engaged for a week.

According to Brown, Isabel Cubas came to America in 1861 after dancing in Spain and in other European capitals.⁵⁴⁷ She made her American debut at the Winter Garden in New York City in 1861 with Ximenes as her partner.⁵⁴⁸ In St. Louis, the reporter from the Daily Missouri Republican who covered her first performance, described the audience as impatiently waiting through the opening farce for the appearance of the Spanish beauty.⁵⁴⁹ After her second performance the reporter wrote that the new division of program into equal parts of play and ballet was a decided improvement.⁵⁵⁰

On May 22, Cubas played the pantomimic role of "Finella" in Masamiello or the Dumb Girl of Porticio and danced in La Gitana. The following evening, she and

⁵⁴⁵ Daily Missouri Republican, 3-22 March 1862.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 19-23 May 1862.

⁵⁴⁷ Brown, p. 33.

⁵⁴⁸ Odell, VII, p. 389.

⁵⁴⁹ Daily Missouri Republican, 20 May 1862.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 21 May 1862.

Juan Ximenes performed a Spanish Ballet. Masaniello, the Spanish Ballet and National Dances alternated on the bills through May 27. On May 28, Cubas played in the French Spy. The production was repeated the following evening. For her last two performances, Cubas introduced the Wizard Skiff, a romantic drama and a "New Ballet Divertissement" with
 Ximenes and the corps de ballet.

551

When Cubas appeared in La Gitanilla, the press, impressed by her performance, wrote that she "appeared the very deification of passion and illustrated Ovid's whole art
 of love."
 552

In the pantomimic drama, Massaniello, Cubas' performance was reported to be "characterized by grace, force and intelligence, qualities not often found utilized
 553 in the representatives of that very arduous part." The reporter went on to say that the dances were "commendable
 554 displays of ability"

The season ended on June 28 at the St. Louis Theatre. The two engagements of the versatile performer
~~Ada~~ ^h ~~Isaac~~ Menken and Isabel Cubas with her ballet troupe

551

Daily Missouri Republican, 30-31 May 1862.

552

Ibid., 23 May 1862.

553

Ibid., 26 May 1862.

554

Ibid.

provided the highlights to the dramatic fare of the stock company.

St. Louis Theatre

1862-1863

On August 18, 1862, the Daily Missouri Republican announced the opening of the St. Louis Theatre. No resident or visiting dancers appeared that fall. ⁵⁵⁵ The last of December, however, a young, promising tragedian played Hamlet at the St. Louis. His name, John Wilkes Booth, was not to be recorded in the annals of history for only his artistic talent, rather he would be remembered for his part in a larger drama yet to be played.

The spectacle, Seven Sisters, opened for a week at the end of June, 1863. Vallée danced with a full corps de ballet, Mr. Fuller of the dramatics company skated and twenty young ladies performed a "Zouave March." ⁵⁵⁶

The first newspaper review was glowing. The scenery was superb, Vallée was "charming," Mr. Fuller was "most wonderful" and "the Zouave March and Drill has never been equalled in the city." ⁵⁵⁷ On July 3, the newspaper reported that considerable cutting had improved the basically weak

⁵⁵⁵ Daily Missouri Republican, August-December 1862.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 28 June 1863.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 30 June 1863.

dramatic script. The dance which Vallée and the corps performed was none other than the "Shawl Dance" from La Bayadere. The novelty of this spectacle was a "scene in which the ballet figurants appear supported in a large and gorgeously painted vase, on which descends a shower of gold."⁵⁵⁸ "The drill of the female Zouave corps included a scene in which numerous revolving pillars with brilliant surroundings are reflected and multiplied from a stage laid with mirrors."⁵⁵⁹ The Seven Sisters played through July 5, and was repeated on July 13, for the benefit of Hattie Vallée.

On August 7, the Varieties Ballet Troupe performed a divertissement at the St. Louis Theatre. This occasion was repeated again on November 7, 1863.⁵⁶⁰ On the whole, the season at the St. Louis had been a modest one again; the only dancing had been as part of the spectacle, The Seven Sisters, and then by members of the resident stock company.

Deagle's Varieties Theatre

1863-1864

The Varieties Theatre had opened in 1852 by the Varieties Dramatic Association under the direction of

⁵⁵⁸

Daily Missouri Republican, 3 July 1863.

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Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰

Ibid., 7 August, 7 November 1863.

J. M. Field. The theatre after several seasons closed in 1855. Mr. Boernstein then leased the theatre and presented German Opera for almost two seasons (1859-1861).

In 1861, George Deagle opened the Varieties Music Hall in the St. Louis Opera House. Deagle advertised it as the "largest and most beautiful Music Hall in the World." The entertainment encompassed Opera, Negro Minstrelsy, Ballet, Burlesque, Farce; or in short, "everything appertaining to the circus, opera and concert hall can be seen in one Grand Consolidation."⁵⁶¹

When the hall opened on December 9, 1861, the Daily Missouri Democrat offered support on Mr. Deagle's success as proprietor presenting "the miscellaneous style of entertainment now so popular all over the country." The performances comprised "choice selections" from concert type entertainment and the performers engaged were "acknowledged as first class."⁵⁶² The article went on to assure readers that "everything will be conducted on a strictly moral principle thus enabling ladies and children to attend without having cause for regret."⁵⁶³

George Deagle had been a local saloon owner and

⁵⁶¹ Daily Missouri Democrat, 9 December 1861.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

one-time steamboat barker. John Russell David in his thesis, "The Rise and Decline of the Varieties Theatre," wrote that a steamboat barker was often employed by packet companies to encourage investment in and travel upon these vessels.⁵⁶⁵ David contended that George Deagle had been considered one of the best in his trade.⁵⁶⁶ In the theatrical business, Deagle was considered to have been a successful manager making a great deal of money at his theatre only to lose it when he tried to tour.⁵⁶⁷ Leavitt, another theatrical manager wrote "George J. Deagle ran Deagle's Varieties in St. Louis, one of the most pretentious in America."⁵⁶⁸

In 1863 Deagle renamed his music hall, Deagle's Varieties Theatre which on July 30, 1863, presented a melodrama as its featured entertainment of the evening. The evening's performance began with "the usual number of songs,⁵⁶⁹ dances and Negro Eccentricities." On August 2 equestrian drama shared the evening with "a new ballet and ballet

⁵⁶⁴ John Russell David, "The Rise and Decline of the Varieties Theatre in St. Louis 1867-1896," (M.A. Thesis, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, 1969), p. 9.

⁵⁶⁵

Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶

Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷

Leavitt, p. 188

⁵⁶⁸

Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹

Daily Missouri Republican, 30 July 1861.

divertissement by Signor Constantine in which all the
 principal dancers and corps de ballet will appear."⁵⁷⁰

However, the advertisement does not name the artists at this time.

The Varieties continued to offer a variety bill upon which the press made the comment "the miscellaneous programme still keeps up the standard of excellence that has become proverbial at this theatre."⁵⁷¹

On August 7, Misses Walby, Lagnier and Messrs. Tony Ross and M. Miller danced in addition to a ballet divertissement in which the corps de ballet appeared.⁵⁷² The ballet Bokaso Coarden based on a Hungarian theme was presented on August 10. The ballet played nightly with the jig dancing and fancy dances on the program as the press noted that "novelty succeeded novelty at this largest and coolest place of amusement in the city."⁵⁷³

On August 24, Mlle. Elise made her first appearance at the Varieties, in the comic pantomime Robert Macaire or the Scamp of Paris arranged by Signor Constantine. Later

⁵⁷⁰ Daily Missouri Republican, 2 August 1861.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 6 August 1863.

⁵⁷² Ibid., 7 August 1863.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 19 August 1863.

Mlle. Elise was to join the Zanfretta family and at that time dance leading roles in their ballets. ⁵⁷⁴ Mlle. Elise had "electrified the audience by her graceful and dashing dance" when Master Barney, champion jig dancer made his first appearance in the comic Irish ballet, Ireland as It Was or The Sports of Donnybrook. ⁵⁷⁵ The ballet ran through September 5. Two evenings later a new ballet divertissement starring Mlle. Elise and Constantine in a pas de deux and Miss Walby in a pas seul opened. The divertissement played until the ballet pantomime Love Vagaries opened on ⁵⁷⁶ September 20.

At the end of September a new Spanish ballet was introduced and a new "songstress and danseuse," Miss Frances Leroy made her debut in St. Louis. Earlier that year, Frances Leroy made her debut at 444 Broadway, a ⁵⁷⁷ New York musical hall. Miss Leroy was not only a dancer and singer but also an actress. The ballet divertissement returned to the boards with Misses Leroy, Walby, Elise and Signor Constantine and played until Mazeppa opened on

⁵⁷⁴
Kendall, p. 510.

⁵⁷⁵
Daily Missouri Republican, 30 August 1863.

⁵⁷⁶
Ibid., 1-20 September 1863.

⁵⁷⁷
Odell, VII, pp. 521-522.

578

October 17.

In November the pantomime ballet Holy Pacha introduced Miss Kate Pennoyer in the role of "Madera."

Miss Pennoyer made her debut in 1855 in New York at the Chambers Theatre as a dancer and pantomimist.⁵⁷⁹ She had danced at various musical halls in New York. In the fall of 1861, she joined the National Music Hall and Odell commented that "she herself must have been amused to see herself described as la premiere danseuse de l'Amerique."⁵⁸⁰ Perhaps the management was merely having fun with the public. At any rate, Deagle took advantage of the publicity and billed her as "the great American Prima Danseuse."⁵⁸¹

The last of November, Constantine presented a new ballet Harvest Festival which was replaced on December 6 by Ireland As It Was with yet another star added to the Varieties company, Mr. Harry Leslie. He was billed as the "American Blondin, Pantomimist, Commedienne and Dancer."⁵⁸² From the middle of December Mazeppa was the chief attraction until December 25 when straight dramatic entertainment

578

Daily Missouri Republican, 17 October-3 November 1863.

579

Brown, p. 285.

580

Odell, VII, p. 439.

581

Daily Missouri Republican, 3 November 1863.

582

Ibid., 7 December 1863.

claimed the bills.

The Amusements column of the Daily Missouri Republican seldom mentioned the on-going entertainment at the Varieties during the months of October through December. The newspaper spared little column space to any items except the War Between the States.

Blue Beard a spectacular pantomime and a "brilliant program of novelties" filled the month of January 1864.⁵⁸⁴

Mazeppa and later the Bandit Queen replaced Bluebeard in February. Ballet returned to the boards in March when Pennoyer, Leroy and Walton performed a "Ballet Divertissement." On March 20, the three danseuses were featured in Queen of the Lakes, and in April a scenic spectacle in four acts was presented. Knights of the Lurlie Bery or Nymphs of the Rhine played throughout the month.⁵⁸⁵

On May 13, Kate Pennoyer took her benefit and a variety of entertainments of "miscellaneous acts" played until June when Pennoyer starred in the French Spy. Miscellaneous entertainment and melodrama continued through June until the middle of July.⁵⁸⁶ During its first season,

⁵⁸³ Daily Missouri Republican, 8-31 December 1863.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., January 1864.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., February-April 1864.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., May-July 1864.

Deagle's Varieties Theatre had presented an amazing diversity of high quality entertainment: ballet, pantomime, equestrian drama, spectacle, melodrama and miscellaneous acts.

St. Louis Theatre

1863-1864

On January 7, 1864, Henrietta Vallée took a benefit. That evening she played The French Spy. On March 19, Henri Corri, acting manager of the St. Louis Theatre took his benefit. The gala affair included a dance by Mlle. Augusta, Ethiopian dances by Messrs. J. C. Campbell, Jefferson, William Reeve and J. W. Smith. The press reported the evening was to be "a monster bill of entertainment" and that many of Corri's "legion of friends" would be 587 on hand. On April 2, Miss Penoyer and Miss Leroy 588 performed a dance.

