HOT DANCE REVUE — "The Fabulous Hollywood Swinging Hot Revue," a bevy of seven lovely girls, perform entertainment numbers nightly at the New Wells Fargo, and every lunchtime at the Manila Garden Hotel.

Manila filmfest gets Venice endorsement

VENICE (PNA) — An official of the La Biennale di Venezia (Venice Film Festival) has endorsed the Manila Film Festival scheduled in January 1982.

"It is not only timely but physically feasible considering your country's location in Asia," Pierre Paulo Pineschi, supervisor of the Biennale, said in talk with two visiting Manila filmfest executives.

The veteran movie festival organizer noted that with so many film conclaves in Europe and America, a big one in Asia would be particularly welcome.

He assured Johnny Litton and Mrs. Betty Benitez, Manila filmfest director general and vice-president, respectively, of his support in terms of technical knowhow.

Pineschi has been involved with the Venice Festival since 1950.

The Filipino group arrived here Monday to observe the Biennale, the first international cinema festival established in any part of the world. But it lost out to Cannes in terms of prestige after it ceased to be competitive in the early 1960s.

WHOSE LIFE IS IT ANYWAY? — Zenaida Amador tackles the difficult role of a paraplegic, and Jorge Ortol plays a sympathetic intern, in Repertory Philippines' production of "Whose Life is it Anyway?" a controversial play that has won both the Tony and the New York Drama Critics Award. "Whose Life" opens tonight at the Insular Life auditorium.

RATINGS CARD

(Last week's Ratings Card was a victim of limited space. However, the subject of the review has since cropped up in recent headlines due to its controversial nature. Accordingly, although the film has since ended its run, our unofficial reviewer thought that readers would not mind a post-mortem rehash).

Sa Akin Ka . . . Magpakasal (Joseph Sytangco, Marianne de la Riva) — In a prologue to the film, Vic Silayan's suave baritone informs the audience that this picture was produced in answer to Pope John Paul II's call for films with more religious content. With all due respect, I don't think this is exactly what the Holy Father had in mind. As a matter of fact, if he should ever find out how the movie ads so blatantly exploit the angle that it was "inspired" by John Paul's rumored early romance, I am certain he would be most singularly distressed.

The ads (and Silayan's urbane voice-over) tell us that the story touches on "eleven (11) highlights" that had been experienced by John Paul as a young man. These so-called highlights are not clearly defined, but the most obvious one is the relationship with his childhood sweetheart, a relationship that threatens to derail his priestly vocation. Adapted to the pastoral and bucolic countryside, the characters become Padre Berting (Sytangco) and the sweet, nubile probinsiyana lass Marita (De la Riva). This absorbing, in fact claustrophobic, tale takes up a good one hour and 45 minutes, with the film's moral — the call of duty is painful, but irrevocable — driven home again and again with all the subtlety of a rolled-up newspaper. It does not help any to have the subplot of Doña Luisa (Anita Linda), Berting's mother, who is portrayed as an unbeliever — and yet inexplicably is the most vociferous in pursuading her son to keep to his vocation. Well, maybe not so inexplicable; because just when things look darkest — when Berting is torn by anguish, and Marita, engaged to marry Ernie (Ronnie Henares), comes to her own ambivalent struggle between duty and love — in fact, just when you think the film will never end, Doña Luisa solves it all by getting on her death bed and asking her son to baptize her. At last, Berting is now convinced he did the right thing. The film ends on a rosy glow of smiles between Ernie, Marita and Berting, who have apparently forgotten what all the conflict was about in the first place.

Director/story writer Jehu C. Sebastian leaves his actors precious little to escape with. Ms. Linda acts as if she were onstage at the Manila Grand Opera House, as usual, and Sytangco tries hard but cannot quite rise above the inanity of the plot. Of De la Riva, from whom little if nothing is expected, one gets exactly that.

Surprisingly, the film briefly comes to life with Henares, who plays the third side to this hoary triangle. Like the rest of the cast, he was saddled with inane characterization and dialogue; but unlike them, his exuberant performance gave the film its only interesting moments.

Margot K. Pimentel

Balestra high fashion at the Manila Hotel

Renato Balestra, Italy's doyen of high fashion, will present his 1981 Spring-Summer Collection at a series of shows at The Manila Hotel's Fiesta Pavilion.

