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PEDIGREE
ANALYSIS
The Fugue

Irish Champion heroine keeps Dansili in spotlight

THE rain-softened terrain at Leopardstown on Saturday meant Declaration Of War became a regrettable absentee from the Irish Champion Stakes, but the decision to let The Fugue take her chance was gloriously vindicated with a performance of real quality.

The filly's connections have always believed fast ground suits her best and that is a judgement with which the form book concurs, so there had to be fears the underfoot conditions would blunt her speed. Not a bit of it. The daughter of Dansili duly produced her trademark burst of acceleration when William Buick called for it and she claimed her first victory in open-sex company in emphatic style.

The Fugue appeared only once as a two-year-old, producing a highly promising display when winning a backend 7f Newmarket fillies' maiden. Apparently little fancied as a 14-1 shot, she fluffed the start, was held up in rear, but made steady progress from halfway to challenge the well-backed Godolphin contender Salacia, gained the upper hand inside the last and ran on for a cosy success, the pair finishing well clear of their ten rivals.

There was no knowing what that form was worth, but The Fugue was held in high enough regard to make her seasonal debut at three in the 1,000 Guineas. The Rowley Mile rode good to soft and the filly had a troubled run, but she ran on honestly to reach fourth place, suggesting she now wanted a longer trip. Ten days later she proved that point, coasting to a wide-margin victory in the Group 3 Musidora Stakes at York, a performance so convincing she started favourite for the Oaks on her next appearance.

Epsom was not kind to The Fugue. Buffeted about and shuffled back in the field after half a mile, her cause appeared hopeless, but when finally in the clear she ran on with real purpose to finish a respectable third behind Was and Shirocco Star, leading many to assert that with ordinary luck she would have won. Subsequent events seemed to confirm that impression as she twice finished in front of the pair who beat her in the Oaks.

Second to Princess Highway on soft ground in the Ribblesdale, The Fugue encountered more favourable conditions at Goodwood, where she claimed her first Group 1 victory in the Nassau, collaring Timepiece close home, and at York, where she went under by only a neck against Shareta in the Yorkshire Oaks. Now acknowledged as top of her class in Britain, she went off favourite for the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf, only to meet ill-luck in traffic and wind up third behind older home-trained rivals.

The Fugue returned a little ring-rusty for the Prince of Wales's Stakes at Royal Ascot, finishing third behind Al Kazeem and Mukhadram, and she was expected to fare better against those same rivals and other worthy foes in the Eclipse, but something was clearly amiss and she trailed home last of the seven.

We have seen a different filly in her two latest starts, in both of which she has recorded personal best performances. Profoundly impressive back among her own sex in the Yorkshire Oaks, she registered a new high Racing Post Rating of 121, and at Leopardstown, in accounting for proven top-class males Al Kazeem and Trading Leather, she improved again with a mark of 123.

The Fugue has plenty of options

THE FUGUE

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Danehill	Danzig	Northern Dancer	Nearctic
		Pas De Nom	Natalma
		His Majesty	Admiral's Voyage Petitioner
Dansili (b 1996)	Razyana	Spring Adieu	Ribot
			Flower Bowl
			Buckpasser Natalma
Hasili	Kahyasi	Ile De Bourbon	Nijinsky
			Roseliere
			Blushing Groom Kalkoen
Sadler's Wells	Kerali	Kadissya	High Hat
			Time Call
			Roberto Irule
Twyla Tharp (b 2002)		Nearctic	Nearco
		Northern Dancer	Lady Angela
		Natalma	Native Dancer Almahmoud
Sumoto		Bold Reason	Hail To Reason
		Fairy Bridge	Lalun
		Special	Forli Thong
		Busted	Crepello
		Mtoto	Sans Le Sou
		Amazer	Mincio Alzara
		General Assembly	Secretariat
		Soemba	Exclusive Dancer
		Seven Seas	Riverman Ya Ya

Bred by Watership Down Stud in England

VERDICT

- ▶▶ Always good, but now in the best form of her life
- ▶▶ Granted suitable ground, capable of holding her own in the very best company
- ▶▶ Bred on the same Dansili-Sadler's Wells cross as five other European Pattern winners

available to her now, including the Arc, the Champion and the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf, although ground conditions may prove a limiting factor. Granted a suitable surface she will surely prove a potent force wherever she goes, and it is not beyond the realms of possibility she may yet find further improvement.

