

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 seating 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



Omaha's Distinctive Photoplay Theater

RE-OPENS NEXT SATURDAY

With a New Series of "Sun Wonder Pictures"

Everything New Re-Furnished Re-Decorated

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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.

Wally Reid at Strand.

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.

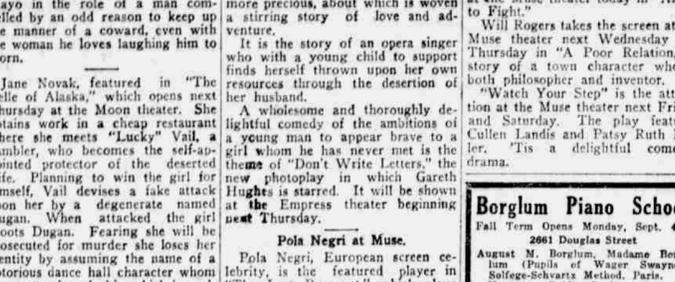
Fortunately, Mr. Griffith had two wonderful French types at hand for the embodiment of Henriette and Louise Girard, the two heroines. These two are Misses Lillian and Dorothy Gish.

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-

The Movies



ONLY SIX MORE DAYS **RIALTO** Prices EVENINGS 50¢ SUNDAY MAT. 35¢ DAILY MAT. 35¢ (Includes Tax) 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

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

Sun theater was opened to the public on Thanksgiving day, 1916, and was the first theater in Omaha to be built exclusively for photoplay presentations. From that date until seven weeks ago, when the theater was closed, it has been estimated that 3,800,000 people have passed through the doors of the theater. This estimation is based on the average of 20,000 people weekly attending the theater, making the yearly total for 32 weeks 1,040,000 people. Among the attractions to be shown at the Sun theater are: "Harold Lloyd in 'Grandma's Boy,'" "The Storm," "In the Name of the Law" and "The Silent Call."

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

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TODAY—TOMORROW—TUESDAY WEDNESDAY

FARHAM AT 24 TH

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 Jane Novak coming THURS.

Strand's DIRECTOR A. H. BLANK

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

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.

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 homeliest man on the screen and a stream.

A Ladies' Man A Laugh-As-Laugh-Can Comedy