Nijinsky film fails to reach the heights

By Donna Chernin

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Nijinsky should be a masterpiece.

It is a long awaited, finely detailed chronicle of the crucial years in the life of Russian dancer Vaslav Nijinsky.

After overcoming childhood with his genius, then outraging some with his controversial ballets, young Nijinsky experienced emotional breakdowns as devastating as that spent the last 15 years of his life in a mental institution. Nijinsky's world collapsed under the strain of professional pressures, but mostly under the weight of his tempestuous affair with his longtime lover and mentor, Sergei Diaghilev (Alian Baten). The film created considerable scandal and was publicly shown in a Parisian bordello.

"Nijinsky" weaves a mordant web of a homosexual-heterosexual love triangle. All the essential ingredients are present for a provocative production. Yet somehow "Nijinsky" never succeeds.

A vivid portrait of an enigma

Vaslav Nijinsky was one of the greatest classical dancers who ever lived. Was he also a choreographer of genius?

Or was he just a poor pupil, with no one of music who gave him an opportunity to choreograph because he was the lover of Sergei Diaghilev, impotent founder of the Ballets Russes?

This is one of several disturbing questions raised but left unanswered in Herbert Ross' provocative film, "Nijinsky." Based on fact, the oepluted movie presents both sides of the choreographic issue.

Diaghilev, who believed Nijinsky was a lack of potential genius, is shown guiding the impressionable young Nijinsky in his career, introducing him to the wonders of art and encouraging him to choreograph his first ballet to Debussy's "Prelude to the After- noon of a Faun" only when he was able to feel like the faun painted on a precious Greek vase.

When Nijinsky danced the role in the ballet's Paris premieres and made an instant name on the circus, he was asked to do his own choreography. "It was not me," he cried. "It was the Faun." The audience was outraged. But Diaghilev praised Nijinsky's daring on the beginning of a new plastic art. Collaborators who had to work with the inexperienced choreographer found him charming and talented. Brilliant choreographer Mikhail Fokine lost his job because of his low opinion of Nijinsky, whose first major, but only, composer Igor Stravinsky stormed out of the rehearsal room, quoting Stravinsky's inability to comprehend his revolutionary music.

Nijinsky, an impression of the Ballets Russes, was launched by Diaghilev. He was created under the strain of professional pressures, but mostly under the weight of his tempspestuous affair with his longtime lover and mentor, Sergei Diaghilev (Alian Baten). The film created considerable scandal and was publicly shown in a Parisian bordello.

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Picture of today's art world tinted with business reality

By Helen Collinan

Acceptance by society and a good business sense are extraordinary attributes to be enjoyed during a creative lifetime, but Nijinsky isn't what you expect at the 90th anniversary of the Cleveland Institute of Art.

For example, director of Gallery Maaght in New York, was the one to tell graduates at the ceremony that they should work more as creative talent and could do without alienation. He talked of cash flow and cash shortages, and the new symbols of conformity: a car and a desk. Above all be "different," he stated. "You may not do the same thing that you are now but you will be useful.

Probably few of the graduates realized how similarly Herbert Ross felt. But in fact, he began his own career as a painter and reached the top in theater and art administration before becoming a dancer. Ross earned a master of arts degree from Columbia University and a master of fine arts from Yale University. He then studied at the Art Students League and Pratt Institute in New York, and with painter Fernand Leger in Paris.

Ross, who worked in galleries and museums (including director of the Ohio State University's Museum) and became director of the City College of New York (1935-40) and Colgate University (1944-45), and became director of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 1963. From 1974 to 1977 he was president of the San Francisco Art Institute, managing to become a dealer.

"I was fed up with student-faculty politics," Herbert Ross said during a conversation last week in New York. "It was a very personal situation, and I wanted to think international. I never believed in decisions by committee, now I love them all myself."

He's wife, Nancy, who is director of development for New York's Guggenheim Museum, convinced him to go into business for himself. He had been buying art for family colleagues and had once and New York and European Voices. That's not enough. I spent a year doing research. They and then realized that to be suc- cessful you have to be either a dealer or with a deal of stock." Ross has sold art to high- profile figures, including the prestigious Galerie Magsi in Paris that now is owned a New York branch. Magsi handles an international side of artists, including Chagall, Miró, Mirabon, Guyomard, Childish, Arbus, Stone, Biggers, Tafi- Cast, Balm, Hershik, Euler, Alexeevsky and鹰. Figure Gallery Nijinsky is at the Maggi Foundation in Southern France, and in Paris, Zurich, Barcelona and, since 1973 under Herbert's direction, New York.

Herbert's office, located in the National Building, there are no gallery doors. Admission is by appointment, maintaining privacy and discretion.

Herbert conducts a brisk busi-

In Review

Nijinsky

World Press and West Theaters

Vladimir Nijinsky in Paris in 1919, in "Danse Sadoïone" ("Les Orientales"), Daniel Charles, New York Public Library

Heed U.S. guidelines, food industry is urged

JANET LEVITTE

NEW ORLEANS -- The new government mandatory food guide

lines are here to stay and the food industry should support them, "even if it comes out of someone's skinny," Dr. Mark Hegsted of the U.S. Department of Agriculture told the annual conference of the Institute of Food Technologists this week.

Food scientists at the meeting urged by calling for more nutrition education as Americans will know how to choose better from foods already available.

Hegsted, a nutritionist and administrator of USDA's Human Nutrition Center, has been a prime sponsor behind the government's new food guide to the nation's health. He agreed with Hegsted's claims that the new guide will have to be revised when the results of the new food guide are available.

"The food industry should support the new guide," Hegsted said. "The food industry should support the new guide to the nation's health.

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Nijinsky: World Press and West Theaters

"What if Nijinsky had not had a role with Diaghilev and secured成名 continued on Page 6-C

George de la Peau makes his movie debut in the title role of "Nijinsky."

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