The feature of the entire year was the Ravel, Martinetti and Marzetti Troupe which opened at the St. Louis in July. During the first years of the war, this troupe had not visited St. Louis. Now that they had returned, a new family name had been added to the troupe's billing.

587

Daily Missouri Republican, 19 March 1864.

588

Ibid., 2 April 1864.

Monsieur and Madame Marzetti had been with the Ravel Troupe
 589 as early as the 1830's. Joseph Marzetti was a pantomimest
 590 and Madame was a dancer.

The Ravel-Martinetti-Marzetti troupe had some new pieces which they carefully interjected among their old standards. Les Hommes L'Aire was basically a tight rope exhibition. The Stars, the troupe may have adopted from the Pratesi's who travelled with the Martinettis in the late 1850s. Harvest Home was a new pantomime for St. Louis 591 audiences. The troupe played through the end of July. This was to be the troupe's last visit to St. Louis. The Ravels, the Ravel-Martinetti troupe, and now the Ravel-Martinetti-Marzetti troupe had always been a welcomed attraction at the St. Louis theatres for over twenty years.

Deagle's Varieties Theatre

1864-1865

Mr. Tophoff made his first appearance on the Varieties stage on August 22, 1864. According to Brown, Monsieur Tophoff was a ballet master who came to America in 592 1860 and who appeared with Annetta Galletti. Several days

589 Brown, p. 237.

590 Ibid.

591 Daily Missouri Republican, 6-30 July 1864.

592 Brown, p. 362.

later, after Tophoff's first appearance Mlle. Augusta and the new French Ballet Troupe made their first appearance in
 his ballet La Rose.
 593

On September 4, Tophoff introduced La Maja de Seville and the next week Dorina followed by La Esmeralda near
 594 the end of the month. The newspaper commented that the Varieties was "doing a fine business notwithstanding the draft of the proprietor" and the following evening the
 theatre presented a complimentary testimonial for Deagle.
 595

In October, the Varieties Ballet Troupe performed Tophoff's production of Les Fleur returning to La Maja de Seville during the second half of the month.
 596

Tophoff produced a new ballet Marco or the Draft the first week of November. Then the company returned to its previous ballet repertory which shared the bill with drama for the remainder of the month. In December Marco returned until Tophoff opened a new "Swiss Ballet Divertissement" and a ballet entitled Katrina which played until the end of the year.
 597

593 Daily Missouri Republican, 23 August-3 September 1864.

594 Ibid., 4-30 September 1864.

595 Ibid., 30 September 1864.

596 Ibid., October 1864.

597 Ibid., November-December 1864.

Throughout the month of January, A Young Girl from the Country, a comic ballet and the pantomime, The Magic Trumpet, were advertised. However, when Mazeppa opened ballet became advertised as of secondary importance, listed only as "brilliant ballet" without title or artists.

Tophoff's Gallop Infernal opened at the end of January with the ballets Marco and Le Bouquet, returning each for a week's run. During March the ballet Anacondastockeronia played for a week followed the next week by Sherifanai. The ballets in the fall repertory returned one by one until the extravaganza The Fountain of Beauty or the King, the Princess and the Geni opened on March 20 and was presented every night until further notice.

After the extravaganza had run a week, the newspaper offered this comment: "This piece is one of the best and most elaborately gotten up of all similar productions . . . the Amazonian march as a general feature is alone worth a visit to see it." By April 9, the theatre claimed in its advertisement that over 50,000 people had seen the production.

The next week the theatre closed in mourning over President Lincoln's death. When the theatre opened on

⁵⁹⁸ Daily Missouri Republican, 29 January-20 February 1865.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 21 February-20 March 1865.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 26 March 1865.

April 24, the spectacle returned to the boards with "a
 choice selection of miscellaneous acts." ⁶⁰¹ During this
 season at Deagle's Varieties Theatre, Monsieur Tophoff's
 ballets dominated the dancing segments which were presented
 until late March, then an extravaganza claimed the bill for
 the remainder of the season.

St. Louis Theatre

1864-1865

The feature attraction of the fall season was
 Marie Zoe in the drama The Wizard Skiff in which Zoe played
 three characters, performed a Spanish dance and a broad
⁶⁰² sword combat.

The Seven Sisters opened April 24 and ran through
 April 29, 1865. The advertisement in the newspaper described
 a ballet corps of "twenty beautiful young ladies" and a
 "magnificent fairy lake formed by 31,780 square inches of
⁶⁰³ mirror of plate glass laid upon the surface of the stage.
 The Theatrical column commented later in the week on the
 production, calling it "that scenic, nondescript Seven
⁶⁰⁴ Sisters." Besides these two attractions, the St. Louis

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Daily Missouri Republican, 24 April 1865.

⁶⁰²

Ibid., 31 August 1864.

⁶⁰³

Ibid., 24 April 1865.

⁶⁰⁴

Ibid., 30 April 1865.

Theatre continued to present drama as its major offering.

De Bar's Opera House

1865-1866

In August, of 1865, the St. Louis Theatre opened under the name of De Bar's Opera House. De Bar appeared throughout the fall, winter and spring season. The last stars of the season were the Dupreg and Benedict Minstrels in the last part of June. Then the theatre closed for eight weeks for restoration.
 605

Deagle's Varieties Theatre

1865-1866

Deagle's Varieties Theatre was open every evening throughout the summer of 1865. Monsieur Agoust and Mlle. Rosita were engaged to perform as the featured dancers until July 22. The last two weeks of July, Mazeppa Mazeppa Mazeppa shared the bill with the usual eclectic number of songs, sketches and dances by the Excelsior Variety Company. This company continued to provide the entertainment until
 606 September.

In September, the Daily Missouri Republican's advertisements in the Amusements column included De Bar's

605 Daily Missouri Republican, September 1865-July
 1866.

606 Ibid., July-August 1865.

Opera House, the Apollo Garden, a German Theatre, and Morris
 and Wilson's Opera House, a minstrel house. Throughout
 the fall season of 1865 and until January of 1866, the
 newspaper did not mention the Varieties Theatre.

Deagle continued to operate the Varieties, but for some reason he chose not to advertise in the Daily Missouri Republican. Since the newspaper had granted his establishment only a perfunctory acknowledgement in its articles about the St. Louis theatrical scene, this may have been reason enough for Deagle not to advertise in this newspaper.

Instead the Daily Missouri Democrat, a newspaper mainly devoted to commercial news, offered a record of the Varieties' performances through a standard advertisement which ran daily in the newspaper and through short reports about the playing attractions.

According to the Daily Missouri Democrat, Deagle's Varieties played throughout the summer and fall. On August 14, Monsieur Agoust and Mlle. Rosita danced in the Battle of Nations. The following Monday, the Gallop Infernal ballet opened which was followed by La Danube during the last week

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Daily Missouri Republican, 1 September 1865.

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Ibid., September 1865-4 January 1866.

On September 4, Peppot, a new ballet opened. Dancing was a part of the program every evening. Each week a new ballet opened; often the ballets' titles were not given in the newspaper but referred to as a "beautiful ballet" or as "a ballet" within the evening's program.

The Gallop Infernal ballet returned to the stage in October for a week, and the next week a "Swiss Divertissement" replaced the ballet. The standard variety bill continued for the month of October and through most of November. At the end of November, the ballet, Festival of Roses, and Ecossaise, another new ballet, opened on subsequent weeks.

The December 13 edition of the Daily Missouri Democrat reported the Varieties had a new "maitre de Ballet," a Monsieur Boldy. That evening he performed a Scotch Ballet. In the Theatrical column of the Democrat, Mlle. Leah was complimented as making a "greater impression than any dancer that has appeared in St. Louis for years."

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610 Daily Missouri Democrat, 14-28 August 1865.

611 Ibid., 4-30 September 1865.

612 Ibid., 2 October-27 November 1865.

613 Ibid., 28 November-11 December 1865.

614 Ibid., 13 December 1865.

Ibid.

Mlles. Leah, Leroy and Monsieur Boldy performed the leading roles in the ballets that were presented in December. Leah and Boldy danced a "Spanish Dance" and grand pas de deux. Boldy composed a new ballet, Armagh Sports for the three leading dancers and the corps de ballet. The year ended with the spectacle of The Fairy Fountains of Real Waters directed by Professor Bakewell whom Deagle had engaged in Europe to direct "this truly great and novel effect."⁶¹⁵

The Theatrical and Musical column of the January 14 Daily Missouri Republican reported Mr. Boldy's ballet pantomime, The Four Lovers, danced by Mlles. Leah, Walton, Monsieur Boldy and a corps de ballet would open that evening. On February 7 and 8, the ballet divertissement "La Tyroloes" was performed. The following week,⁶¹⁶ Mlle. Elise returned to the Varieties. In March Mlle. Leah, billed as the "beautiful Queen of Terpsichore," rejoined the Varieties company. That week, March 4, Alexandre and Josephine Zanfretta opened an engagement at the theatre. Josephine was Alexandre's wife; her maiden name was Dupree.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁵ Daily Missouri Democrat, 22-17 December 1865.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 29 December 1865.

⁶¹⁷ Daily Missouri Republican, 13 February 1866.

⁶¹⁸ Brown, p. 404.

The spectacle of Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp remained the central attraction of the Varieties bill since early February. The Sunday, March 18 Daily Missouri Republican advertised that Signora Juliette Bronner and Guiseppe Cardella had joined the ballet corps. The following Sunday, the newspaper announced that "Manager Deagle will proceed in a day or two to New Orleans with a company of twenty-five persons for a season at one of the theatres of that city."⁶¹⁹ That same day, Mazeppa opened, but no dance was mentioned as part of the bill.

In April, cholera swept the city and the theatre closed. The Varieties reopened on April 22 with the Fairies of the Laughing Waters. Bronner and Cardella, the newspaper wrote, "have been among its [the Varieties] chief attractions for a week or two."⁶²⁰ In May, the dancers were advertised as "the greatest dancers of the age."⁶²¹ Near the end of May, Bronner and Cardella performed a new "Grand Pas de Deux."

On May 28, the Fairies of the Mississippi opened; the ballet had been composed by Monsieur Zavistowski. The spectacle included a "Grand Warrior March," Grand Zouave

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Daily Missouri Republican, 24 March 1866.

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Ibid., 29 April 1866.

⁶²¹

Ibid., 13 May 1866.

"March and Drill" and "La Sicilian," a character dance. The
piece played until June 12.

A miscellany of entertainment played through June.
On June 28, "all the great stars" participated in a ballet
divertissement "La Rococco."

In the month of July, Mlle. Elise was re-engaged for
the grand fairy ballet, The Fountain of Real Waters.
Zavistowski composed the ballet divertissement,
"Conservatoire a Paris," which opened on July 9 and he
introduced the ballet, Prima Donna, which played until the
season ended on July 21. Ballet followed ballet during
the fall and winter months of the season, and in the spring,
one spectacle after another appropriated the Varieties stage
until the end of the season.

622 Daily Missouri Republican, 28 May 1866.

623 Ibid., June 1866.

624 Ibid., July 1866.

Summary

During the Financial Panic of 1857 and until the end of 1859, the St. Louis Theatre continued to operate.

De Bar managed the theatre during the summer and leased it out for the regular season. The attractions during those lean years were somewhat limited and had to be chosen for their box office appeal in order for the theatre to financially break even or make any sort of profit.

