

GYARMATY
MIHALY
PARIS

Feminine Hand Will Still Rule Paris Folies

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PARIS (UPI) — The Folies-Bergere has changed hands, but its style is sure to remain the same. At least for a while.

It was a woman-to-woman transaction; both parties are widows of former nightclub proprietors. The new owner, Helene Martini, is a veritable stage- and floor-show magnate — she is known as the "Empress of the Night" here — with a string of eight cabarets and three theaters.

But the question everyone is asking is will the venerable, 105-year-old Paris institution and tourist at-

traction be revamped under the new ownership? Unthinkable, says Mrs. Martini.

THE CURRENT revue, whose title "J'Aime a La Folie" contains the traditional 13 letters and the word "Folie" that have characterized shows since 1946, will stay on the marquee until March, 1976. And for the show after that, Mrs. Martini has signed veteran Folies director Michel Gyarmaty, the man responsible for each of the nine reues staged since World War II.

The former owner, Mrs. Paul Derval, took over the management of the Folies in 1966 upon the death of her husband. In the 56 years that the Folies-Bergere has been in the Derval name, spectators have witnessed performances by such notables as Pavlova, Mistinguett, Josephine Baker and the man most identified with the Folies in song and film, Maurice Chevalier.

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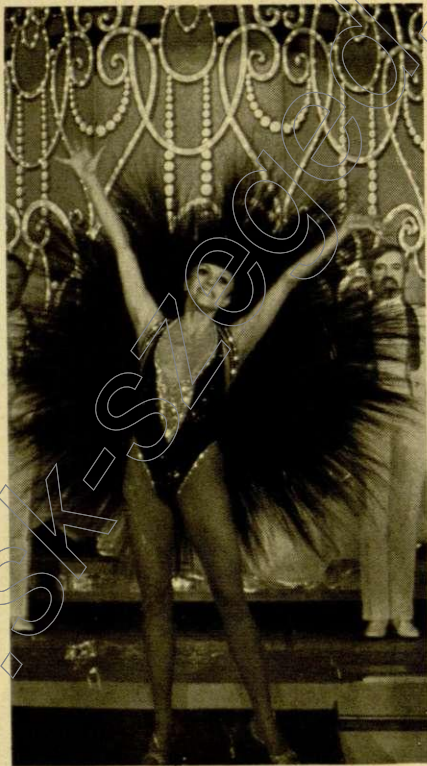
IN PURCHASING the Folies — for an undisclosed sum — Mrs. Martini adds another 300 artists and 50 technicians and administrators to the thousands of such people who already work for her. Little is known about this "Empress" of Paris night life other than that she was in her youth a designer and a model, and that she married a Syrian named Nachat Martini.

Condemned in his home country as a spy for France, Martini left Damascus for Paris and gained renown as a night club impresario before he died in 1960.

His wife stayed in the business. In addition to her Pigalle-area cabarets, she owns the Mogador, Comedie des Champs-Elysees and Bouffes-Parisiennes theaters which, according to one Paris critic, "Have always presented quality shows, justly crowned with success."

That's Still Entertainment

The grande dame of girlie shows, Paris's **Folies-Bergère**, is alive and still kicking up its high heels at age 106. Decades ago, the Folies was a showcase for such stars as Josephine Baker, who made her Paris debut on its stage in a



Michel Ginies—Sipa

The Folies-Bergère is alive and kicking

bikini fashioned from bananas. But big-name performers have long since been phased out, and the big attraction at the Folies is now the show itself. Never fully nude, Folies beauties are forever streaming up and down a staircase, popping out of cardboard cakes or spraying balloons from hanging carriages. Compared with other flesh-peddling shows in Paris, the Folies is tame—but that is the way veteran director Michel Gyarmathy wants it. He calls his production a "family show." Attendance has declined recently—and there is talk of possible layoffs—but Gyarmathy insists that "the Folies-Bergère will go on as long as there is an Eiffel Tower."

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