

About Plays, Playhouses and Playhouses

Much disappointment was felt in Omaha when it was announced that the Wilson Lackey engagement was cancelled. The demand for seats was such as to warrant the conclusion that the house would have been packed to the limit at each of the three performances, and not one of the prospective patrons has been anxious to see the play and the players. Just a little later in the season Mr. Lackey will be here, and everybody who wants to can enjoy him in his great character of Curtis Jaden in "The Pit." The present situation is the result of an unexpected development at St. Louis, and the fact that managers of theaters have consideration for one another. Manager Short of the Century theater at St. Louis, where Mr. Lackey and his company had been playing, found himself at the end of the Lackey time without the expected attraction to fill in the coming week. Business is good at the St. Louis theater, and it meant a heavy loss to have to remain "dark" for a whole week. The Lackey dates were with Woodard & Burgess, Kansas City and Omaha. Manager Short laid the case before them, and Manager Brady of the Lackey company joined. It was pointed out that the Lackey engagement at Kansas City and Omaha could be held in at a future time, while the loss of time at the Century could never be made up. Woodard & Burgess saw the point, and agreed to the proposed change. It was simply a matter of accommodation on their part, although it left them without the business for the week. It was arranged that they will not be losers, while Manager Short has the advantage of getting a week's good business he might otherwise have lost. In this little incident alone is a lesson for the men who are never tired of declaiming against "syndicate" methods. Under the old rule, Manager Short would have offered Manager Brady a little bigger percentage of the receipts, and Brady would have stayed in St. Louis, for he would have had the week's time and would not have been put to the expense of coming to Omaha. Woodard & Burgess could have sued him for failure to keep his contract, but that is about all the satisfaction they would have had in the end. Under the new rule everything is arranged without friction, all parties are satisfied and none will lose anything, while one, at least, will be a gainer. This is only one of the ways in which organization has aided the theater.

Right in line with this, but showing another phase of the proposition, is a case that has just been commenced at Trenton, N. J., by David Belasco against J. S. Misher, manager of one of the Broadway theaters. Mr. Belasco and Mr. Maurice Campbell had a contract with Misher for the appearance at his theater of Henrietta Crossman. After the contract was made, and before the appearance of the company, Misher entered into an arrangement with Stair Havlin whereby he bound himself to allow none but popular-priced attractions to play at his theater. He notified Belasco and Campbell of the change, and that their date was cancelled. These gentlemen declined to accept the notice of cancellation, and undertook to compel Misher to allow them to present their star at his theater, even going so far as to take the entire company to the city and haul all the scenery and baggage to the theater, where it was refused admittance. This latter step was simply to make their case strong by showing good faith. The case will bring to adjudication the right of a house manager to cancel a contract with a company. Nearly all the managers hold that the right to cancel is one that is beyond dispute. It doesn't matter in the present instance that Belasco is animated by his desire to pursue the "war" he has declared on the "syndicate." It is in the determination of the principle involved that the public will be interested. But how different the methods employed by the "independents" in their crusade for the right they claim to be battling for. Just contrast the action of Belasco with that of Woodard & Burgess.

The question of advertising is again agitating the managers. It has become especially acute in New York, where the managers' association has placed the ban on certain forms of endeavor to attract the public's attention, and the result is some very primitive forms of display have been adopted. Here is what is now being done there, according to a recent survey of the field.

Low Dockstader is sending his company out every morning in autos. This is new, but after all it was an improvement on the old street parade idea of twenty-five years ago, when every minstrel was expected to double in brass. Every half hour "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" leaves the theater and delivers her cabbage to market in a quiet country. When, of course, people stare at her and read the sign on her wagon. Mr. Dockstader's advertising manager has a notion of his own on the subject of advertising. He sends out every night a number of automobiles, each constructed to carry illuminated moving

pictures and paragraphs telling about the attraction in his string of theaters. Sooner or later the managers of theaters will all come to the conclusion that the newspaper is the surest way to reach the public and not only that, but the most desirable. In fact, they all know it now for every man jack of them is eager and anxious at all times to get his star or his play into the public press in season and out, and each of the great managers employ press agents at high salaries who do nothing else year through but get up matter for publication in the newspapers. And the newspapers reciprocate, for thousands and thousands of columns of descriptive matter about plays and players are published free of charge each year by newspapers all over the world. This is appreciable, and not only that, but the most effort on their part is made to show that they value the service, but the great majority have come to look on the newspaper space as one of their vested rights, and when they have any money to expend in advertising they use it on some fool undertaking as those named above.