In 1857, the People's Theatre reopened as the Wood's Theatre, with George Wood as lessee. The theatre offered dramatic fare as its staple finally resorting to circus entertainment before closing in 1859. In 1860, the theatre was renovated into a bowling alley.

The Varieties Theatre opened numerous times during these last years of the decade as a ballroom. St. Louisians never seemed to tire of an endless succession of masquerade balls and dancing parties held during the winter months at the Varieties. In 1859, Mr. Boernstein leased the theatre. The theatre was renamed the St. Louis Opera House with its chief attraction, German opera. This theatrical venture only lasted until the first year of the War Between the States.

When war broke out, St. Louis as a border city was in a complex situation. In the first years of the war, many theatrical stars did not choose to travel or play in

cities which were not absolutely safe from the conflict, and St. Louis was questionable. Meanwhile, soldiers and travelers streamed into St. Louis. The St. Louis Theatre was the only legitimate theatre which continued operation during the war. De Bar and his St. Charles company had left immediately for St. Louis when Ft. Sumter fell in the spring of 1861.

Music and minstrel halls mushroomed in the city. George Deagle ran such a music hall and accumulated enough financial backing to reopen the Varieties Theatre as Deagle's Varieties Theatre and offer a high quality of family entertainment to St. Louisians.

In 1857, the Musard Family performed pantomimes and dancing at the St. Louis Theatre. Lola Montez returned for an engagement, concentrating her talent in dramatic fare. The Ravel Troupe played its annual engagement. The ballet stars were Yrca Mathias and Paul Brilliant. La Belle Oceana, Messrs. Leeson, a pantomimist, and Jarding, a gymnast, presented a month of pantomimes at the St. Louis.

At the People's Theatre, the Keller Troupe created its living pictures of great art works and scenes from the Old Testament. The two resident dancers in the stock company were Miss Llewelyn and Millie Peters.

The year 1858 was an exciting one at the St. Louis Theatre. The Ronzani Ballet with numerous stars such as

Louise Lamoureux, Phillipo Barratti, the Cecchettis, the Pratesis and many other fine Italian dancers performed a repertory of new ballets never before presented in St. Louis. Immediately following the ballet troupe, the Martinetti-Blondin (late-Ravel) Troupe played the Ravel repertory of pantomimes and performed the tightrope feats for which the Martinetti Family and Blondin were famous. The Keller Troupe played the St. Louis this same year. The troupe included within its ranks, the Young America Ballet Corp.

In 1857, the People's Theatre was renamed Wood's Theatre. Mrs. Leighton and Maggie Scanlan handled the few dancing entertainments which were presented between the plays.

The Ravel Troupe returned to the St. Louis Theatre in 1859. Another family troupe, the Zanfrettas performed with the Ravels. Miss Llewelyn who had danced at the People's Theatre in 1857 now was the principal dancer at the St. Louis Theatre.

The only attraction at the Wood's Theatre was the Martinetti-Blondin Troupe. Flora Weekley and Mlle. Haydee with Monsieur Smith provided the dance and pantomime. The theatre closed at the end of 1859 and was remodeled into a bowling alley.

In 1869, the main attraction at the St. Louis

Theatre was the Ravel Troupe. That year the Varieties Theatre was opened as the St. Louis Opera House. Specializing in German opera, the only dance attraction which appeared was the Zanfretta-Siegrist Troupe. The Zanfretta family had joined forces with the Siegrist family presenting pantomimes and tight rope exhibitions.

During the War Between the States, the St. Louis Theatre was the only major theatre providing dramatic fare. Ada Isaacs Menken, a talented actress and dancer, provided the main attraction in 1861 and again in 1862. The other featured artists which appeared in 1862 were Isabel Cubas partnered by Juan Ximenes who performed a repertory of pas de deuxs and pantomimes.

In 1863, Hattie Vallée returned to the boards of the St. Louis in the capacity of dancer, pantomimist and member of the dramatic company. That year George Deagle reopened the Varieties Theatre as Deagle's Varieties Theatre, offering variety entertainment. Among the numerous stars which played the theatre were Signor Constantine who danced and composed ballets for the troupe, Mlle. Elise, Miss Walby, who performed ballets and fancy dances. Kate Pennoyer and Frances Leroy from the New York music halls joined the company during the year.

In 1864, the Ravel-Martinetti Troupe performed at the St. Louis Theatre. Hattie Vallée performed only in the

French Spy. Marie Zoe visited the St. Louis acting and dancing in the Wizard Skiff. At the Varieties, Kate Pennoyer and Frances Leroy became resident dancers. A Monsieur Tophoff was engaged to perform and compose the ballet. Sophie Walton appeared in speciality dances. The following year, Monsieur Boldy joined the Varieties as maitre de ballet; later that season Monsieur Zavistowski replaced him. Dance was a part of many of the miscellany of entertainments presented. During the 1865-1866 season at the St. Louis Theatre, renamed De Bar's Opera House, no dance was presented.

The years between 1857 and 1865 had been hard times--depression followed by the War Between the States. St. Louis had been affected by each of these events, and during these times because of economic reasons, the theatrical community had to rely more upon its resident company's talents than on visiting stars. Nevertheless, many of the dance artists who did visit St. Louis were of a high caliber and presented a diversity of entertainment which the public avidly sought during this era.

Theatrical Seasons

1857-1865

St. Louis Theatre

Varieties Theatre

People's Theatre

1857 Ravel Troupe*

(July-December)

1858 Ronzani Ballet*
 Keller Troupe*
 Martinetti-Blondin
 Troupe*

renamed the
Wood's Theatre
Mrs. Leighton
Maggie Scanlan

1859 Ravel Troupe*
 Zanfretta Family*
 Miss Llewelyn

Martinetti-Blondin
Troupe*
Flora Wekley
Haydee/Smith

1860 Ravel Troupe*

renamed the
St. Louis Opera House
Zanfretta-Siegrist
Troupe*

--CLOSED--

St. Louis Theatre

St. Louis Opera House

1861

Ada Issacs Menken*
Sallie St. Clair

--CLOSED--

1862

Isabel Cubas/
Ximenes*
Ada Issacs Menken*

1863

Hattie Vallée

renamed the
Deagle's Varieties
Theatre
Signor Constantine*
Mlle. Elise*
Frances Leroy*
Kate Pennoyer*
Miss Walby*

1864

Ravel-Martinetti
Troupe*
Marie Zoe*
Hattie ValléeFrances Leroy
Kate Pennoyer
Monsieur Tophoff*
Sophie Walton

St. Louis Theatre

St. Louis Opera House

Olympic Theatre

1865

renamed the
De Bar's Opera House

Monsieur Tophoff
Monsieur Boldy
Mille. Leah
Miss Leroy

1866

(Jan.-
June)

Monsieur Boldy
Mille. Leah
Miss Leroy
Miss Walton

Zavistowski
Troupe*

Zanfretta Troupe*
Bronner/Cardella

Monsieur Zavistowski*

* Designates a
visiting star
or company

CHAPTER IV

ACT III: ST. LOUIS, THE FOURTH CITY AND "THE FUTURE GREAT CITY OF THE WORLD"

Denouement

1866-1870

When the War Between the States ended, St. Louis began to enter a new period of great activity. In 1866, St. Louis was "a focal point for reconstruction operations to the South."⁶²⁵ Moreover, the citizens of St. Louis were anxious to maintain the city's position of importance in the Mississippi Valley.

On August 9, 1867, the Daily Missouri Republican reported St. Louis had a population of 204,327, thereby making it the fourth largest city in the United States with New York, Philadelphia and Brooklyn being the first three.⁶²⁶

New industry was moving into the city rapidly. Coal had been discovered in nearby Illinois. A bridge across the Mississippi was being considered to alleviate the blocking of commerce during the severe winter months in which the

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Herbstruth, p. 36.

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Daily Missouri Republican, 9 August 1867.

river was frozen. St. Louis was moving swiftly into becoming an industrial city.

In the spring of 1866, the Olympic Theatre opened. The theatre was designed as a "hippotheatre" to accommodate both circus and stage productions. The circus was soon replaced by drama and then by variety until the theatre finally became established as a house offering legitimate dramatic fare. The St. Louis Theatre continued to operate under De Bar's management as a stock company with visiting stars. Deagle's Varieties Theatre began presenting drama after the war but returned to variety and spectacular entertainment.

During the years after the war, the theatres and theatrical fare were changing to accommodate the faster pace in people's lives. Variety had grown popular during the war and it continued to please audiences in the years following the war. Variety was often integrated into spectacle and later developed further in extravaganzas. Moody sums up the types of spectacles produced during this period:

realism and romanticism were simultaneously in evidence . . . in the theatre and drama of this period a searching for realistic detail to be exhibited with a general romantic design.⁶²⁷

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Moody, p. 238.

This dichotomy is evident in the production of The Black Crook as a prototype of the type of entertainment the public demanded, for this show contained many of the popular theatrical features of the time.

Olympic Theatre

1866

The Olympic Theatre was built in 1866 by Moses Flannagan and his silent partners, Gilbert Spauding and David Bidwell from New Orleans. David Bidwell purchased the Phoenix Hotel in New Orleans. From his hotel earnings, he built the theatre, the Academy of Music. In 1856, Bidwell formed a partnership with the circus managers, Spauding and Rogers. ⁶²⁸ The Olympic Theatre was erected by Flannagan with Spauding and Bidwell holding the mortgage.

Theodore Johnson wrote in his dissertation, "A History of the First Olympic Theatre of St. Louis, Missouri, 1866-1887," that little is known about Flannagan, except that "it was claimed in 1865, G. H. Metcalf of the Champs Elysses Circus of New York and Flannagan acted together in ⁶²⁹ planning for the erection of the Olympic Theatre."

A description of the exterior of the theatre has not

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Sherman, p. 60.

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Theodore Clarke Johnson, "A History of the First Olympic Theatre of St. Louis, Missouri, 1866-1887" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1958), p. 17.

been discovered by the investigator, however, a picture of the theatre as it appeared in 1870 is included in Appendix B. The architect for the theatre was George I. Barnett, who designed the "Hippotheatron" as part of a five story building located on Fifth Street between Walnut and Elm Streets, opposite the Southern Hotel. The "Hippotheatron" was designed to accommodate both circus and stage attractions by removing the stage to make a ring "with a sawdust carpet."⁶³⁰

The entrance to the auditorium was under the dress circle. The auditorium seated 1500 people. The seating arrangement was designed with a parquette and three balconies: the dress circle, the family circle and the gallery. The balconies extended from the back of the house along the sides of the auditorium.⁶³¹

The stagehouse had a proscenium opening measuring approximately 41 feet wide. "The proscenium opening was designed to represent a 'palace with a gateway in the center'--the gateway presumably being painted on the curtain."⁶³² The stage was approximately 55 feet wide and

⁶³⁰ Scharf, p. 983.

⁶³¹ Johnson, p. 16.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Ibid., p. 15.

63 feet deep with a wing space of 7 feet per side. Johnson speculates that because of the narrow wing space, there may have been some rigging in the loft for drops.⁶³⁴

The Olympic Theatre opened on April 23, 1866, with eighteen hundred people in attendance,⁶³⁵ some three hundred more than the theatre seated. M. E. Flannagan and Company were advertised as proprietor, and Levi J. North was listed as director. The theatre's opening performance featured "Levi North's Circus with an Equestrian Troupe, a shadow pantomime and Tanner's Dogs and Monkeys."⁶³⁶

Johnson summarized that between April and June 1866, Flannagan booked circus and variety entertainment by travelling combinations.⁶³⁷ The newspaper advertisements bear out this fact. A change in this early period of predominately circus entertainment came with the engagement of the celebrated Zavistowski Troupe which opened on June 11, 1866. The troupe included Monsieur Zavistowski, Madame Zavistowski, whose maiden name was Christine Ludlam,⁶³⁸ and their two children, Emeline and Alice, billed as "La Petite Alice."

