

Children's Ballet

By Our Ballet Critic

What is Children's ballet? I would recommend, for answer, a visit to Richard Maitland's International Children's Dance Theatre, which is scheduled to give a performance on Wednesday at the AIFACS, in aid of the Bengal flood victims. The Bengal Association is sponsoring the show.

It is no good denying that Indian dancing is not the thing for children. It is taught at an early age only so that the child may attain proficiency in adulthood. A child cannot portray (nor can adults, for that matter!) Krishna's love for Radha, or the Siva theme, or any of the very adult, mature sentiments which form the content of Bharatanatyam or Kathak.

What the child loves to portray, and does without appearing precocious are animals, fairies and elves. So far as I know, animals have very rarely come in for aesthetic treatment in the hands of our dancers. This is probably because animals in our tales have been given human attributes, and a moral consciousness.

FREE MOVEMENT

Richard Maitland's animals are not bound down thus. With the result that they have a freer flow of movement, and are unmistakably the friendly little creatures in a child's story book.

"Animal's Ballet" is sure to be one of the most popular items with children. The other numbers include "Hansel and Gretel", and simple dance numbers.

There is also an item about a vain queen and her beautiful maid. Mr. Maitland himself shows glimpses of his talent as the Witch in "Hansel and Gretel", and as the turtle in the "Animal's Ballet".

There is joy, gaiety and simple fun here, and after all, that is what a children's ballet should be.

At Wednesday's performance Mrs. Ellsworth Bunker, the American Ambassador's wife, will preside.