The newspapers are to blame in great measure for this condition of affairs. In the eager chase for news they have opened their doors to the managers, and in an extent that about all the managers care to have told is now printed free. Newspapers that really value their space, and have some regard for the eternal principle that underlies all business transactions, are the ones that have no respect for the managers, but even they do not receive the notice to which they are entitled. Some glad sweet think the managers, who are just what being educated in a business way, will awaken to the fact that they really owe the newspapers something, and will endeavor to repay it. Whenever the men who are at the head of the theatrical affairs of the country come to look on their business as thoroughly legitimate and cut out all the claptrap and mountebank features resorted to for advertising purposes and deal soberly and intelligently with the public, treating their own undertakings in a dignified way, they will wonder that they have not been able to make spectacles of themselves to attract attention. The public grinning through a horse collar isn't a very elevating sight, and the men who have control of the destiny of the stage ought to realize it. Until they learn to take themselves seriously no one else will.

One is inclined to believe that, with all his sweetness of disposition and breadth of understanding, his philosophical insight and his generally optimistic temperament and philanthropic tendency, the old "Wilder" Winter of the New York Tribune is taking a great deal of personal satisfaction in his ability to decline to receive Mr. E. H. Sothen into that glorious company of good fellows and capable actors to which the old gentleman pays grateful as well as grateful tribute in his reviews. It is not with the idea of depriving him of his privilege of dissent that The Bee points out that he is the single discordant note among the chorus that has greeted the Sothern-Marlowe combination. Mr. Winter has too long and too firmly in his proud position as doyen of the American Guild of Dramatic Critics to be easily toppled from his pedestal now; and his voice has always been in favor of the good and the genuine, so that one dislikes very much to even think that he is in this matter tempering his judgment with even the least little bit of spite. But when other men, younger, to be sure, and lacking in the long years of experience that add weight to the dictum of the dean, but who are as thoroughly in earnest and of culture as scarce less than his own, unite in praising the performance of an actor, and he alone refuses to see anything good in it, and declines to give any sane or cogent reason for his dissent, the conclusion is not only obvious by almost inevitable that he is swayed in his judgment by some exterior influence. In the present instance the quarrel between Mr. Sothen and Mr. Winter is so well known that it offers the readiest excuse for the condition in the Chicago Tribune Mr. W. L. Hubbard, who has already been quoted to some extent by The Bee on the same topic, says of Mr. Sothen in concluding a lengthy and scholarly review of his work:

Nothing these signs of growth, there seems every reason to expect that he will, with his keenly analytical mind, his sincere desire to be fair and true, and his increasing mastery of stage technique, will come in due time to a true and just estimate of the value and lightness of the art worth of his own and others. He will then awaken to the employment of impassioned utterance, and his criticisms will be more direct and to the point, and his reviews will be more generally delightful to read and will do more to the credit of the theater in New York, hands out some little short-arm jabs at Mr. Sothen, of which this is a sample: "Even self-repression, however, could not reduce Miss Mather's Juliet to the level of Mr. Sothen's dapper and laborious Romeo." Further on in his article he disposes of Mr. Sothen thusly:

Mr. Sothen, as Romeo, shows earnest purpose, professional experience, refinement and a low, but certainly, the distinction and allurement; the manner is dignified, courteous, and his delivery is the method of that strenuous, elaborate, artificial effort. No attitude for tragedy is made to commend itself to the eye. The intonation, countenance, voice or style. This actor, in his acting, exhibits a certain refinement, but it is not the refinement of the stage, and his range is narrow.