⁶³⁴ Johnson, p. 16.

⁶³⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

⁶³⁶ Daily Missouri Republican, 23 April 1866.

⁶³⁷ Johnson, p. 25.

⁶³⁸ Brown, pp. 404-5.

During the first week of the Zavistowski Troupe's engagement, Christine played the three role lead in The French Spy.⁶³⁹ The second week of their engagement, Christine performed a new dance, Emeline, a "capital farce"⁶⁴⁰ and the season ended June 27.

Soon after opening, the Olympic Theatre added a new innovation to St. Louis theatre by offering Wednesday and Saturday matinee performances; these were well attended by ladies.⁶⁴¹ Flannagan presented a variety of entertainment in his attempt to attract a family audience in order to establish the reputation of an orderly and respectable house.⁶⁴²

Finale

Olympic Theatre

1866-1867

Johnson wrote that Flannagan promised that the Olympic Theatre would be a legitimate house by the fall.⁶⁴³ The fall season at the Olympic opened on September 6, 1866, with the play, Money. In the play, Senorita Maria danced

⁶³⁹ Daily Missouri Republican, 14-16 June 1866.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 17-27 June 1866.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 11 June 1866.

⁶⁴² Johnson, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., p. 35.

644

a clog dance. Throughout the fall and winter season, the Olympic Theatre did not present dance except in a dramatic piece. At the end of December, the theatre closed because Flannagan was plagued by a series of law suits against him from members of the stock company. They were seeking damages for unemployment.

In March 1867, the Olympic opened presenting the spectacle, The Wonders of the World. In the performance were "the latest European novelties, The Sphynx, Illuminated Fountain, Golden Shower, and the famous Hanlon Brothers and Troupe."⁶⁴⁷ A Senorita Roseti, principal danseuse and tight rope performer from the Grand Opera, Madrid and Mlle. Augustine, "premir [sic] danseuse and pantomimist from the Parisian Theatres" were introduced in this production. The spectacle ran from March 4 through 16. Then the theatre was closed.⁶⁴⁸ The Globe Democrat, a St. Louis newspaper, later reported that "interest lagged in circuses and so in 1867 the theatre became a variety house."⁶⁴⁹

644 Daily Missouri Republican, 6 September 1866.

645 Ibid., September-December 1866.

646 Johnson, p. 39.

647 Daily Missouri Republican, 4 March 1867.

648 Ibid., 4-16 March 1867.

649 Globe Democrat, 15 November 1869.

When the theatre opened on April 8, George Deagle was advertised as business manager. The Olympic offered a pantomime, Mother Goose or the Golden Egg and a ballet, Medora. On April 14, Mlle. Leah, from the Deagle's Varieties Theatre, danced a divertissement and Mlle. Lillie performed a dance on April 19. The theatre then closed until the end of April when it opened for a visiting opera troupe.

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The season had been a disaster. After a brief fall season offering legitimate drama, the theatre had closed in December. Between the end of December 1866 and July 1867, the theatre had no permanent management except for a local manager who opened the theatre for benefits and traveling companies.

Deagle's Varieties Theatre

1866-1867

The operatic extravaganza, Cinderella or the Little Glass Slipper ran through the latter part of August, 652 1866. During the last week of August, the Varieties presented "startling novelty and melodrama". The Varieties Theatre had little competition for the only other operating

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651 Daily Missouri Republican, 8-30 April 1867.

652 Johnson, p. 50.

652 Daily Missouri Republican, 18-25 August 1866.

theatre was the St. Louis.

On September 2, La Giselle was presented, and on September 10, the Willies or the Night Dancers was performed as part of a drama. From September 12 until the beginning of October, the Varieties produced plays.

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On October 3, the Varieties announced the theatre was to open every evening, but no listing of the bill to be performed or the company members was included in the advertisement.⁶⁵⁴ This advertisement changed on December 24 to announce the great spectacles of Sadak and Kalasrade which ran until January 17, 1867. Throughout this period the Amusements column did not offer any further information about the production.⁶⁵⁵

On January 17, the Varieties produced a local drama entitled Lillie or the Mysteries or Miseries of St. Louis. The month ended with Elise and Leah performing new dances in a production An All Time Low!⁶⁵⁶

The theatre offered dramas with new ballets, new songs and new Negro acts from February until April 6, when

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Daily Missouri Republican, September 1866.

654

Ibid., 3 October-23 December 1866.

655

Ibid., 24 December 1866-17 January 1867.

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Ibid., 17-31 January 1867.

it closed to prepare for a new production.

On April 14, 1867, Deagle's Varieties presented The Black Crook in St. Louis. The history of The Black Crook has been written about by many scholars at length, so only a brief synopsis of the events preceding the historical event will be presented.

Henry C. Jarrett and Harry Palmer in the summer of 1866 were planning to present a ballet troupe from Europe at the New York Academy of Music. Before this production opened, the Academy burned down. The partners contacted William Wheatly, the manager of Niblo's Theatre. Jarrett and Palmer invited him to join their partnership and present the ballet troupe at Niblo's. Wheatly accepted and the partners decided to display the troupe within the framework of a spectacle with a mere clothesline plot for a storyline. To write this thin device, the partners asked Charles M. Barras, a New York Journalist and dramatic critic.⁶⁵⁸ Barras wrote the script, about which Joseph Whitton commented in his book, "The Naked Truth!" "there was no originality in the plot at all-being a medley made up of the Naiad Queen, Undine, Lurline and two or three other spectacular dramas of

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like nature." Although the plot of The Black Crook left much to be desired dramatically, the fact remains that the play was highly successful in many ways and especially financially. The production called upon new sources to produce an unheard of lavish theatricality of

cascading water falls, displays of fire, caverns, grottos, phantasmagorias of horror, brilliant transformations of color and lighting and most important of all, ballet extravaganzas.⁶⁶⁰

Throughout the ballet extravaganzas, the most important article on display was "legs" whose impact was summed up in Joseph Whitton's book:

Legs are staple articles, and will never go out of fashion while the world lasts. They top the list of the Beauties of Nature, and we will father an array of them that will make even the surfeited New Yorker open his eyes and his pocket and hold his breath in astonishment.⁶⁶¹

Not only did the New Yorkers stare but so did St. Louisians!

In order to accomodate the production of this spectacle Deagle had to make some changes in the Varieties Theatre. The stage had to be removed and a twenty foot pit dug to house the machinery necessary for the production.⁶⁶²

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Joseph Whitton, "The Naked Truth!" An Inside History of The Black Crook (Philadelphia: H. W. Shaw, 1897), p. 10.

660

David, p. 8.

661

Whitton, pp. 5-6.

662

David, p. 10.

For the total production, sets, machinery, costumes,
 Deagle supposedly invested \$47,000. ⁶⁶³ David makes the
 comment that "In the age of P. T. Barnum any figure would
⁶⁶⁴ be suspect."

Needless to say, whatever Deagle's expense of the production, it was a success with the St. Louis audience from opening night on April 24. In the St. Louis production, Annetta Galletti played the lead female role which Marie ⁶⁶⁵ Bonfanti had made famous in New York. ⁶⁶⁶ Cardella, Galletti's husband, played the male lead. ⁶⁶⁷ Other dancers included Mlles. Rosati, Auriol and Elise.

A week after The Black Crook opened, the New Opera House, a minstrel house in St. Louis managed by Fred Wilson, presented a burlesque, The Black Cook with the "Flat Foot ⁶⁶⁸ Ballet Troupe."

The Black Crook continued its run at Deagle's In its seventh week, Mlle. Pepita replaced Galletti. Throughout the summer, The Black Crook played. At the end

⁶⁶³ Daily Missouri Republican, 25 April 1867.

⁶⁶⁴ David, p. 12.

⁶⁶⁵ Daily Missouri Republican, 30 April 1867.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., 13 May 1867.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 18 Mary 1867.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 8 May 1867.

of June, Deagle refreshed the ballets; he advertised an "entire change of ballets and dances."⁶⁶⁹ The Black Crook ran for 87 performances until July 14, when the theatre closed for the season. The season in retrospect had been one of spectacles with the production of The Black Crook being the most outstanding.

De Bar's Opera House

1866-1867

De Bar's Opera House opened on August 13, 1867 with the Holman English Opera Company. In February, Dan Bryant, the Irish comedian danced his "celebrated jig" entitled "The Rocky Road to Dublin"⁶⁷⁰ On April 27, 1867 Black Crook and Cupid, a burlesque, opened in parody of The Black Crook⁶⁷¹ which had just opened at Deagle's Varieties Theatre.

Olympic Theatre

1867-1868

The management of the Olympic Theatre announced on November 25, 1867 that the theatre had been entirely rebuilt, remodeled and enlarged. The proprietors and managers, Spaulding and Bidwell, who also owned the Academy of Music

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Daily Missouri Republican, 24 June 1867.

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Ibid., 18 February 1867.

⁶⁷¹

Ibid., 27 April 1867.

in New Orleans and the Theatre De Prince Imperial in Paris, were presenting a "Double Combination of Artists in Specialities." The artists in the company included the Zanfretta Pantomime Troupe, Monsieur Baptistine's Ballet Troupe and "Terpsichorean Chef D'Ouvre" by Mlles. Augusta, 672 De Vere, and the Clinetop Sisters.

Monsieur Baptistine had been Mlle. Martinetti's partner earlier at the Bowery Theatre in New York. Not only 673 was he a dancer, but he also performed Harlequin roles. The Clinetop Sisters, Lucy and Sallie, had danced at the 444 Broadway Music Hall in 1865. Later they would return to 674 the New York music halls.

Baptistine's ballet troupe opened with a 675 mythological ballet. Oddly enough, the ballet which opened next was entitled Les Sylphides which featured Mlle. Augusta, and Monsieur Baptistine who were supported by De Veres, the Clinetop sisters, coryphees and a corps de 676 ballet. The next attraction was a grand ballet with the same cast which shared the evening with the Zanfretta's pantomime, The Enchantment and other gymnastics and

672

Daily Missouri Republican, 25 November 1867.

673

Odell, VII, pp. 653, 656.

674

Ibid., pp. 81, 642.

675

Daily Missouri Republican, 28-30 November 1867.

676

Ibid., 2-4 December 1867.

On December 9, a Swiss ballet, Guillaume Telle opened, followed by a grand fairy ballet Telemoque or the Isle of Calypso.⁶⁷⁸ The ballet troupe and other dancers in the company performed "Terpsichoreanisms" and closed the year with the entire company plus fifty extras participating in a pantomime, The House That Jack Built.⁶⁷⁹ Over the New Year's holiday, a production entitled Holiday Novelties played.⁶⁸⁰

The Zanfrettas presented The French Dancing Master followed by "The Infant Wonder, Master George [Siegrist]" leaping from the dome to the stage. Later on in the program, Billy Emerson performed the "Song and Dance of America." A classical ballet, "a screaming farce by the Corps d'Afrique" followed, and the evening concluded with an extravaganza,
Unfortunate Notary by the entire company.⁶⁸¹

Much of the time, titles or general titles were given to the offerings; seldom were casts listed. Only visiting stars usually received any billing. In February, the Olympic presented "Grand Olio Attractions" which

677

Daily Missouri Republican, 5-7 December 1867.

678

Ibid., 12-18 December 1867.

679

Ibid., 19-25 December 1867.

