

First Night Stage Performances Mean Heaps of Work for Theater Folk

Snappy Orchestral Accompaniments and Speedy Scene Shifting Don't Just Happen; Hours of Rehearsals and Patient Instructing Are Required.

By WILL M. MAUPIN.

It looks easy, doesn't it, when you go to the Orpheum and see how smoothly the orchestra and the vaudevillians work together?

You attend the opening at the Sunday matinee, and you think that it all just happened. But it didn't.

Sunday morning, and even until an hour before the matinee curtain goes up, the actors and the actresses—pardon us, the actresses—are drifting in from Chicago, Minneapolis, Kansas City or St. Louis. Their trunks are on the way, but they carry the music for their acts in brief cases.

The actors merely shed their coats, while the actresses doff fur coats and traveling hats, and everything is ready for the rehearsal.

The stage isn't set. Every stage property is piled back against the walls and the huge stage looks as bare as a big ball room the next morning.

But the orchestra is there, all right. Arno Huster, the director, doesn't look quite so spruce as he will when the audience is there. Now he wears his hat and puffs his cigarette between instructions from the entertainers.

Elbow Wigging Cue.

"When I say 'Just like that,' you get your cue." Then Director Huster reaches into his pocket for a stub of a pencil and makes a mysterious mark on the music. The other members do the same.

"When I wiggle this elbow you get the cue for Miss Ryan's dance."

More cabillate marks by the orchestra members.

"Now, once more, please, and you, Mr. Trap Man, give me a 'crash at the end of that forte passage. Fine, that's fine. Thank you."

Whereupon the man at the traps smiles and makes some mysterious marks on his music.

By the way, did you ever get up close to the traps and make note of the outfit he has to have to keep up with the stage folk? He only has four drums—mare, bass and two kettledrums. If he is thoughtful and inclined to be economical he might use those kettledrums for copper wash-tubs on Monday. The heads are not hard to remove.

But drums are the least numerous of the equipment. Cymbals, bells, xylophone, triangles, bird calls, whistles, tambourines, gongs, castanets, flywatters, coconut shells, cigar boxes, sandpaper, blocks of wood, believe me the trap man is a mighty busy individual in a vaudeville orchestra.

Back to Pianissimo.

"Right here," says the artist on the stage, leaning over the orchestra pit and pointing to the music, "is where you increase the tempo, swelling quickly into forte and slowly going back to pianissimo."

Director Huster nods, makes some more marks on the music, and then they go through it again.

"That's fine; thank you. Now once more and we'll have it."

Thus the whole bill is run through rapidly. Meanwhile, the trunks and special scenery have arrived, and while the orchestra is rushing through the cues music all by itself, the stage artists are explaining how they want their particular acts set. The stage manager and his assistants make a few notes, nod their heads and then start to juggling the stage properties around. Then comes the work of arranging the acts in order.

Vaudeville acts do not just happen one after another. It takes a lot of diplomacy to get them just right. It would be a violation of all vaudeville acts to have two consecutive numbers in one. That, by the way, is the furthest down stage an act can be placed, and is almost always a street scene. That's where the monologists work; also the team that does the patter and singing, but little or no dancing. It would be simply "awful" to have one of these following the other, both working in one.

It must be arranged so that while

one act is on the stage, the stage can be set for the next one, and that's no easy matter sometimes. The stage hands do not have time for a rehearsal like the orchestra. But their compensation comes from the fact that they don't have to go back and do it all over again because they didn't get it right the first time. And if there is any complicated scenery to set, the artists are usually right there to see that it is set just the way they want it.

Now we have rehearsed the music, and arranged the acts in order. We know just how the stage is to be set for each act, too. But there is a lot more to do. The electricians must be rehearsed. Don't think for a minute that all the electricians have to do is to open and close switches at random. They must get instructions just where to put the spots and flood lights.

