

Crisis in Theater Business in Omaha This Show Season

Nine Downtown Movie and Vaudeville Houses to Battle for Patrons—Influx of Pantages and Shubert to Create Keen Competition—Daily Seating Capacity of 16,000 Considered Enormous for Omaha.

By JOHN E. KENNEBECK.

SIMILAR to conditions in Kansas City, St. Louis and Minneapolis, the coming theatrical season in Omaha will either make this city a good show town or a flop, to use vaudeville parlance.

This season will be a crisis in theatricals in Omaha, theatrical managers say.

The addition of the World theater, playing pictures and Pantages vaudeville, and the Brandeis theater, to play Shubert vaudeville, to an already overcrowded theater row in this city indicates much.

Seating Capacity High.

Briefly it means that the public will benefit by the keen competition.

With the Brandeis, Orpheum, World and Empress playing vaudeville, and the Rialto, Strand, Sun, Moon, Muse and a dozen suburban houses playing pictures, there will be a large enough daily seating capacity for a city of at least 50,000 on the basis that 25 per cent of a city's population are steady theater patrons.

Omaha is 200,000.

A survey of theatrical conditions in Omaha shows that this city will have a capacity of approximately 16,000 seats for each performance this coming season, or 52,900 seats daily. Pro rate that number with 50,000 steady theater-goers and it will stimulate a little study.

Where will it all end?

What will be the outcome?

First, "will be a battle for business between the vaudeville and the movie houses; then, the game will simmer down to keen competition among theater managers.

50,000 Weekly Patrons.

If all the vaudeville and movie houses in Omaha are to prosper this season, it is estimated that 112,000 out of Omaha's 200,000 population must attend a show every week. But—approximately only 50,000 persons in Omaha are regularly weekly patrons.

The 16,000 seating capacity for all theaters represents the capacity for one performance, it must be remembered. The Orpheum and Brandeis will play two performances a day while the other places will feature from three to five performances.

In other words, the daily seating capacity of Omaha's theaters for an entire day will be just about 160,000; therefore, if all these houses were to do a capacity business at all performances on a given day, the entertainment appetite of Omaha's 50,000 theater-goers would be more than satisfied for a week and the theaters would have six days on their hands with no customers to patronize them.

Take the vaudeville houses alone: For each performance, there are approximately 6,000 seats. With the World and Empress playing three performances daily and the Orpheum and Brandeis playing two, vaudeville houses will have a daily capacity of approximately 16,000 seats, or 118,300 a week.

Therefore, conditions for vaudeville houses look much brighter than for movie palaces in Omaha.

And yet, foregoing figures are conservative.

It is up to the theater managers to make Omaha a better show town than it has been and to educate the public to a new interest in theatricals so that at least half the city's population may become regular theater fans instead of the statistical 25 per cent.

Through all the competition, the public will benefit; the theaters will present the best in vaudeville and pictures, indications are.

The Orpheum is bidding to give its best to Omaha while Shubert, which will play at the Brandeis, will be new, and Pantages will begin running its shows here in units.

To quote Arthur Frudenfeld, manager of the World theater, which plays both Pantages vaudeville and pictures: "Omaha will become a good show town this season—or bust."

Programs for This Week

"Chasing the Jinx" at World. Most persons believe in signs and omens to a greater or less extent. Just what part they play in the life of a human being is uncertain, but Arthur Barnes, a bank teller, found that for one day the jinx raised havoc

with him, and it all came about because he walked under a ladder. His girl was superstitious and he wasn't.

The day started all right and brought him luck—he was promoted to cashier, but the next season his troubles began and those troubles have been woven into a comedy that is sure to hold the interest from the first flash.

Such makes up the interest in "Chasing the Jinx," which is the cinema attraction at the World theater this week.

Margaret Landis and Edward Horton are the featured players.

The big battle is on at the Strand theater this week.

Wallace Reid, Paramount star, supported by Lila Lee, leading woman; Theodore Kosloff, Walter Long, Alan Hale, Kalla Pasha and other screen notables, is giving the public five delicious reels of fun, excitement, romance and revolution in "The Dictator," based on the famous play by the late Richard Harding Davis, in which Willie Collier scored a distinct success several years ago.

