Calendar of Events April 1940

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A year and a half ago a storm swept in from the sea over Rhode Island and left irreparable destruction in its wake. It advanced with ever-increasing speed and wind velocities—and Rhode Island stood directly in the path of its dangerous semi-circle. Mounting winds and a blinding torrent of rain heralded this fury in mid-afternoon... The center of the storm was not far to the westward, and the storm would bring with it a cone of water rushing north at express-train speed... Not a beach home was left standing at some of these gay shores, and the beach itself upon which the dwellings had stood was ground down and swallowed by a furious sea made mad by wind... The days that followed brought tales of heroism... Into the face of the storm's unbridled wrath men flung their puny strength to go to the rescue of the drowning... But it must be recorded to that even before the flood waters subsided and the howl of the wind died down, locaters descended upon the devastated areas, summing up by some obscure grapevine telegraph to pick and claw at the vitals of a stricken community.

These vivid words were published by the Providence Journal Bulletin in their pamphlet on "The Great Hurricane and Tidal Wave." Such scenes have been amply painted and photographed. Now they are being translated into music and dance, as far as instrumental sound and the limitations of human forms moving on a stage will allow.

Early in November 1939 I conceived the idea for a dance drama based on this subject, and immediately began to experiment with ten of my dancers, during our class in the Brown University Extension. One of the group, Lila Hitchcock, mentioned that her husband had been thinking of composing music for a ballet. As this husband is one of our outstanding musicians, Arthur B. Hitchcock of Brown University Music Department, the suggestion was received with enthusiasm. The morning of Thanksgiving Day I handed him a sketchy version of the following synopsis.—

Part I. DEVASTATION

1. FORCES OF DESTRUCTION
A group rises and falls in sultry motion as of a menacing sea. A second group increases the fury—they leap, sway in semi-circular formation, whirl, and finally sweep with horizontal relentlessness against the figures of land.

2. ESCAPE
After a brief lull a solitary dancer seeks to escape thru strum wreckage and an onrushing force, which flings it onto the shore.

3. ELEGY
The same dancer arises in lamentation for the destruction on all sides.

4. REFUGEES
Several individuals and small groups are carried towards the shore, some helplessly, some struggling. Rescuers from the land strive against the elements and assist the refugees to safety.

Part II. WRECKAGE

1. LOOTERS
To grotesque strains locaters enter an imaginary store, snatching the ware, grasping it from one another in a confused free-for-all, and end in a convivial dance of sour amiability.

2. SEARCHERS
Storm victims search in a tragic expanse for their homes and belongings. The haunting quality of the music is enhanced by its strange metrical changes. (It starts with 16 measures of 7/8 time, then 1 of 9/8, 4 of 7/8, 3 of 10/8, 1 of 12/8, and so on.)

3. SIGHTSEEERS
To banal and ironic music, caricatures of sightseers gape at the debris artists, a camera man, a family, athletes.

4. REHABILITATION
Groups of workers on land and sea tear down wreckage, hoist in boats, and unite in re-building. But in the background the searchers return, and the ominous sea accompanies the hopeful vigorous movements of the men.

None of us dreamed at the time the extent of the undertaking. So we blithely outlined the course of action, grouping, and tempo of various parts, and the most important themes. On December 14 we had a special showing, which was attended not only by the composer but also a number of students from the Rhode Island School of Design. In the course of composition Mrs. Hitchcock was our go-between, showing Mr. Hitchcock how we built up our themes.

The original plan was a score for two pianos, and many measures had been written in this way, when Winfield Cunningham and Edward Caffier of our present Rhode Island Symphony Orchestra became interested, and discussed a possible program of combined music and dance. Forthwith, Mr. Hitchcock re-scored for orchestra.

When each section was completed, we studied the score together and the movements were mapped out to coincide with the phrasing of the music and counterpart of the instruments—often very complex. The girls contributed valuable ideas. One related her experiences in attempting to reach her West Warwick home at the height of the storm. Another brought little sketches with choreographic suggestions. Still another of the group demonstrated some amazing leaps. After much experimentation the first section was entirely choreographed by the director on pencil and paper, and mimeographed. Other numbers were mapped out in thought, ground-plan, and focus, but details developed naturally during improvisation, were caught by snapshot or sketch, and then memorized.