Less than two months have passed since Dansili featured in this space in connection with the success of his son Flintshire in the Grand Prix de Paris, but The Fugue's Group 1 double is not the only significant update to his record. Winsili secured a Group 1 success in the Nassau Stakes, Vancouverite collected a Group 2 victory in the Prix Guillaume d'Ornano, and Zibelina became a Group 3 winner in the Prix de Lieurey.

In addition, some 12 hours before The Fugue's triumph at Leopardstown, the six-year-old gelding Foreteller landed his second Group 1 win in Australia, supplementing his earlier victory in the Ranvet Stakes with a hard-earned short-head win over Melbourne Cup favourite Puissance De Lune in the Makybe Diva Stakes at

Flemington. We should remember too that Dansili has extended his sphere of influence in 2013, featuring as broodmare sire of Irish Oaks heroine Chicquita, the first product of one of his daughters to triumph in Group 1 company.

Dansili is now in his tenth season of racecourse representation, his record in the European Pattern showing 46 individual winners of 94 races, the latter figure putting him level with Danehill Dancer, the pair standing joint-12th on the all-time list. The tenth crop – only 74 in number – have yet to make a contribution, but that comes as no surprise, with his stock characteristically proving better for experience and greater maturity.

IF IT seems odd that Dansili has only ten individual winners of 14 European Group 1 races, it should be remembered he was himself not a winner at that elite level, and he was not everyone's idea of a prospective important sire at the outset, when he covered at only £8,000. His reputation has been steadily rising, so that he now features high on the list of stallions that any



Owner Madeleine Lloyd Webber leads in The Fugue after her Irish Champion Stakes victory. It was the filly's third Group 1 success

prominent breeder would consider for use with top-quality mares. He is not going to get chance-bred and indifferent mates at his current fee of £80,000.

Rail Link (Grand Prix de Paris and Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe) and The Fugue are their sire's only multiple Group 1 winners, but it is safe to predict an increase in that number before very long.

We remember Dansili's racecourse performances chiefly for his exploits at a mile, but while he gets his share of milers, there is plenty of variety in the distance requirements of his stock, some excelling in sprints and others in the intermediate and staying divisions.

The Fugue is one of six Pattern winners produced by daughters of Sadler's Wells, the others being Passage Of Time, Father Time, Testosterone, Thomas Chippendale and Flintshire. All have proved most proficient between a mile and a quarter and a mile and a half.

The Fugue's dam Twyla Tharp had some smart form to her credit as a three-year-old in 2005, winning a maiden at Goodwood before finishing a short-head runner-up to Thakafaat in the Group 2 Ribblesdale Stakes at the royal meeting at York (when Ascot was under redevelopment). Now the dam of three winners from as many

runners, she is a half-sister to two Group 1 winners in Compton Admiral (by Suave Dancer; Eclipse Stakes) and Summoner (by Inchinor; Queen Elizabeth II Stakes).

Their dam Sumoto, who beat subsequent Classic heroine Sayyedati when she broke her maiden, was culled from Hascombe and Valiant Studs for only 6,500gns as a seven-year-old at the 1997 December Sales. Her buyer, Jim Furlong, could not begin to imagine what a bargain he had secured. Two years later, after Compton Admiral had won the Eclipse and Summoner had scored an impressive juvenile maiden success, he sent her back to Tattersalls and that time she fetched 920,000gns from Watership Down Stud.

That major investment also proved a bargain, as Twyla Tharp, having produced a ready distinguished replacement for herself in The Fugue, was sent to last year's December Sales, realising 1,700,000gns in foal to Oasis Dream. It was no surprise to learn her buyer, Sheikh Joaan Al Thani, sent Twyla Tharp back to Dansili this spring.

Watership Down should be able to look forward to another lucrative day at Tatts when Twyla Tharp's yearling colt by Shamardal is presented as lot 197 early in the session on October 9.