They must know what colors to use, and when. They have their cues just the same as the men in the orchestra. The man in the balcony who makes his big spot follow the artist around must be an artist himself, with a long head. If he doesn't get the bright light on the artist just at the right time he has made an enemy for life. A careless or inefficient spotlight manipulator can knock a hard-earned reputation into a cocked hat.

Dressing Room Problem.

Back of the stage are the dressing rooms, and there is always a problem about them. If perchance Manager Hartung should give Madame Siskowitz a dressing room deemed by her to be inferior to the one assigned to Miss Hilkekerupsky, there would be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

These artists are so temperamental, don't you know.

But quite a bit before 2:30 p. m., the orchestra is all ready, the stage hands know just what comes next, the electricians are there with their spots and floods and other contrivances, and everything is all set.

But all the time these things are going on there is a lot of activity elsewhere. A corps of caretakers is sweeping out the big theater, carefully wiping the dust from the chairs, rearranging things in the boxes and getting things ready for the opening.

And above the music of the rehearsing orchestra, the scraping of properties on the stage, and the directions of the artists, is the sound of a huge vacuum cleaner propelled by a well-muscled gentleman of color over the carpets in aisles, foyer and boxes.

The smooth performance you see at the Sunday matinee doesn't just happen to be smooth. It took a lot of polishing while you were asleep, perhaps. Sunday may be a day of rest for you, but it is Sunday for the theatrical folks.

At the Grand.

Blanche Sweet and William Russell in the Pulitzer prize play, "Anna Christie," is the feature offering of the Grand, for today, Monday and Tuesday. "Anna Christie" is a totally different sort of motion picture and one that has received pages of comment. Al St. John is also offering one of his comedies, Richard Talmadge in a comedy drama, "Watch Him Step" and Ruth Roland in "Ruth of the Range," chapter 10, comes for Wednesday and Thursday. "Tom Mix in a western full of action and speed, "Mile A Minute Romeo," finishes the week.

Teuton Film Coming.

"Destiny," a highly successful German picture, is due to be shown in the United States in the near future. At present it is playing in London, where the showing has caused much comment. The story is symbolic of the victory of love over death, and according to reports from London the theme is handled with "Teutonic chastity."

Who Wouldn't Go Into the Gymnasium Business?



Anyone who thinks this business of being a movie actress is all ginger pop and skittles just take a look at these pictures!

Up there in the left-hand corner, astride the horse, is Beth Darlington, leading woman for Hal Roach's comedy, Charley Chase. The young lady hanging to the rings with her feet on the same old horse, is Blanche Mehaffey, the folles beauty who is leading woman in Mr. Roach's "Some-

Four Films Comprise Program for Muse

"The Man From Brodneys" is today's attraction at the Muse theater. Monday and Tuesday the Muse screen will show "More to Be Pityed Than Scorned," followed Wednesday and Thursday by "The Mask of Lopez," with the week concluding with a two-day showing of "Fights Out."

"More to Be Pityed Than Scorned" features Alice Lake, Rosemary Theby and J. Frank Glendon. Fred Thomson is the star in "The Mask of Lopez," and "Fights Out" is a crook story taken from the Broadway stage success.

Dorothy Devore Use of Makeup



DOROTHY DEVORE

Dorothy Devore, Christie's scintillating comedy star. Dorothy is one of the very, very few comedienne on the screen. She plays her parts "straight," without recourse to freak makeup, pigtail braids or slap-stick methods. Dorothy is just as funny in a Fifth Avenue creation as she can be—so why deprive her of the fun of wearing good clothes?

At the Lothrop.

Betty Blythe, she of the wondrous shoulder, heads the week's program at the Lothrop in "The Darling of the Rich," showing today and Monday. "Fighting Blood" round eight, a comedy, "Wise Crackers," and the Pathé News are included. One of Peter B. Kyne's stories, "The Go-Getter," is featured Tuesday and Wednesday and also Mildred Hara in "Go Get Her." Alice Brady is billed for Thursday in her picture made in Canada, "The Snow Birds," with the addition of George Hopkins in "No Wedding Bells." John Gilbert, starring in "The Madness of Youth," and Ben Turpin in "The Pitfalls of a Big City," complete the week.

