

By **MARIAN PFROMMER**

Pictures by **Michael J. B. Kelly**

A SPELL of silver magic floated down on the RISD Museum Friday night, turning the austere formal gallery into a fairyland palace of light and music.

Silver glistened everywhere, heralding The Silver Ball, sponsored by the Museum Associates.

Sheets of silver cloth hung from gallery walls. In the long, dimly lit room used for dancing, shining chandelier-shaped masses of foil covered overhead lights.

Basement display galleries housed an impressive array of New England silver, combining heritage pieces with sleekly designed modern coffee services.

Enraptured by the glistening surroundings, more than 600 guests mixed with high-spirited enthusiasm.

The main gallery, used as a ballroom, was a popular gathering place. Peter Duchin's orchestra played without intermission, from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Their music was so appealing that few persons sat out the evening.

Mr. Duchin, the dark-haired son of the late Eddie Duchin, added a touch of personal charm to the performance, chatting amiably with women guests, who perched next to him at the piano to compliment his playing.

Even Albert Bush-Brown, president of the Rhode Island School of Design, got in a few words with Mr. Duchin, although it is debateable whether he was complimenting the orchestra.

It happened when Mr. Duchin broke into a rare bit of "modern" music, stimulating some attending RISD students into a gay exhibition of the frug.

Older guests gathered around the center of the floor, watching as the youngsters danced with unconcerned abandon.

After about four minutes of the frugging, Mr. Bush-Brown ambled up to the piano and whispered a few words to Mr. Duchin.

Almost momentarily, the "modern" beat ceased and the

orchestra retreated into a dignified foxtrot.

Older persons seemed to enjoy the brief display, but it was obvious they were even happier when the conventional music returned.

As the evening wore on, guests began drifting out of the ballroom and into the adjoining smaller galleries, where tables and chairs were arranged against a backdrop of the museum's paintings.

Many sat and rested a while, then proceeded downstairs to view the silver display, much of which was from the collection of Cornelius C. Moore, the Newport lawyer.

Younger guests favored the second floor of the museum, where one large room was decorated informally, with checkered tablecloths on round tables. A small band played from one corner and, as in the main ballroom, the dance floor was crowded most of the evening.

Styles at the ball topped anything so far in the Providence social season.

Beaded and sequined gowns predominated, but several women guests chose foreign-flavored outfits.

Among these was Mrs. James N. Byers III who arrived in a green and gold floor-length gown, combining the fabric of an Indian sari with classic Grecian lines.

Only 400 persons were expected at the ball and when arrivals topped 600 several minor problems cropped up.

The additional guests caused consternation among workers in the checkrooms.

At the start of the ball, it was the men who had to wait, some as long as 20 minutes, to check their coats.

But, when the ball ended, the women had their turn. Ladies queued up on a majestic stairway, holding white check stubs, waiting patiently to get to the second-floor ladies' checkroom.

Some waited almost a half-hour to redeem their minks and sables but no one seemed to mind. They used the time well, to discuss the sparkling evening that was too quickly drawing to a close.

Dance

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at the

Ball