As Mr. Winter has already gone on record that there is no one else speaking actor worth while, and that one Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Sothen need not despair.

The new comedy "The Jewel of Asia," by Frederic Ranken and Ludwig Englander, that will be offered at the Boyd for two performances Sunday and Monday evenings of this week, is fortunate in having stood the severest critical tests and received the endorsement of press and public. Manager Slocum has brought his experience to bear upon the production, and in addition to Miss Vera Michelena, the popular young prima donna, in the role of Zaidie, and William Blaisdel as Pierre, the young French artist, presents a chorus and ensemble specially selected for beauty and voice, with an environment of splendid new scenery and gorgeous costumes. One of the most interesting novel features ever made has been the performer and manager was negotiated last season between Manager Slocum and Miss Michelena, which stipulates, among other things, that she must not marry during ten years. The manager's faith in Miss Michelena's future has been amply justified by the favorable criticisms of all who have heard her sing. The contract has still eight years to run, and as Miss Michelena is but 13 years of age now, time will have fallen but lightly upon her by that time.

De Wolf-Hopper and his company are to appear at the Boyd Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and at a special matinee on Wednesday in Sam S. Shubert's elaborate Lyric theater revival of the stirring old comic opera masterpiece, "Wang." If "Wang" is surrounded by a gathering of followers equal to the merry and gaudy group that sided and abated him in the old days, and if his royal habit is retained and festooned as gaily as it was when Wang first graced the throne, we shall be more than satisfied. Our eastern friends declared the new "Wang," as shown them at the fashionable Lyric theater for nearly

a quarter of a year, was even superior to the old "Wang," both in the matter of company and stage settings. Mr. Shubert promises all the scenery, costumes and general stage properties that made his Gotham revival famous in a night. The company supporting Mr. Hopper, who, of course, will appear as Wang, consists of seventy male and female voices, and the female chorus is made up of the original Lyric theater chorus girls, the forty comely young women who, because of their special beauty, were selected to fill a full summer season at Manhattan Beach.

William Owen with a competent company will present "The Lady of Lyons" at Boyd's theater on October 23-24. Mr. Owen is supported by J. W. McConnell, with Miss Samella Reynolds and a strong cast. He is no stranger in Omaha and his name always stands for what is best. He has never cheapened himself by appearing in catchy but inferior plays, whose only appeal to the public is made upon the bill boards.

R. C. Whitney's "The Show Girl," will be the offering at the Krug theater for four nights and two matinees starting with a matinee today.

At the Krug theater for three nights and Saturday matinee starting with a matinee, October 27, the Holden company will play "Ingomar, the Barbarian."

For the week beginning with a matinee today the vaudeville bill at the Orpheum will present some new faces here, as well as old and tried favorites. Howard Thurston, the successful young magician, who achieved much prominence as "the man who mystified Hermann," is exploited as the big feature. Mr. Thurston carries elaborate stage settings and paraphernalia to make his act fascinating and attractive. His features include a variety of conjuring, a great variety of clever tricks. Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Kely will appear in an Irish comedy entitled "In Trust." Among the initial bidders from whom some good entertainment is expected are Howe and Scott, who call themselves "The Two Real Hebrews." They will furnish funny stories, anecdotes and proverbs. Misses Lillian Tye and Irene Jermon do a singing turn, a feature of which is said to be very amusing is Miss Tye's imitation of an Irishman's attempt to yodel. Lawson and Norman are an athletic pair. Mr. Lawson does a variety of stunts, including a high diving, a bicycle, while Miss Norman gives an exhibition of expert pug punching. The three Mitchells are lively and comical colored entertainers who sing, dance and cake walk. The motion pictures projected by the kinodrome will be entirely new.

