

'PILLAR OF FIRE' IS WELL RECEIVED

New Ballet by Anthony Tudor Introduced.

By IRVING KOLODIN.

Anthony Tudor, who has placed ballet fans in his debt more than once before, has given us a work of art in "Pillar of Fire," which had its first performance anywhere by the Ballet Theater company in the Metropolitan last night. One has rarely seen a new ballet more enthusiastically received here, with curtain calls almost uncountable and enough "bravos" to make even a tenor happy.

With the glowing score of Arnold Schoenberg's "Verklaerte Nacht" as his point of departure, Tudor has evolved a study in repression and frustration which goes beyond even the searing sensitivity of his fine "Jardin aux Lilas." Girl meets boy and girl gets boy, but only on a plane of Freudian complication which, it is as well, was not talked about, but danced.

It is danced in that mixture of posture and movement which spells Tudor to the initiated, with poses of torture and excitation oddly blended with attitudes of restraint and avoidance which he can discipline so well. So deeply does Tudor feel the music with which he has worked that he could even evolve a "Pas de deux" (near the close of the second section) which was choreographically exquisite and still did no violence to the poignant music.

The choice of a (in the Emily Dickinson phrase) "New Englandy" background was a happy one, setting up a frame of reference for Tudor's feeling which was completed by the effective turn-of-the-century costumes and decor. Both of these are rather specious devices, for Tudor could imagine these people in any time or clime, but it is a favor to the audience that it is not required to transport itself further than he asks.

There was a performance of exceptional quality by Nora Kaye as the girl pursued and pursuing, with those veteran collaborators, Tudor and Hugh Laing, in the principal male roles. The ensemble also performed beyond one's expectations for a premiere. Some details of apparent monotony may be enforced or clarified by another viewing, but the unity of Tudor's choreography, Jo Mielziner's decor, and Schoenberg's music (splendidly played by the orchestra under Antal Dorati, especially by the solo violin of Jacques Margolies) was, overall, a pervasive and inspiring thing.

Markova in 'Swan Lake'

This was not the only satisfaction of the evening, for it began with the Dolin version of "Swan Lake," in which Alicia Markova danced the Queen of the Swans with infinite artistry and distinction. The other works were "Pas de Quatre," with Markova, Conrad, Rosalie Hightower and Anabelle Lyon, and "Princess Aurora" with Irina Baronova. It was also announced that there will be another week by the Ballet Theater, following next week's performances by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.