The haute couturier is himself coming to Manila to launch his new collection for the benefit of the MSSD Youth and Social Welfare Services for Region VIII in Tacloban City.

Balestra will be accompanied by four of his own European signature models. Eight Filipino mannequins have also been handpicked for the shows, among them Melanie Marquez, Miss International for 1980.

"Renato Balestra: Alta Moda, Roma," will be launched at a gala night presentation at the Fiesta Pavilion on Sept. 5. Door prizes ranging from a grand prize of P10,000 cash to scarves and accessories designed by Balestra will be raffled off to lucky patrons.

The collection may also be viewed at luncheon shows from September 8 to 11 at the same venue.

Oddments

HEIDE, West Germany (AFP) — Paintings worth around 1.6 million marks (about $800,000) were stolen last week from the home of an artist and Berlin gallery-owner, police announced.

Among the paintings stolen were four famous works, including "After the Bath" by Edgar Degas and "St. Jerome" by Titian. The two alone are worth 1.2 million marks (about $600,000).

* * *

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong will stage a major ready-to-wear fashion promotion at the world famous Salon International du Pret-a-Porter Feminin in Paris from April 4 to 8 next year.

Announcing this today, a spokesman for the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC) said the Hong Kong salon would accupy a prominent corner site in hall 3 at the Parc des Expositions complex, Porte de Versailles.

A standing committee has been formed for this TDC project, called "Mode Hong Kong '81." It is chaired by Mr. H. Lin, managing director of Hong Kong Milo's Knitwear Factory Ltd.

* * *

NAHA, Japan (Reuter) — Some 30,000 to 40,000 people died of deadly snakebites throughout the world every year, an international seminar on snakebite was told here this week.

The four-day seminar, the first of its kind in the world, opened in this southern Japanese city yesterday under the sponsorship of the World Health Organization (WHO). Delegates and snake experts from the US, Britain, Australia, South Africa and seven Asian countries are attending the meeting.

Dr. Yoshio Sawai of the Japan Snake Research Institute told the gathering that 350 to 400 people are bitten by dadly *habu* snakes in Okinawa each year but few of them die, thanks to Japan's advanced technology for dealing with snakebite.

According to figures presented to the seminar from the participating countries, deaths caused by snakebite every year were estimated at about 200 in Thailand and the Philippines, 400 in Sri Lanka, between 800 and 1,000 in Burma and between 10,000 and 15,000 in India.

In reporting Japan's success to bring the problem under control, Dr. Sawai stressed the importance of developing serums and preventive vaccines to deal with snakebite.

* * *

ATHENS (Reuter) — A theater director and eight actors have been arrested here after portraying a scene in which a naked actress simulated lovemaking with a Greek Orthodox bishop.

The director and actors were arrested after last week's performance and were charged with insulting public morals and the church, a spokesman for the judiciary said.

The play, "The Saint of Preveza," portrayed a Greek Orthodox bishop involved in a sex scandal. It was a thinly disguised version of the true story of Bishop Stylianos, 67, who was removed from his diocese last year after a photograph purporting to show him in bed with a woman had been sent to the government and published in the Greek press.

Bishop Stylianos maintained that the picture was a photo-montage, but a church court said the police could not determine whether the photo was genuine or not.

The play, in one of Athens' main theaters, was playing to packed audiences. The arrest of the director and actors followed a lawsuit by the president of the Greek Orthodox Association. They were freed pending trial next week.

Rever salon sets seminar on latest hairdo fad

"Stingray," the latest hairdo fad in Europe and the United States, will be taught to participants of Rever Hair Salon's second in a series of seminars on advanced hairstyling.

The seminar, which will be held starting next week, will be handled by Stephen Bradley, Rever's managing partner.

Bradley, a London-trained hairstylist, arrived recently from a tour of the world's fashion centers where he observed the newest trends in international hair fashion.

He said the "stingray" makes use of convex shapes combined with geometrical and asymmetrical cuts, the emphasis of which is around the middle of the head.

Rever's first seminar, which was attended by 10 local professional hairstylists, was supervised by Rever Salon manager David Charlton, also a London-bred hairstylist.

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