680

Ibid., 30 December-1 January 1868.

681

Ibid., 5-8 January 1868.

numbered ten acts in a single evening with the performance concluding with "the Ravel pantomime" Coopers or the Magic Flute.⁶⁸² It is remarkable that this is one of the few times appropriate credit has been offered to the genius of the Ravels!

The Varieties advertised "Marvelous Entertainment with continual changes and Terpsichorean Evolutions by Baptistine and the corps de ballet." The Zanfrettas contributed The Robbers of the Rhine and Master George did a "Leap of Life."⁶⁸³

On January 14, the entire company performed in Mazulme the Night Owl, the old Ravel pantomime but now with the subtitle, The Black Raven of the Tombs.⁶⁸⁴ The pantomime continued until January 18.

Every three days, the advertisements for the Olympic Theatre changed. One bill was presented for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; the second bill for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday matinee and evening performances. With pantomime, ballets, acrobats, gymnasts, vocalists, comedians and a dancers, there was "a multitude of attractions." As the month of February wore on, the variety bill continued

682

Daily Missouri Republican, 3-5 February 1868.

683

Ibid., 9-11 January 1868.

684

Ibid., 14-18 January 1868.

without especial mention of ballet. The bills began to contain more dramatic sketches, burlesques and "songs, dances and Negroians by the Mammoth troupe" and other visiting stars.

The Zavistowski Family joined the Olympic company on February 27. At the same time two other stars were introduced: Mlle. Ida Idalie from the Theatre Royal in Brussels and Monsieur Giovanni Novissimo from the Theatre Royal Concert Garden who later was to dance with
 685
 Marietta Bonfanti in the Black Crook. These two were to lead a group of dancers "from the European theatres"--
 Mlles. Malvina Esres, Rosalie Sisters, Emile Della
 687
 Femina.

The first week of March, Christine Zavistowski danced in La Maja de Seville and on the same bill Idalie and performed a grand pas de deux composed by Novissimo. That week, the Daily Missouri Republican pronounced the Olympic Theatre as "now a dramatic and general variety company to equal, if not superior, to any in the
 688
 country." The following week, the Olympic Theatre

685 Daily Missouri Republican, 17-19 February 1868.

686 Odell, VII, pp. 450, 474.

687 Daily Missouri Republican, 27 February 1868.

688 Ibid., 1-6 March 1868.

reinforced the newspaper's statement by offering a "Carnival of Fun" which included "one hundred first class artists."⁶⁸⁹

Despite the flashy title, the Amusements column reported that it was a "dull week in business and dull in theatres too. . . .the attendance was good and the performers, of course not an impressive character, were certainly varied and amusing."⁶⁹⁰ The article ended by questioning if the Olympic Theatre "will be able to supply the constant demand for novelty"⁶⁹¹

The second week in March was the last week of the variety company. From March 16 on "the gorgeous, spectacular, romantic extravaganza" Undine was advertised as abounding in effects of matchless splendor and combination of marvelous magnificence putting in requisition near two hundred persons, the grand European and American Ballet Troupe, a full Dramatic Company and an Army of Amazons.⁶⁹²

Added to this overpowering description of a spectacle was a "Grand masquerade and carnival with one hundred guests in character and the famous Can-Can".⁶⁹³ The press reviewed the production and reported that although the scenic effects were the object of the play and the variety acts, both had

⁶⁸⁹

Daily Missouri Republican, 8 March 1868.

⁶⁹⁰

Ibid.

⁶⁹¹

Ibid.

⁶⁹²

Ibid., 16 March 1868.

⁶⁹³

Ibid., 19 March 1868.

been overdone so that the story line was lost. After some cutting and a week of production, the work seemed to be a smoother production.

Undine was replaced by a grand "Pas de Sabots" ⁶⁹⁴, danced by Malvina Evers, and "La Sequidilla," a Mexican ballet divertissement which opened on March 31 and played through April 4. Then another spectacle, Seven Sisters with another regiment of "Feminine Zouaves" marched on to the stage. This time, the press registered severe criticism

Undine--like its famous predecessor, the Black Crook, apart from its bewildering ballets and rich dazzling scenic effects, it has nothing of serious interest, and when the eyes are satisfied the mind finds nothing in it from which to extract entertainment.⁶⁹⁵

After the Seven Sisters had played a week, the press lashed out against the current production

. . . like the Black Crook, the White Fawn, Undine and other spectacular pieces, it included some scenes particularly in the way of ballets which if attractive, yet inferring somewhat on the conventional ideals of propriety: Such representations, are now so common in Eastern theatres and are so generally popular that it is useless to inveigle against them with any bitterness of criticism, which serves only to attract attention and raise up defenders. Their idea seems to be that if they can produce the novel or beautiful, either in ballet or other matters, they need not stop to calculate the moral effect any

⁶⁹⁴

Daily Missouri Republican, 6 April 1868.

⁶⁹⁵

Ibid., 28 March 1868.

⁶⁹⁶

Ibid., 12 April 1868.

more than the artist or sculptor in portraying
the 'human form divine.'⁶⁹⁷

The Seven Sisters ran until April 26. The newspaper commented further during its run that the "extravaganza [was] inferior to Undine."⁶⁹⁸ This report may have influenced the management to change the bill to Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp. The press considered Monsieur Zavistowski, now "the head of the ballet department" to be the grand feature of the attraction.⁶⁹⁹ After the spectacle played a few performances, the press pronounced Alladin "not as successful as Seven Sisters or Undine and a tendency to become monotonous."⁷⁰⁰

In the second week of May, the Olympic returned to the old Variety bill. On May 11, Ida Idalie took a benefit. She performed the ballet La Reviele Des Flores which she arranged.⁷⁰⁰ That same evening, Delehanty and Hingle danced "Double Clogs." Emeline and Alice Zavistowski shared a joint benefit performing Beauty and the Beast, a fairy extravaganza, and the French Spy.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁷ Daily Missouri Republican, 12 April 1868.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 27 April 1868.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 2 May 1868.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 11 May 1868.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 15 May 1868.

A "Melenge of Burlesque," The Grand Duchess of Alaska, The Black Fawn of America, and Indian Divertissement (which included a "War Dance," "Scalp Dance," "Pipe Dance" and "Green Corn Dance") and a May Festival filled out the month with the only invariable being danced every
 702
 evening--the "Can-Can."

The Olympic closed the first week of June. The theatre reopened on June 15 with a bill of comic opera, followed by the Ski High of the Gods of St. Louis, a burlesque and the "Black Crook March (Parasol Dance)." 703
 The Olympic Theatre then closed from June 20 until August.

During the season, the Olympic Theatre had three ballet masters. Baptistine, Novissimo and then Zavistowski. Since Baptistine was part of the fall season, he may have been involved in an employee's suit against the management. The short tenure of Novissimo may indicate that he too could not handle whatever disagreement or situation existed, and Zavistowski filled out the season.

Deagle's Varieties Theatre

1867-1868

When Deagle opened the Varieties Theatre on September 2, drama was the major offering for the fall,

⁷⁰² Daily Missouri Republican, 17-30 May 1868.

⁷⁰³ Ibid., 1-20 May 1868.

winter, and spring season until May 11, 1868, when The Enchanted Fawn opened with De Pol's Great European Ballet.⁷⁰⁴ The Daily Missouri Republican warned,

Manager Deagle is struggling against adverse circumstances and is determined to do the best he can. Next week he presents "The Enchanted Fawn." If the play has any other name the author will know it, and the necessary steps taken to obtain redress.⁷⁰⁵

The Enchanted Fawn may have resembled The White Fawn in other ways; George Freedly, a theatre historian wrote this description which presents a picture of the latter production.

As to the Ballet, it appeared to be a very good one, the legs are very numerous, and some of them are beautiful and most of the young ladies are scant of apparel--a lack, however, which does not seem to occasion poignant regret, either in their own gentle bosoms or in the more rugged breaths of their manly admirers.⁷⁰⁶

The Enchanted Fawn was soon complimented by the De Pol's "American Can-Can" at the end of each production. The Varieties advertised that the dance was "received with ⁷⁰⁷ thunderous applause every night." On May 30, the De Pol's European Ballet performed a grand pantomime entitled Arsenie

⁷⁰⁴

Daily Missouri Republican, 11 May 1868.

⁷⁰⁵

Ibid., 10 May 1868.

⁷⁰⁶

George Freedly, "The Black Crook, The White Fawn," Dance Index, January 1945, p. 16.

⁷⁰⁷

Daily Missouri Republican, 17 May 1868.

and, of course, the "Can-Can". They continued to perform the one extravaganza of the season, The Enchanted Fawn and the "Can-Can" until June 7.

De Bar's Opera House

1867-1868

Lota Crabtree was engaged at De Bar's Opera House in May 1868. At her benefit, De Bar performed the famous "Can-Can", as a take-off of the De Pol's Ballet which was currently playing at Deagle's Varieties.⁷⁰⁸ The post-season performances of 1868 forecast the theatrical fare of the 1870s. The Carroll and Emmets Great Western Combination Troupe, featured Delchancy and Hegler, Wilson Brothers, A. B. Pearson, Alfred Moe, R. M. Carroll and J. K. Emment as a complete variety bill which was to become the basis of the traveling combination troupes of the 1870s.⁷⁰⁹ Near the end of June, the Gaylord Minstrels appeared with their "Triple Champion Clog Dancers."⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁸

Daily Missouri Republican, 30 May-7 June 1868.

⁷⁰⁹

Ibid., 22 May 1868.

⁷¹⁰

Ibid., 1-13 June 1868.

⁷¹¹

Ibid., 27-31 June 1868.

Deagle's Varieties Theatre

1868-1869

Deagle closed the theatre for two weeks in July, 1868, and when it reopened on July 27, Deagle's Varieties was advertised to be "conducted as a first class variety ⁷¹² theatre."

In September The Seven Sons of Satan, "a grand, spectacular burlesque" opened which included "a Grand Zouave ⁷¹³ Drill, New Grand Ballet and Female Minstrels." Other variety stars began to be introduced one by one: "Tommy Quien--Song and Dance Artist, Young Leotard in his ⁷¹⁴ Zampillaerostatics Act," and numerous others.

In May of 1869, Female Forty Thieves, a burlesque, was followed by Fortunio and his Seven Gifted Servants. Of course, the show ended every night with the now "great ⁷¹⁵ Can-Can" featuring Conchita Ronzati. ⁷¹⁶ Ronzati had been a danseuse in the New York music halls.

From May 31 through June, a burlesque, Undone or the Nymphs of St. Louis appeared at the Varieties and Ronzati

712

Daily Missouri Republican, 28 July 1868.

713

Ibid., 12 September 1868.

714

Ibid., September 1868.

715

Ibid., 18-30 May 1869.

716

Odell, VIII, pp. 311, 608.

danced the "Can-Can." ⁷¹⁷ During the month of July, in addition to the regular variety bill, a "Chi-Hua-Can-Can!" ⁷¹⁸ played until the end of the season on August 2.

Deagle's Varieties Theatre, "newly painted, splendidly decorated" opened August 19, and Ronzati was still performing the "Can-Can." Mlle. Barretta joined the Varieties in August, and by September she had replaced ⁷¹⁹ Ronzati in the dance. ⁷²⁰ The newspaper advertisement did not delineate the specialty dance acts presented as part of the every night bill. However, a Varieties playbill dated December 3, can provide an example of the dances performed in an evening. Among a number of almost thirty songs, sketches and other forms of entertainments, Malinda Nagle performed a Fancy Dance, Senora [sic] Baretta a dance, Louis Boshell a Fancy Dance, Marie Zoel in her famous Clog Dance with credit for arranging the dance going to ⁷²⁰ Senorita Baretta. In the summer of 1868, Deagle advertised that his theatre was to operate in the manner of "a first class variety theatre." During this last season of the decade, the diversity of entertainment, with numerous

717

Daily Missouri Republican, 31 May-June 1869.