The story shows how a young American falls in love with the pretty daughter of a South American "liberator," follows her south and there becomes embroiled in a revolution of which her father is the instigator, not knowing that his own father, the banished king, is on the other side for business and political reasons. He wins the revolution, the girl and his father's profound respect after a series of exciting adventures, which fairly brim with suspense, mystery, conspiracy, fighting and delightful humor.

"Orphans of Storm" at Rialto. Patrons of the Rialto theater this week will find all of the great "Two Orphans" story that used to interest their fathers and mothers, but also a very great deal more. The story is now set amid the turbulent events of the revolution in France that marked the downfall of the Bourbon monarchy.

Fortunately, Mr. Griffith had two wonderful French types at hand for the embodiment of Henriette and Louise Girard, the two heroines. These two are Misses Lillian and Dorothy Gish.

One of the best casts of recent years enacts the famous story, including Joseph Schildkraut, the celebrated Roumanian actor, sometimes called the handsomest leading man of Europe, who has the romantic role of Chevalier de Vaudrey.

For those unfamiliar with the stage story: Henriette and Louise are little Norman wayfarers in Paris. The former is abducted by a rich noble, while the latter falls into a den of thievish beggars who send her on the street as a charity singer. The tremendous interest springs from the effort of the sundered orphans to be reunited and the love of the Chevalier for Henriette, to whom he is separated by an almost impassable gulf of birth and class distinction.

In Mr. Griffith's story these ad-

ventures are carried right into the revolution. We see Henriette and the Chevalier as puppets of fate in the Reign of Terror, from which the gigantic Danto strives to extricate them. The climax is one of the most thrilling ever staged, not excepting Mr. Griffith's ice jam rescue in "Way Down East," or the ride of the Ku Klux in "The Birth of a Nation."

A fascinating story of treasure is that unfolded in "The Golden Gilt," Alice Lake's latest starring picture, which will be shown at the Empress theater the first four days of this week. But the treasure is not that usually associated in the public mind with golden gills; it is a treasure far more precious, about which is woven a stirring story of love and adventure.

It is the story of an opera singer who with a young child to support finds herself thrown upon her own resources through the desertion of her husband.

A wholesome and thoroughly delightful comedy of the ambitions of a young man to appear brave to a girl whom he has never met is the theme of "Don't Write Letters," the new photoplay in which Gareth Hughes is starred. It will be shown at the Empress theater beginning next Thursday.

Pola Negri at Muse. Pola Negri, European screen celebrity, is the featured player in "The Last Payment," which plays tomorrow and Tuesday at the Muse

The Movies



Lillian and Dorothy Gish
RIALTO



Frank Mayo
MOON



Wallace Reid
STRAND



Will Rogers
MUSE
WED & THUR



Edward Horton
WORLD



Alice Lake
EMPRESS

Program Summary

World—"Chasing the Jinx."
Strand—Wallace Reid in "The Dictator."
Rialto—"Orphans of the Storm."
Moon—Today until Thursday, "Afraid to Fight," beginning next Thursday; "The Belle of Alaska."
Empress—Today until Thursday, "The Golden Gilt," beginning next Thursday; "Don't Write Letters."
Muse—Today, "Afraid to Fight," tomorrow and Tuesday, "The Last Payment," Wednesday and Thursday, "A Poor Relation;" Friday and Saturday, "Watch Your Step."
World—"Chasing the Jinx."
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Marked Changes in Sun Theater; Opens Saturday

The World Realty company, operators of the World, Sun, Moon and Muse theaters, announce the reopening of the Sun theater next Saturday. The Sun theater has been closed for seven weeks, during which time extensive improvements have been made. The house has been completely refurnished and redecorated. A marble stairway has been placed from the main foyer leading to the balcony. The loge seat arrangements in the main auditorium have been completely changed. The loges on the lower floor have been removed entirely, leaving loges only on the first upper tier. New, comfortable chairs have been added. The interior of the theater has a complete new color scheme, done in gold and black, with a slight touch of orange. Beautiful gold and black drapes will be hung in various places throughout the theater. The new stage setting will be in orange and black. Patrons will notice an improvement in the large and beautiful lobby as they enter the theater. The side panels, which formerly held picture display frames, are now done in tapestry and contain the latest in mirrors, the background of the mirrors being black. The decorations of the outer lobby are in a color scheme of old rose, gold and light blue. Improvement has also been made in the ladies' and gentlemen's retiring rooms.

