

THE SPECTATOR
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Ballet

No, No, Napoleon
by Clive Barnes

Festival Ballet's marathon summer season at the Festival Hall opened . . .

Nor can I give a particularly enthusiastic welcome to the Mexican Dance Company currently at the Piccadilly Theatre, or to the Haitian Voodoo Dancers who opened a season at the Westminster Theatre last week. The Mexicans divide their programme into two halves, the first and duller being intended as a reconstruction of dances from Mexico's pre-Hispanic past. With movements said to be copied from sculptures and paintings (shades of Isadora's Hellenic rapes), the company's director and choreographer, Javier de Leon has produced some supposedly authentic Mayan and Aztec rituals of plodding pomposity.

The Voodoo Dancers, led by their High Priestess, Mathilda Beauvoir, are odd almost to the point, I should have thought, where the Lord Chamberlain intervenes. The show appeals partly to the beast and *voyeur* in us, and no fans of Aleister Crowley or James Bond should miss it. This sort of dark-grey Mass must surely be the nearest anyone in London can get to diabolism for the price of a theatre seat. The 'entertainment' opens with a procession to a bamboo altar. Then after a certain amount of chanting . . .