In the presentation of the Sauret trio for their first concert tomorrow evening at the

Music and Musical Notes

Now that President August Borglum of the Omaha Concert Promoters has returned from his summer vacation, the organization has taken on new activities and Mr. Borglum is giving much time to the consideration of future ventures. Of course, it is desirable to get the very best people, but by a general rule of nature, the very best costs the proportionate very large price. The Omaha Concert Promoters will get the very best of the season, and they are in a position to get much better terms than the managers of the artists would be disposed to give. By a clever co-operation with other societies of promotion, Omaha music lovers will be given an opportunity to hear great artists at prices hitherto deemed impossible.

The Omaha organization will not go in debt. They will finance their concerts in a business-like way and the more subscribers the better the attractions will be. It is therefore advisable that each present subscriber should use every influence to induce others to become subscribers. The promoters are doing a very generous thing in letting students come in by paying just the single admission fee for each concert, and it is to be most fervently hoped that no one who could afford the \$10 membership and become a permanent art supporter thereby will take advantage of the single admission idea. In preference to the season ticket. Upon the number of season tickets sold will depend the success of the venture, and there are enough men and women in Omaha who can afford to support the good name of Omaha in the event of a \$10-bill, to put the management of these concerts beyond financial worry.

The first concert of the season scheduled by the above named organization will take place tomorrow night, at the First Congregational church. It will be given by three great artists, Mr. Emil Sauret, Mr. Rudolph Ganz and Mr. Bruno Steindel.

Of the latter gentleman no comment is necessary. It is generally conceded that he is one of the best of the present-day violinists. Those who attended the concerts of the Thomas orchestra at the exposition here will remember the beautiful playing and the exquisite art of this man. Mr. Steindel has visited Omaha only once since that time and he has still the honor of being the solo cellist of the famous Chicago orchestra, Theodore Thomas, conductor.

Mr. Emil Sauret is a Frenchman and the last pupil of De Bériot, that wonderful figure in history of violinists and violin literature. He also studied under Viexu, a reputation is absolute. He is known by every student who wields the trained bow, and he is a master among masters, whose fame is widely acknowledged by the best critics on both continents. Mr. Sauret will play an "Introduction and Rondo" of Saint Saens, in addition to the ensemble work with Mr. Ganz and Mr. Steindel.

Rudolph Ganz is a great pianist. Although I have never heard Mr. Ganz, and know him only through his songs, which are of the highest musicianly type, yet I have heard so much about the man and his playing that I have very strong confidence in beginning this paragraph with the certain phrase which you have read. Mr. Ganz will be doubly interesting to us because we have not heard him, and he will be almost certain to completely meet and even surpass our expectations. He will play a number each by Liszt and d'Albert. The concerted or ensemble numbers will be the Beethoven trio in B flat, op. 97, and the Rubinstein trio, in the same key, opus 92.

The accompanist will be Madame Mother Borglum.

And on Tuesday night of this week the new organ in the First Baptist church will be formally opened by J. Lewis Brown, Deaf Man, Doc, who has been here as the selection of a committee which corresponded with many organists and whose judgment centered upon the work of Dr. Brown. We will have an opportunity of judging Dr. Brown's work

First Congregational church the Omaha concert promoters have spared no expense in obtaining and giving to the members of this organization artists who are equal to and surpassed by none of their kind either in this country or Europe. In fact, each and all have stood at the head of their respective professions both in Europe and in America. The individual members are Emile Sauret, the world-renowned French violinist; Rudolph Ganz, the celebrated Swiss pianist, whose fame dates from 1898, when he made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic as pianist and composer (Symphony No. 1); and Bruno Steindel, formerly solo violinist of the Berlin Philharmonic, while under the direction of Hans von Bulow and now occupying the same position with the Thomas orchestra of Chicago, which position he has held since its organization. In their performance of ensemble, or chamber music, the Sauret trio has everywhere met with the most flattering success. Being artists of the highest individual perfection, they have been chosen to meet with the ideals of the most exacting critics.

M. Elsemann, manager of the German theater at Germania hall, begs leave to make the announcement that a postponement of the opening night became necessary on Saturday morning last, owing to the illness of some of the members of the troupe from Germany. The opening performance will, therefore, take place on Sunday night, October 30.