Dainty Usherettes.
New light fixtures replace the old in the interior foyer, which adds greatly to the improvement of the cozy spot. The Sun parlor, which has always been an attractive room, has been made more attractive than ever under the touch of the decorator's hands.

Usherettes will be costumed in a novel and distinctive manner. The costumes will be in a color scheme of gold, black and orange. Usherettes will be used on the lower floor, while young men in tuxedos will give service in the upper portion of the theater. The orchestra pit has been enlarged and music will be one of the features of the Sun programs. Louis Schnauber, a prominent Omaha leader, will conduct the Sun Augmented orchestra, while Edwin Stevens, who is now playing the organ at the Moon theater, will be transferred to the Sun theater as first organist. The policy of the theater will be exclusively photoplays and musical programs. Special super-productions will be booked for indefinite engagements.

"The Storm," an emotional action story laid in the great snowbound north, will be the opening attraction at the Sun theater. House Peters is the star.

It is interesting to note that the

CONTINUOUS DAILY
11 a. m. to
11 p. m.

MOON

TODAY—TOMORROW—TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY

MUSE

"COOL AS A CAVE"
TODAY ONLY
Continuous 12:45 to
11 p. m.

CARL LAEMMLE presents

FRANK MAYO

supported by Lillian Rich and a
great cast in the story of a war hero
who fought his greatest fight over here.

Afraid to Fight

STORY BY L. R. BROWN

MOON COMEDY

"SWEET MAMA"

MOON "BELLE OF ALASKA" with
coming Jane Novak
THURS.

ONLY SIX MORE DAYS

RIALTO

Direction of A. H. Blank

BREAKING ALL RECORDS IN ATTENDANCE!

D.W. GRIFFITH'S

Dramatic Epic

Orphans of the Storm

Adapted from "The Two Orphans"

A Love Story Supreme

LILLIAN GISH, DOROTHY GISH, MONTE BLUE, CREIGHTON HALE.

Presented with the original musical score
AUGMENTED SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA JOHNSON AT THE ORGAN
Performances start promptly at 11-1-3-5-7 and 9.





Strand's


DIRECTION OF A. H. BLANK

The Kind of a Picture You Always Wanted to See Him In

Down where the music of love strums the heart strings day and night; down where the moonbeams eternally spell the word "romance" on the soft languid waters; down where the flashing eyes and rosy lips of the serenitas are an ever-present invitation to kiss—that's where a mere boy became The Dictator of the land and found happiness and heart's desire.

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TODAY at 11-1-3-5-7-9
Feature 40 Minutes Later
ALL WEEK




Wallace REID

Lila Lee-Theodore Kosloff

in RICHARD HARDING DAVIS' Famous Romantic Story of Adventure,
"The Dictator"

He stirred up a revolution because a pretty girl said "please."

Musical Scenes From Spain
by Strand Orchestra
Harry Silverman, Directing
Latest News Events by Selanik



A good laugh is as good as a tonic—and here's one of the new season's best offerings in clever comedies.

Bull Montana

Positively the funniest man on the screen and a stream.

A Ladies' Man

A Laugh-As-Laugh-Can Comedy

WE'VE COMED OFF THE SUN



Omaha's Distinctive
Photoplay Theater

RE-OPENS

NEXT
SATURDAY

With a New Series of
"Sun Wonder Pictures"

Everything New
Re-Furnished
Re-Decorated

You will be mighty proud of
your one and only "Sun."

WATCH FOR
Announcement of
OPENING
ATTRACTION