

COVENT GARDEN PREPARE FOR BALLET

Closed since 1940, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden prepares for its new opening. The lean years behind them, stage hands and maintenance men buckle down to the job of giving the old place a new shine.

For the first of the new productions, Covent Garden picks a season of ballet. Work among the chairs goes on while the dancers limber up for rehearsals. Ballet has plenty of headaches in austerity days. With silk tights at six guineas a pair and an allowance of only five pairs a year, dancers keep an eye wide open for ladders. The ballet mistress takes over and the hard grind of constant rehearsing begins. First of the season's productions is the "The Sleeping Princess".

Ballet producers reckon half their expenditure goes on costumes. Dancers knock up two pairs of ballet shoes a week;

Not much to look at at this stage, but for Covent Garden it's the beginning of a brilliant new era.

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