Gossip from Stagehand.

Cheridat Simpson has secured her divorce. "A Wife Without a Smile" is the title of the latest of the Arthur Wing Pinero plays. It has just been produced in London by Charles Frohman. The name is suggestive, at least.

Not on your life; Theodore Kremer is neither dead nor asleep at the switch. He has just produced in New York a thriller called "A Prisoner of War," in which all the characters are Russian. It is said to be a masterpiece of the art.

Howard Thurston, who appears at the Orpheum this afternoon, has been in Omaha several days preparing to put on his act. He has some new tricks for this season, and is greatly amplified those he had last year.

Manager James H. Decker, by dint of dint of haggling, has now gotten things ready so that the Sauret trio, which will begin their tour on November 1, will be ready to start on their tour on October 31.

The Shuberts have pushed the lever one notch further and are going to have "The School for Scandal" made over into a musical comedy for Lillian Russell's use. They will furnish the story, and Mr. Shubert will furnish the music.

Miss Swanson, Harp and Piano, 533 So. 27th St.

well, for the church is comfortable, the auditorium is good acoustically, and the organ is a worthy instrument to try a man's music.

The organist has given a very good program and one not usually exceeded in point of strength or interest. He opens with the Fourth Sonata for organ by the master-composer Rheinberger, a man whose writings every organist admires and enjoys. The G-major prelude, and the C-minor fugue of Bach will be of great interest to the discerning ones, and all pianoforte students should hear these works of the great father of music, for it will give them added interest in studying his pianoforte compositions.

But this program is not all made up for the professional, the student or the ultra-musical. There are beautiful numbers which will be enjoyed to the full by the layman and by those who love the "simpler strains." Compositions by Dubois, Chaminade, Godard, Fuchs and Liszt will be found to be especially suited to the taste of the average music lover. Mr. Hans Albert, the well known violinist, will contribute some very difficult and very interesting violin numbers, and as he has been working several hours daily for a number of weeks, getting his solo in preparation, it is to be presumed that Mr. Albert will more than satisfy his most ardent admirers.

A couple of tenor solos by a Mr. Johnston, who, I believe, is a leading light in Lincoln, will give further variety to an already interesting program.

A word about the organ. It is built by the reliable firm of the name Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Conn. It contains a fine manual, thereby becoming a brother instrument to that at the First Congregational church. Through the courtesy of Mr. L. T. Sunderland (who does not want his name mentioned, but who, I suspect, has had a great deal to do with regard to the possibility of bringing such an instrument to Omaha), I was invited to go through the entire "works" the other day. It is a beauty in every sense of the word. Mr. Sunderland kindly allowed me to play it to my heart's content, or rather until I had forgotten the fact that I was expected elsewhere. The case is very handsome and corresponds to the general good taste which is evident throughout the building. The organ consists of the Sweet, the Great and the Orchestra, the latter being a modern substitute for the "Choir" organ, a name which is somewhat misleading; the Pedal organ and the "Solo" organ.

In a column like this, which is supposed to be given over to the general discussion of musical affairs, rather than a particular branch, I am obliged to abstain from saying many things which would be understood only by organists, but let me say for the public generally who are interested in music that the tone-quality is excellent, some of them almost phenomenal; the strong quality is most realistic, and the possibilities of the action are unlimited; sometimes the sounds would seem, even to the player, as though they came from a fine orchestra, so perfect is the "unconscious" of it in connection with the word here.

The action which enables the organ at the rear of the church to be operated from the keyboard of the organ in the other end works like a charm. The entire construction is a complexity of simplicities; that is, it is added to another, so that there is no crawling over or under barriers to get to a place which is causing trouble, everything is accessible, and the workmanship is of such a nature that it is really a work of art rather than artmanship. Most heartily I congratulate the Baptists, and the people of Omaha generally, on this occasion to the working musical force of the community, and I look forward to some great musical doings in the new temple of Religion and Art on the hill, which is at the junction of Park avenue and Harney street.

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Coming Events.
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