718

Ibid., July-2 August 1869.

719

Ibid., 19 August-12 September 1869.

720

Deagle's Variety Theatre Playbill, 3 December 1869 Missouri Historical Society.

performances and an ever-changing bill of ollios and spectacles contributed to Deagle attaining his goal.

Olympic Theatre

1868-1869

When the Olympic Theatre opened on August 24, 1868, it presented a Minstrel show. The fall season opened with Romeo and Juliet on September 12 and dramatic offerings continued through the fall of 1868. In January of 1869 Humpty Dumpty, a pantomime, opened, and a Mlle. Antonini danced in the production. Barlesque and trapeze artists filled much of the bills in January and February. In late February, the performances returned to dramatic fare for the rest of the season and 1870.

De Bar's Opera House

1868-1869

In September Marietta Ravel performed the French Spy and a tight rope act. Marietta Ravel, niece of the Ravel brothers, came to the United States at the age of four. Her engagement included the pantomime Angel of Midnight,

721

Daily Missouri Republican, August-December 1868.

722

Ibid., 1-24 January 1869.

723

Ibid., February-December 1869.

724

Clipping n.d., Ravel File, Museum of the City of New York, New York.

Marsaniello, and Marco the Mute in which she played the part
 of "Marco."⁷²⁵

In October, Whitman's Parisian Ballet Troupe produced the Enchanted White Fawn. The Danseuse Assoluta was a Mlle. Diana and a corp of thirty young ladies under the direction of Monsieur Marvig.⁷²⁶ The Enchanted White Fawn featured "love, romance, fairies, princes, princesses, magicians, devils, glittering scenes, dazzling lights and bewilder⁷²⁷ing ballet."

In May of 1869, Vallée performed King Charles, a breeches part,⁷²⁸ and accompanied A. H. Davenport in a "Champion Clog"⁷²⁹ near the end of the season.

In December 1869, the Lydia Thompson Burlesque Troupe opened at the De Bar Opera House for a two week engagement.⁷³⁰ Lydia Thompson brought over a troupe of British girls, all blondes, who rejuvenated the art of burlesque on the American stage.

In the last theatrical season of the decade, De Bar

⁷²⁵ Daily Missouri Republican, 14-19 September 1869.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 17 October 1869.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 22-29 May 1869.

⁷²⁸ Ibid., May 1869.

⁷²⁹ Ibid., 5 July 1869.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., 13-25 December 1869.

continued to manage the St. Louis theatre as a stock company. However, the visiting stars, dramas, spectacles and popular burlesques were rapidly being consolidated into packaged shows which traveled from city to city, replacing the whole entity of the resident dramatic company.

Summary

Although a cholera epidemic swept through St. Louis in 1866, it did not impede the city's economic recovery. In the years following the War Between the States, St. Louis was being challenged by other western cities in industry and commerce, and she was waging a battle to retain her position of importance in the Mississippi Valley.

When the war was over, Krone recollects that "the song and dance men began to invade the St. Louis stage in even greater numbers,"⁷³¹ but by that time the variety company was already firmly entrenched in Deagle's Variety Theatre. However, after the war, Deagle attempted to become a legitimate theatre by offering heavy dramatic fare for which the Daily Missouri Democrat chided him, "We have been filled to bursting with blood and intrigue and crime" and appealed to him to present lighter entertainment.⁷³²

What the St. Louis theatre-goer in the late 1860s, like other Americans, wanted was

something to please his eye and tickle his ear, something to strangle his cares and cut the throat of his troubles, something to make him laugh and forget he has a note to pay tomorrow, with no money to meet it.⁷³³

731 Krone, IV, p. 224.

732 Daily Missouri Democrat, 7 October 1867.

733 Whitton, p. 32.

St. Louis was engaged in administering reconstruction activities and combating a depression in the post-war period when a new theatre opened. The Olympic Theatre was designed as a "hippotheatron." In the last years of the 1860s, the theatre's fare vacillated between circus, variety and dramatic entertainments. Meanwhile at De Bar's Opera House, the stock company played at the beginning and end of the seasons and at intervals when star engagements did not meet. The theatre did not move into variety type performances until 1872, but in the last years of the decade, combination troupes appeared more regularly.

The railroads had made possible the long run which, of course, was also more profitable in transporting an entire production. The days of the stock companies were numbered. In the Pageant of America, one of the authors summed up the theatrical future of cities like St. Louis:

In the decades following the Civil War, the famous stars and stock companies of New York with a speed that would have shamed the fastest racing pilots of the Mississippi, travelled on luxurious private cars to such mammoth industrial cities as Chicago and St. Louis, and to the well-managed theatres of San Francisco, Salt Lake City, and other theatrical centers in the regions beyond the Mississippi.⁷³⁴

Not only was the entire structure of the theatre changing externally, but internally the dramatic presentations were undergoing a radical transformation. The

⁷³⁴

Coad and Mims, Jr., p. 157.

realistic trends in drama were also evident in dance.

H. E. Cooper wrote in an article "Ballerinas of Yesterday" that

the Civil War did more than emancipate the slaves; it freed the ballet skirt. In the Reconstruction Period, native ballerinas and their admirers changed their minds about fluffs and tights, and the American theatre rose formally on undisguished legs.⁷³⁵

Dance in the form of speciality dances, pas de deuxs, and divertissements became one of the many components of Variety. The most appealing variety acts became integrated into spectacles, built on clothesline plots. Magnified still further with less costumes and more Zouave Drills, the spectacles evolved into extravaganzas. Sol Smith, commented in his autobiography about the drama in the late 1860s in St. Louis:

In latter years the legitimate drama seems to have been crushed out by what may be termed Black Crookery and White Fawney, . . . Negro minstrelsy itself, a modulated form of the drama, has had a hard struggle to maintain its ground, and has only done so by burlesquing the burlesques of the theatres. Theatres did I say? Where are the theatres? They seem to have nearly all vanished and in their places we have Academies of Music, Olympics, Varieties, Gaieties, Athenaeums, and Opera Houses.⁷³⁶

Dance on the St. Louis Stage had come to an end of an era--and passed on into another form. However, the quality

⁷³⁵

H. E. Cooper "Ballerinas of Yesterday," Dance Magazine, January 1927, p. 40.

⁷³⁶

Smith, pp. 237-238.

of the dancers was yet another matter. Leavitt wrote in his book Fifty Years in Theatrical Management that

there were a number of fine dancers of another class in the Sixties and Seventies, notably Isabel Cubas, Madame Celeste, Annetti Galletti, Josephine Zanfretta, Christine Zavistowski, Elsa Blasini, Mlle. Albertine, La Belle Oceana, Marietta Ravel, Marie Zoe, Zavistowski Sisters, Fowler Sisters, Mlles. Leontine, Bartoletti, Helene Minzelli and Kate Pennoyer.⁷³⁷

Most of these dancers whom Leavitt mentions had performed in St. Louis. These artists and others who danced at the various theatres between 1850 and 1870 (see Appendix D) encompassed a sizable magnitude of theatrical personalities.

737

Leavitt, p. 161.

Theatrical Seasons

1866-1870

Olympic Theatre

De Bar's Opera House

Deagle's Varieties
Theatre

1866

(July-December)

Mlle. Elise

1867

Mlle. Leah*

Dan Bryant*

Zanfretta Troupe*
Mlle Leah
Monsieur Baptistine
Clinetop Sisters
The Black Crook
Cardella/Galletti/
Pepita*

1868

Monsieur Baptistine
Ida Idalie
Monsieur Novissimo
Zanfretta Troupe*
Zanvistowski Troupe*

The Enchanted Fawn
De Pol's Great European
Ballet*

Theatrical Seasons

1866-1870

Olympic Theatre	De Bar's Opera House	Deagle's Varieties Theatre
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1869

Marietta Ravel*
The Enchanted Fawn
Whitman's Parisian
Ballet Troupe*

Louis Boshell
Malinda Nagle
Conchita Ronzati

*Designates a visiting star or company

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Summary

Many dance historians dismiss the period of the last half of the nineteenth century as being uneventful in terms of dance history. Little information has been published which deals with dance from the American tour of Fanny Elssler until the time of Isadora Duncan. Preliminary research revealed, however, that in St. Louis much dance existed during these years. The investigator narrowed the study to encompass the period of 1850-1870. During this time span, a dance history was recorded for the five major theatres which operated in the city.

The major primary resource for the study was the daily newspaper. The Daily Missouri Republican remained the most consistent publication during the period of time encompassed by this study. The newspaper provided such information as theatres which operated, the artists who appeared, the works which were performed and the dates these performances were given. Other columns in the newspaper provided information about the performers and their reception by the public, audience attendance and synopses of ballets and pantomimes or descriptions of the scenery.

Elsewhere in the newspaper, the investigator learned about weather, political and economic events in the city and the nation.

In order to identify the artists who performed in St. Louis and the works in which they performed, it was necessary to examine playbills, autobiographies of theatrical managers and other nineteenth century theatrical materials. These in combination with present day historical accounts of the personalities and the period provided additional resources necessary for preparing a history of dance on the St. Louis stage.

In compiling the various sources into a chronological framework, the investigator developed the design of the study into three major sections. There were several observable trends in the period.

During the first time period of the study, 1850-1856, ballet and pantomime were popular forms of theatrical entertainment of which dance was an important part. The themes of many of the existing romantic ballets provided the basis upon which the various touring stars and companies built their repertories. The pantomimes, for which the Ravels became so famous, served other troupes as well. Some of the most famous nineteenth century foreign dancers performed on the St. Louis stage. These artists included such male dancers as Espinosa, Monplaisir, Baratti and

Brilliant who were complemented by ballerinas such as Ciocca, Franck, Mathias, Lamoureux, Monplaisir and Cubas.

The principal dancers at the major St. Louis Theatres, Vallée, St. Clair and La Belle Oceana, had danced in New York and Philadelphia before appearing on the St. Louis stage. The artistry of these dancers and their repertories of dances made them valuable members of the stock companies in which they performed.

In the second period, 1857-1865, theatre-goers were acutely aware of the economic pressures and political struggles affecting their lives and clamored for entertainment. The managers of the theatres complied with the public's taste by offering fantasies. Life began to move at a faster pace with a mounting uncertainty, of which the cumulative effect was the War Between the States. The theatrical fare mirrored these rapidly changing times with a melange of a highly compartmentalized series of songs, dances and sketches presented on a single bill--called Variety. Throughout the 1860s, as Variety entertainment became the vogue--music hall artists and ballet dancers from the New York theatres joined the ranks of the variety company in St. Louis.

The final years span the post-war period, 1866-1870. These years seemed to show an acceleration and expansion of events of the previous period, but with even more emphasis

on variety entertainment and its inclusion into spectacle and extravaganza productions.

Very few of the ballets which were popular in the nineteenth century have survived. Dance being the ephemeral art that it is, the nineteenth century dancer relied totally upon memory to restage these works. Certainly, these artists are to be complimented for their ability to perform the large number of dances and pantomimes which made up their repertory. It is only fair to speculate, however, on how similar the titles and performances were to the original works, for very often the titles of the works were changed or were spelled in various ways. In addition, many companies performed the same works which must have resulted in various interpretations of the original or of later productions from which the dancers originally learned the piece. Looking back, it seems remarkable that works performed in Europe reached the St. Louis stage in less than a year or two and that works from the New York theatres reached St. Louis in only a few months time.