At the Boulevard.

Jackie Coogan and a full fledged three-ring circus in "Circus Days," with Jackie as a peanut and ice cream vendor, is on the Boulevard screen for today and Monday. There is also "Fighting Blood" and a comedy, Elinor Glyn's love story, "Six Days," which is also full of action and thrills, is featured for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, with the chapter play "Days of Daniel Boone" and a comedy completing the program. A newspaper story, produced by Thomas H. Ince, "Her Reputation," will be featured the final two days of the week with a screen comedy and also a vaudeville bill.

Mae Busch has bought a new home in the Hollywood Hills.

Glitter of Orient Brought to Screen

All the glitter of the orient is brought to the screen in a remarkable story of romance, "The Man From Brodneys," at the Moon theater. In this Vitagraph special production will be seen several hundred Mohammedans in native costume. They plan an important in the sequence of the film, which is an ad-

venture story set on the island of Japet, in the South Seas. J. Warren Kerrigan plays the leading role. In the all-star cast also are Alice Calhoun, Miss DuPont, Wanda Hawley, Pat O'Malley and Kathleen Key.

Cheer? Yes, He Will!

Mr. Emory Johnson has changed the name of his picture, "Swords and Ploughshares," to "The Spirit of America." This will no doubt be pleasing news to Mr. D. W. Griffith, the producer of "America."



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NEXT SUNDAY

RIALTO

REEL REMARKS
By M. P. EDITOR.

Betty Blythe was born in 1893.

Theda Bara continues to "rest" in Hollywood.

Louise Glauco has disappeared entirely from pictures of recent vintage.

Constance Talmadge is younger than her sister Norma by three years.

Josephine Lovett, famous scenario writer, is the wife of John S. Robertson, the director.

Jackie Coogan's "A Boy of Flanders" has been completed and the star is about to begin the filming of an unnamed original story by Willard Mack.

William Farnum has taken possession of a bungalow on the Lasky lot in Hollywood and is kept busy reading stories designed as starring features for him.

Irene Rich, Willard Louis and Pauline Geron have been cast for "Pal O' Mine," which is to be a Harry Cohen production for independent release.

Sunshine Sammy, the cute negro boy screener, has quite Hal Roach, due to a difference in salary demand on a new contract and may essay a trip into vaudeville.

Dinky Dean, 6-year-old star of "A Prince of a King," and protégé of Charlie Chaplin, through his guardian,

lans, has just signed a four-year contract to star in Dinky Dean Productions, Inc.

Norma Talmadge will have the benefit of the direction of Fred Niblo in a picture to be made during the current season.

Mary Newcomb, stage player, succeeded in her divorce suit against Robert Edeson on the grounds of non-support and desertion.

A recent high wind in Hollywood blew down a tree in front of Carmel Myers' home. Her automobile, from which she had just alighted, was pinned under it.

Walter Hiers, for seven years with Paramount as a stock actor, has signed with Metro for a role in "Along Came Ruth," starring Viola Dana.

Matt Moore and Patsy Ruth Miller have the principal roles in "Fools in the Dark," now being produced for Film Booking office release.

Sidney Chaplin, Frank Mayo, Mary Carr and Phyllis Haver are supporting Colleen Moore in "The Perfect Flapper," now under production.

Laurette Taylor will begin the filming of a J. Martley Manners story, "A Night in Rome," at the Metro studio in Hollywood some time this month.

Henry Walthall will be Ruth Roland's right bower in the filming of "Dollar Down," her first feature picture under her own producing banner.

Today and All Week

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| Winston McCay | Ned Wayburn |
| Earl Sende | Damon Runyon |
| Joe Humphries | Nell Brinkley |
| T. Roy Barnes | Johnny Gallagher |
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