When our thoughts turned to the necessary costumes, we knew of a person who would and did receive the idea whole-heartedly—Miss Grace Ripley of the Rhode Island School of Design. She has commissioned one of her students in the costume department, Joyce Martin, to design and execute the costumes, and Bob Chase to take charge of scenery and lighting.

Another valuable ally arose—Mrs. Ada Holding Miller, President of the Rhode Island Federation of Music Clubs. We followed her suggestion to organize and join the Federation, and so became the Creative Dance Guild. We chose as other officers besides the director, Estelle Leif Blis for assistant director, Lila Hitchcock and Fran Bess Finkeston for secretary, Sylvia Mann for treasurer. From twelve charter members the Guild has increased to thirty-five members, including several men and children.

Our original plan to present the dance drama during Music Week, 1939, had to be altered, and one-third of the music was played on Rhode Island Night by our local orchestra. In June the group disbanded for the summer, and composer and choreographer sought further inspiration in California and the hills of Vermont, respectively.

Our next step for the resumption of rehearsals in the fall was the recording of the entire score in a piano version. Now the music can be played often without bothering either Mr. Hitchcock or Mr. William Dennen for rehearsals.

"Hurricane," in its entirety, including introductory music, takes forty minutes, half a concert's duration. The second half of our program will also be dance premieres, though not built up from scratch as "Hurricane." All of the compositions are by Rhode Island musicians, all of them except one played at previous orchestral concerts. The one exception is a brand new series of short songs composed by Hugh F. MacColl in Jamaica—

THE CHOICE. THE NET. SPANISH MADONNA. The music is as haunting as the words by Adele Kelley Thompson.

Six dancers will impersonate Ichabod Crane, Brom Bones, Katrina, and other amusing characters of the LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW by Walter Legawiec. I will represent FRANCIS OF ASSISI, to the inspiring music by Fr. Leo Rowland. The phases in the life of St. Francis will be personified by single dancers, in the naive style of a morality play—Lady Poverty, Gaiety, Valor, Adventure. Original duets and trios by dancers of the Guild will make up the rest of the program—BERGERETTE MODERNE by Miss Ruth Trice, MOON WALKING by Foster Dixon, RHAPSODE by David Stockhouse. The composers have in all cases been most anxious to co-operate with rehearsals and recordings, Fr. Rowlands made a special piano version for four hands, Mr. MacColl is making a special orchestration.

Now everyone will wonder whether, and when and all of this will materialize. After much discussion, and meetings of a committee of ladies, we decided to present it as originally planned, during Music Week, but in the year 1940. The Rhode Island Federation of Music Clubs is sponsor, as of all events during Music Week. The Rhode Island Symphony Orchestra will add to the glamor of the occasion by playing the accompaniment. There will be a few private performances, but to date Tuesday, May 7, at the New Hope Street High School is the only occasion where the public can, free of charge, see the Hurricane stylized into dance and music.

GERTRUDE PROKOSCH KURATH
EXHIBITIONS IN RHODE ISLAND

Faunce House Gallery, Brown University
Apr. 10-May 8—Photographs of Domestic Colonial and Modern Architecture.

Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design
Mar. 10-Apr. 30—American Cartoonists of Today.
Mar. 24-Apr. 7—French Eighteenth Century Silver.
Apr. 1-May 1—Contemporary Rhode Island Artists.

School Gallery, Rhode Island School of Design
Apr. 1-Apr. 22—Water Colors by Margaret Mory.

Providence Art Club
Apr. 2-Apr. 14—Oil paintings by Ralph C. Scott.
Apr. 16-Apr. 28—Water Colors by Elliot O'Hara.

Armour Gallery

Tilden-Thurber Gallery
Apr. 1-Apr. 30—Original celluloids of "Pinocchio" by Walt Disney.