Findings

As a result of undertaking the research for this study, the investigator was able to report several findings:

The five theatres which operated during the period of 1850-1870 offered St. Louis theatre-goers a wealth of theatrical entertainments from which to choose: ballets, pantomimes, and other entertainments of dancing. St. Louis theatre-goers had an opportunity to see many fine artists, both visiting and resident, both American and foreign, perform a wide repertory of works.

1850-1856: The stock company's theatrical bill comprised a loose framework in which pantomimes, ballets and even smaller segments from ballets sometimes were included in an evening's entertainment, thus providing a variety of dramatic fare, ballet and other entertainments in one program.

1857-1865: Dance in the theatre seemed to exist on opposite extremes--from the legitimate ballet of the Ronzani Troupe to the dancing tight rope exhibitions of the Ravels and Martinettis.

1866-1870: Dance as a segment of the variety bill was easily integrated into both spectacles and extravaganzas which became popular entertainments in the post-war period. The dancing became a secondary feature of the production with attention almost entirely directed to the display of the female form.

Conclusion

It was concluded that although little attention has been focused upon the history of dance in America before 1900 and especially on dance in the major cities of America, the findings of this study confirmed that dance was indeed a flourishing and vital art upon the St. Louis stage.

Recommendations for Further Studies

During the research conducted for the study, the investigator became aware of the need for additional studies of nineteenth century theatrical dance in the United States. Specifically recommended are the following investigations:

1. A historical study of dance on the St. Louis stage before 1850.
2. A series of historical studies of theatrical dance in the United States before 1900 in other major cities and theatres.
3. A biographical study of the Ravel Family in the United States.
4. A chronology of the Ravel Troupe and its tours throughout the United States.
5. A description of the pantomimes in the Ravel repertory.
6. A biographical study of Espinosa's career in the United States.

7. A historical study of the Ronzani Ballet in the United States.
8. A critical study of selected foreign dancers who appeared in the United States during the nineteenth century.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

An 1852 Engraving of St. Louis

Missouri Historical Society Archives, St. Louis, Missouri

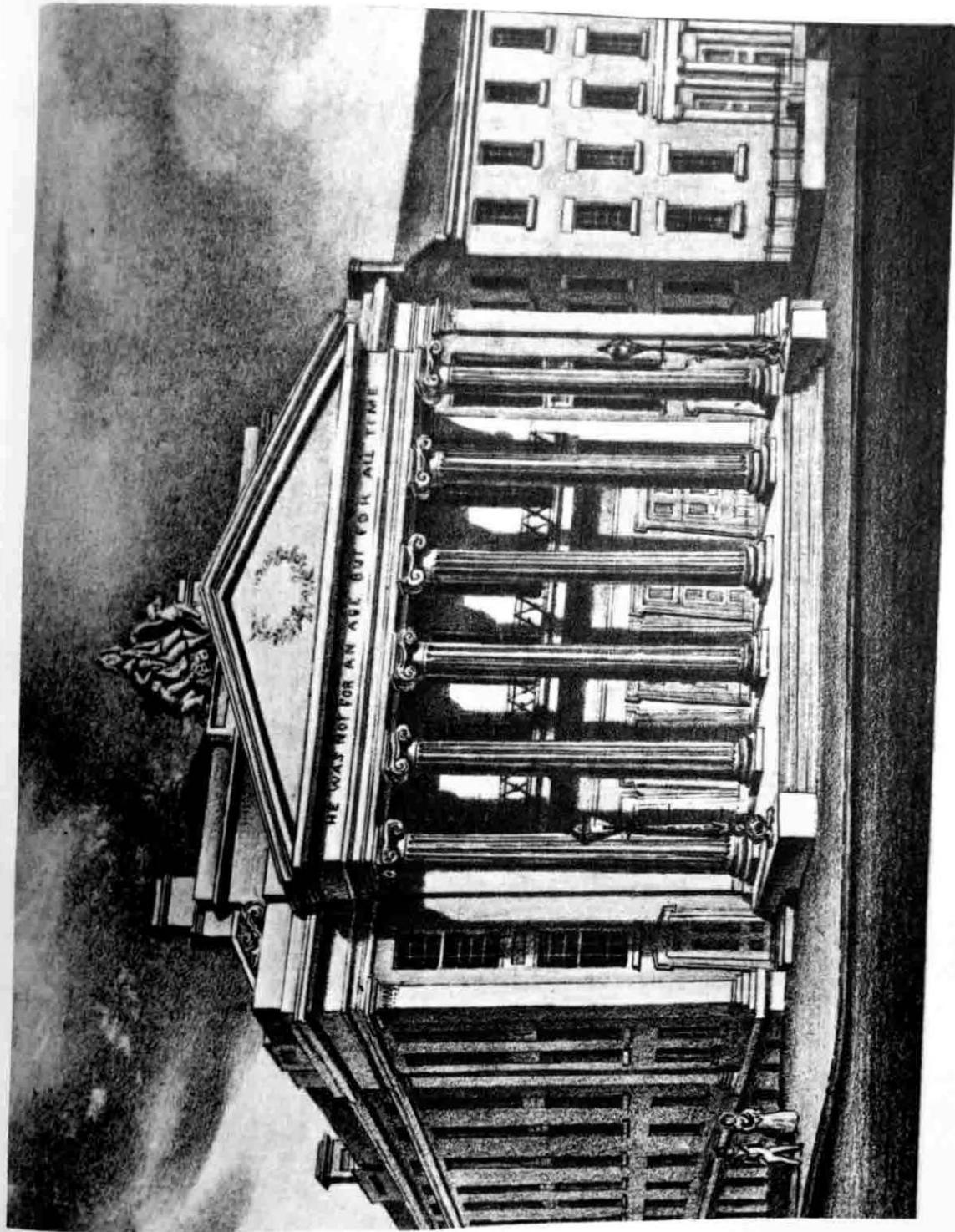


APPENDIX B

The St. Louis Theatre 1837-1851

Copy of the lithograph by J. C. Wild in Valley of the Mississippi which includes the columns which were purchased for the portico but were never erected.

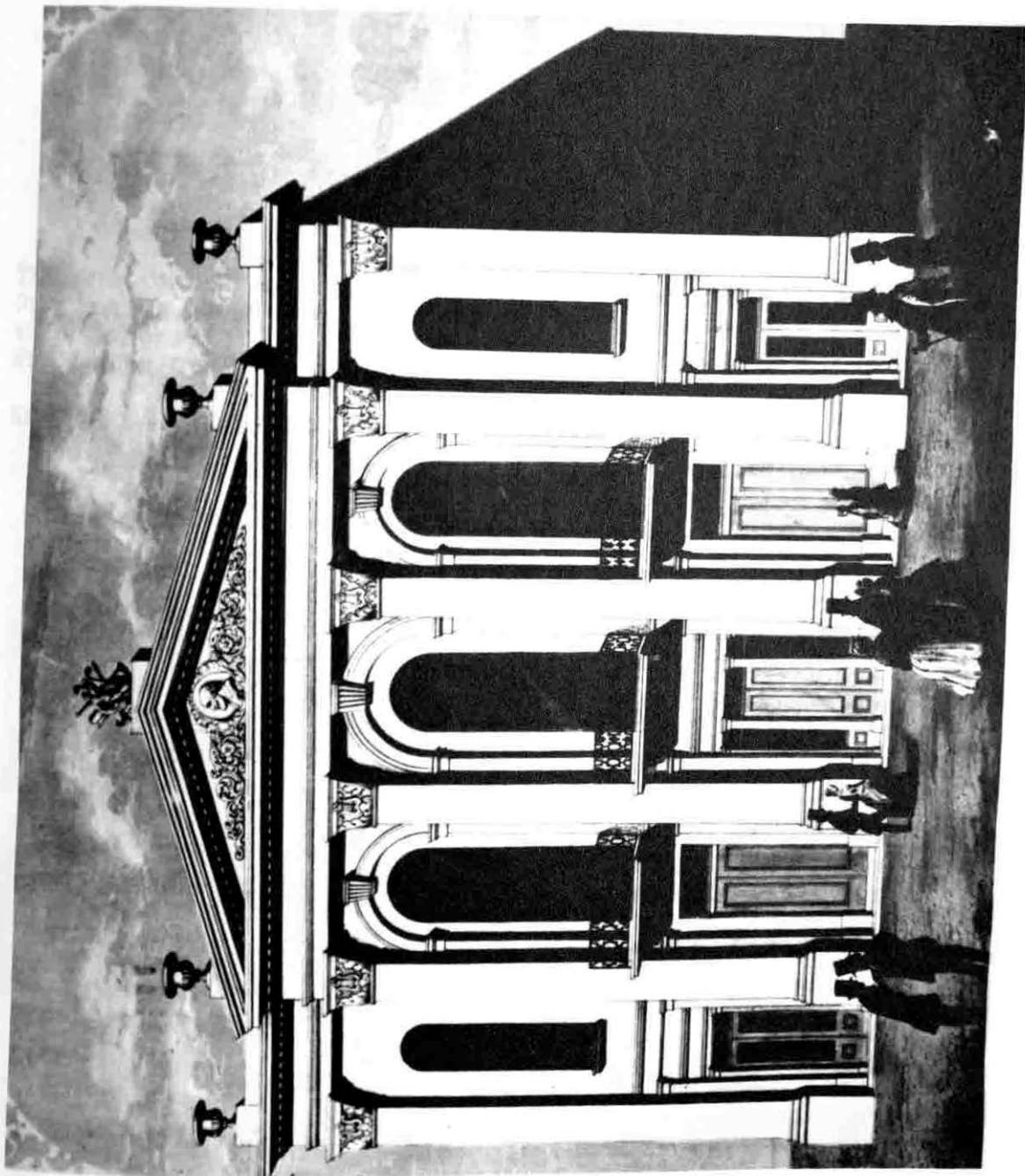
Missouri Historical Society Archives, St. Louis, Missouri



APPENDIX B

The Bates Theatre

Missouri Historical Society Archives, St. Louis, Missouri



APPENDIX B

The Varieties Theatre

The photograph is of De Bar's Opera House, ca. 1875. Originally, the theatre was built as the Varieties Theatre which opened in 1852. The theatre later operated as the St. Louis Opera House and in the 1860s as Deagle's Varieties.