Leisure' Time Activities
Apr. 1-Apr. 30—Exhibition of Students' Work.

Research Laboratory Gallery, Rhode Island School of Design

EXHIBITIONS OUTSIDE OF RHODE ISLAND

Andover, Mass., Addison Gallery, Phillips Academy
Apr. 13-May 5—Sculpture and Photographs by Esther Jackson.

Boston, Mass., Museum of Fine Arts
Apr. 27-May 26—Picasso, Forty Years of His Art, Exhibition under the auspices of the Institute of Modern Art, Boston.

Boston, Mass., Guild of Boston Artists
Apr. 8-Apr. 20—Paintings by Marguerite S. Pearson.

Northampton, Mass., Smith College Museum of Art
Apr. 11-May 12—Work by Miss van der Rohe.
Apr. 4-Apr. 18—Photographs of Landscape Architecture.

Springfield, Mass., Springfield Museum of Fine Arts

CALENDAR OF ART EVENTS

Monday, April 1
Basement Studio Group: Dramatic reading of scenes from Shakespeare. Tea, 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Wednesday, April 3
Player's radio dramatization. WJAR, 7:30 P. M.

Monday, April 8
Basement Studio Group: Dramatic reading of scenes from Shakespeare. Tea, 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Friday, April 12
The Department of Romance Languages at Brown University presents "Amphitryon" by Moliere. Faunce House Theatre, 8:30 P. M.

Sunday, April 14
Lecture by John B. Archer on the program of the Boston Symphony program, Providence Art Club, 4:00 P. M. Auspices of the Monday Morning Musical Club.

Monday, April 15
*The Players present "Idiot's Delight" by Robert E. Sherwood. Barker Playhouse, 8:30 P. M. Tickets may be obtained through members.
Basement Studio Group: Dramatic reading of a modern play. Tea, 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Tuesday, April 16
*Concert by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Theatre, 8:15 P. M.
*The Players present "Idiot's Delight" by Robert E. Sherwood. Barker Playhouse, 8:30 P. M.

Wednesday, April 17
*The Players present "Idiot's Delight" by Robert E. Sherwood. Barker Playhouse, 8:30 P. M.

Thursday, April 18
*Concert by the Brown-Pembroke Orchestra, Miss Virginia Bowman, soprano, Faunce House Theatre, 8:30 P. M.
*The Players present "Idiot's Delight" by Robert E. Sherwood. Barker Playhouse, 8:30 P. M.

Friday, April 19
*The Komians present three experimental productions. The program includes "The Twelve Pound Look" by Barrie, "Aria da Capo" by Millay, and "The Proposal" by Chekov, Alumnae Hall, 8:30 P. M.
*The Players present "Idiot's Delight" by Robert E. Sherwood. Barker Playhouse, 8:30 P. M.

Saturday, April 20
*The Komians present three experimental productions. The program includes "The Twelve Pound Look" by Barrie, "Aria da Capo" by Millay, and "The Proposal" by Chekov, Alumnae Hall, 8:30 P. M.

Monday, April 22
Basement Studio Group: Dramatic reading of "Fires of St. John" by Hermann Sudermann. Tea, 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Wednesday, April 24
Concert by Gladys Chernack, soprano. Miss Chernack is a senior at Pembroke College, Alumnae Hall, 8:30 P. M.

Thursday, April 25
*The Providence Community Concert Association presents Arthur Rubinstein, pianist. Metropolitan Theatre, 8:30 P. M.

Monday, April 29
Basement Studio Group: Dramatic reading of a modern play. Tea, 80 Benefit Street, 8:10 P. M.

Worcester, Mass., Worcester Art Museum
Mar. 10-Apr. 7—Selections from the Fifth International Exhibition of Etching and Engraving, and the Seventh International Exhibition of Lithography and Wood Engraving, circulated by the Art Institute of Chicago.
Apr. 7-Apr. 21—Water Colors by Heral Rome.

New York, N. Y., Museum of Modern Art
Apr. 3-Apr. 23—Work of Shereku.
Apr. 3-Apr. 23—Designs for Abstract Films.