Missouri Historical Society Archives, St. Louis, Missouri



APPENDIX B

The People's Theatre
1852

Missouri Historical Society Archives, St. Louis, Missouri



APPENDIX B

The Olympic Theatre in 1870

Missouri Historical Society Archives, St. Louis, Missouri



APPENDIX C

Mlle. Henrietta Vallée

Missouri Historical Society Archives, St. Louis, Missouri



APPENDIX C

Miss Sallie St. Clair
Harvard Theatre Collection



APPENDIX D

Dancers: 1850-1856

¹

Adelaide, Mlle. P 56 (E-M)
 Adolphe, Monsieur V 54 (P)
 Angelina, Madame St.L 56
 Baron, Anne Mlle. V 52 (E)
 Baron, Emilie Mlle. V 52 (E)
 Velan, Mlle. V 54 (P)
 Bennie, De Gray Monsieur P 53, V 54
 Bouxary, Monsieur B 51
 Capel, Leotine Mlle. B 53 (R), B 54 (R)
 Carmen, Little Laura V 54
 Carrese, Monsieur V 52 (E)
 Ciocca, Giovanna Mlle. V 52 (E), St.L 56

¹

Example: Adelaide, Mlle. P 56 (E-M) P--People's Theatre, 56--1856, (E-M)--Espinosa-Monplaisir Troupe

Theatres: B--Bates Theatre
 V--Varieties Theatre
 P--People's Theatre
 St.L--St. Louis Theatre (1850, 1851--Old St. Louis Theatre, 1855-1870 St. Louis Theatre)

Troupes: (E)--Espinosa
 (E-M)--Espinosa-Monplaisir
 (F-E)--Franck-Espinosa
 (M-C)--H. Monplaisir-Ciocca
 (P)--Pougaud
 (R)--Ravel
 (FR)--Francois Ravel
 (GR)--Gabriel Ravel

Collet, Monsieur B 53 (R), B 54 (R), V 54 (R), St.L 55 (GR)
De Bar, Benedict St.L 51, B 52, V 53, St.L 55, St.L 56
Duncan, Monsieur V 52 (E)
Desire, Mlle. B 53 (R), B 54 (R) (Martinetti)
de Sota, Pepita Senorita V 53
Elise and Emma, Mlles. P 53
Espinosa, Jenny, Mlle. St.L 51 (F-E), V 54 (E)
Espinosa, Leon Monsieur St.L 51 (F-E), V 52 (E), P 56 (E-M)
Franck, Celestine Mlle. St.L 51 (F-E), St.L 55 (GR)
Franck, Victorine Mlle. St.L 51 (F-E), V 55 (FR)
Frances, Miss. B 53 (R), B 54 (R), St.L 55 (GR)
Freeman, Miss. P 54
Gilbert, Monsieur and Madame B 53
Gredulise, Monsieur St.L 51 (F-E), V 52 (E)
Jacobi, Monsieur V 52
Javelli, Leon V 52
King, Miss. St.L 56
Lavigne, Mlle. V 54 (P)
Leeson, D. W. Mr. St.L 56
Lehman, Flora Mlle. V 55 (FR)
Le Martie, Monsieur V 54 (P)
Ludlam, Christine Mlle. St.L 51 (F-E)
Mangin, Evariste Monsieur V 55 (FR)
Marrette, Franc Monsieur V 55 (FR)
Marrette, Madame V 55 (FR)
Martinetti Family St.L 55 (GR)
Mathewman, Harry Mr. St.L 56 (E-M)
Mathewman, Mrs. St.L 56 (E-M)
Mathias, Yrca V 55 (FR)
Mege, Monsieur V 54 (P)
Montez, Lola V 53
Monplaisir, Adele Madame P 56 (E-M)
Monplaisir, Hippolyte Monsieur St.L 56 (M-C)
Morrison, Monsieur V 52
Musard Family (Henri, La Petite, Omar, and Madame) St.L 56
Olinza, Madame St.L 55
Olivia, Mlle. V 52
Pray, Frances Miss. P 56
Pray, Louisa Miss. P 55, P 56
Peters, Millie Miss. P 56
Pougaud, Mlle. V 54 (P)
Ravel, Francois Monsieur V 55 (FR)
Ravel, Gabriel B 53 (R), B 54 (R), V 54 (R), St.L 55 (GR)
St. Clair, Sallie Miss. B 52, V 53, P 54, V 54, P 55, V 55,
St.L 56
Scanlan, Maggie Miss. P 53, V 54, St.L 55, P 56
Spanish Dancers P 56, V 56
Smith, George Washington V 53

(Smith), La Belle Oceana B 51, P 52, V 52, P 53, V 53, P 54,
P 55, St.L 56
Stephan, Mlle. V 54 (P)
Terpsichorean Sisters P 53
Theiman, Leopold Monsieur V 55 (FR)
Theiman, Nathalie Madame V 55 (FR)
Theorean Children V 54
Vallée, Henrietta Mlle. St.L 50, St.L 51, V 52, V 53,
St.L 55, V 55, St.L 56
Vallée, Julia Mlle. B 51
Wiethoff, Monsieur B 53 (R), B 54 (R)
Winther, Charles V 52
Winther, Jerome V 52
Winther, La Petite (Josephine) V 52
Winther, Madame V 52
Zavistowski, Monsieur St.L 51 (F-E)
Zoe, Mlle. B 53 (R), B 54 (R), V 54 (R)

APPENDIX D

Dancers: 1857-1866

1

Agoust, Monsieur DV 65
 Auguste, Mlle. SLO 60 (Z-S)
 Augusta, Mlle. St.L 64
 Baratti, Phillipo St.L 58 (Ron)
 Barney, Master DV 63
 Blondin, Monsieur P 59 (M-B), P 59 (M-B)
 Boldy, Monsieur DV 65
 Brilliant, Paul St.L 59 (R)
 Capel, Leotine Mlle. St.L 58 (M-B)
 Cecchetti, Ceasare and Pia St.L 58 (Ron)
 Claudcrus, Mlle. St.L 57
 Constantine, Signor DV 63
 Cubas, Isabel St.L 62
 Desire, Mlle. (Martinetti) St.L 58 (M-B), St.L 60 (R-M)
 Elise, Mlle. DV 63
 Frances, Miss. St.L 57 (R-M), St.L 59 (R), St.L 60 (R-M)
 Galletti, Annette, Signora SLO 60 (Z-S)
 Gilbert, Zoe Mlle. St.L 57 (R-M), St.L 58 (M-B)
 Haydee, Mlle. W 59

1

Theatres: DV--Deagle's Varieties Theatre
 SLO--St. Louis Opera House
 St.L--St. Louis Theatre
 W--Wood's Theatre, formerly People's Theatre

Troupes: (M-B)--Martinetti-Blondin
 (R)--Ravel
 (R-M)--Ravel-Martinetti
 (Ron)--Ronzani Ballet
 (Z-S)--Zanfretta-Siegrist

Jarding, Monsieur St.L 57
Keller Troupe (Louis, Wilhelmenia, Julie and Amelia) W 57,
St.L 58
Leighton, Mrs. W 58
Lacnier, Miss. DV 63
Lamoureaux, Louise St.L 58 (Ron)
Leeson, D. W. Monsieur St.L 57
Lehman, A. St.L 60 (R-M)
Leah, Mlle. DV 65
Leroy, Frances Miss. DV 63, DV 64, DV 65
Llewelyn, Miss. W 57, St.L 59
Maginney, Ada W 59
Marsh Troupe (Jeanie and Louisa) St.L 57
Martinetti, Ignacio St.L 58 (M-B), W 59 (M-B)
Martinetti, Julian W 59 (M-B), St.L 60 (R-M)
Martinetti, Madame St.L 58 (M-B)
Martinetti, Paul St.L 58 (M-B), W 59 (M-B)
Mathias, Yrca, St.L 57 (R-M), St.L 59 (R)
Menken, Ada Issacs St.L 61
Montez, Lola St.L 57
Musard, Madame and Mc Carthy, Harry St.L 57
Pennoyer, Katie DV 63, DV 64
Pratesi, Gaspare St.L 58 (Ron), W 59 (M-B)
Pratesi, Guiseppina St.L 58 (Ron), W 59 (M-B)
Pratesi Sisters St.L 58 (Ron)
Pratesi Brothers St.L 58 (Ron)
Ravel-Martinetti-Marzetti Troupe St.L 64
Ravel, Francois St.L 57 (R-M), St.L 59 (R), St.L 60 (R-M)
Ravel, Gabriel St.L 57 (R-M), St.L 59 (R), St.L 60 (R-M)
Robintace, Albert St.L 57 (R-M)
Rosa, Mlle. SLO 60 (Z-S)
Rosita, Mlle. DV 65
Ross, Tony Monsieur DV 63
Santolini, Signor St.L 58 (Ron)
Scanlan, Maggie Miss. W 58
Siegrist, August SLO 60 (Z-S)
(Smith), La Belle Oceana St.L 57
Smith, Sidney W 59
St. Clair, Sallie St.L 61
Toldeo, Monsieur St.L 58 (M-B)
Tophoff, Monsieur DV 64, DV 65
Vallée, Henrietta St.L 57, St.L 63, St.L 64
Velarde, E. Monsieur SLO 60 (Z-S)
Walby, Miss. DV 63
Walton, Sophie DV 64
Wekley W 59
Young America St.L 60 (R-M)
Young America Ballet Corps (with Keller Troupe) St.L 58
Ximenes, Juan St.L 62

Zanfretta, Alexander St.L 50 (R), SLO 60 (Z-S)
Zanfretta, Marietta SLO 60 (Z-S)
Zoe, Mlle. St.L 64

APPENDIX D

Dancers: 1866-1870

¹
 Allen, John O 68
 Antonie, Mlle. O 69
 Augusta, Mlle. O 67
 Augustine, Mlle. O 66
 Auriol, Monsieur DV 67
 Baptistine, Monsieur O 67, O 68
 Baretta, Mlle. DV 69
 Boldy, Monsieur DV 66
 Boshell, Louise Miss. DV 69
 Brent, Eva Miss. O 68
 Bronner, Juliette Signora DV 66
 Cardella, Giuseppe DV 66, DV 67
 Carroll, Dick O 68
 Clinetop Sisters O 67
 Della Femina, Emile Signora O 68
 De Pol's Great European Ballet DV 68²
 De Verve, Mlle. O 67, O 68

¹

Theatres: DV--Deagle's Varieties Theatre
 O--Olympic Theatre
 St.L--St. Louis Theatre

²

De Pol's Great European Ballet:
 Mlles. Blavina Corradins
 Croce Duchateau
 Tarrant Giovanni
 Ricci Morincus
 Barretha Gerard
 Trissi numerous corps de ballet

Elise, Mlle. DV 66, DV 67, O 68
Emerson, Billy O 68
Esres, Mlle. O 68
Evers, Mlle. O 68
Galletti, Annetta DV 67
Idalie, Ida O 68
Lang, Joe O 68
Leah, Mlle. DV 66, O 67, DV 67
Lillie, Mlle. DV 67
Lorraine, Mertha Mlle. O 67
Malvina, Mlle. O 68
Maria, Senorita O 66
Nagle, Malinda DV 69
Novissimo O 68
Pepita, Signora DV 67
Ronzati, Conchita Mlle. DV 69
Rosati, Senorita O 67, DV 67
Rosalie Sisters O 68
Walton, Miss. DV 66
Zanfretta, Alexander DV 66, O 67, O 68
Zanfretta Josephine DV 66, O 68
Zanfretta, Marietta DV 66, O 68
Zavistowski, Alice (La Petite) O 66, O 68
Zavistowski, Christine O 66, O 68
Zavistowski, Emeline O 66, O 68
Zoe, Marie DV 69

APPENDIX E

The Newspapers

The newspaper, the Daily Missouri Republican, used as a primary source for this study originally appeared as the Missouri Gazette. This first newspaper printed west of the Mississippi River first appeared on July 12, 1808. The following year, the name of the newspaper was changed to the Louisiana Gazette. In 1818, the newspaper resumed its original name, the Missouri Gazette, and in 1822, the newspaper was renamed the Missouri Republican.

The newspaper was a weekly publication until 1833, when it became semi-weekly. Two years later, the Missouri Republican was printed as a tri-weekly, and in 1836, the newspaper became a daily. The political stance of the Daily Missouri Republican was that of both independent and conservative. The scope of its reporting included national and local news, river commerce, commodities trading and amusements and social events in St. Louis and the surrounding area.¹

The Daily Missouri Democrat originated as a merger in 1835, when William Mc Kee and William Hill, proprietors of the Democrat purchased the Union, known as an "anti-Benton organ." The Daily Missouri Democrat operated as an independent, Republican publication which served St. Louis primarily as a commercial newspaper.²

¹

R. A. Campbell, Gazetter of Missouri (St. Louis: by the author, 1874), p. 556.

²

Ibid., p. 557.

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