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What IS a Pretty Chorus Girl?

And WHERE Has She Gone? She's Not on the Stage Where She OUGHT to Be! Manager Ziegfeld, Learned in the Ways of the Footlight Crop, Explains the Difficulties of Gathering It.

Lilly Elsie, Loveliest of the English Type of Chorus Girl, Whose Beauty Took Her From Chorus to Starhood and from Starhood to Be a Millionaire's Wife.

WHAT is the recipe for beautiful chorus girls? If the ingredients are known, and they exist, why are the musical comedies so deficient in this, the chief excuse for their existence? Other forms of stage entertainment depend for success upon ability, talent, gifts of the mind rather than of the body; but without beauty in the chorus the lighter musical stage productions are a waste of money—as the sequel invariably proves.

This has been a disastrous season for musical comedy productions—rarely has the percentage of real beauty in the choruses been so low. Is the visible supply of pretty chorus girl material exhausted? Or don't the musical comedy managers know where to find it? Or don't they recognize it when it presents itself at their offices for engagement? What is the trouble? What are they going to do about it, anyway?

As Florence Ziegfeld, Jr. is probably the most industrious producer of musical comedies in this country, and therefore has a more anxious interest in chorus girl beauty than anybody else, these questions were put to him—with the result here printed.

By Florence Ziegfeld, Jr.

YOU'RE right—it keeps me awake nights! Show me a constant source of truly beautiful chorus girl material and I'll crowd the theatres where my musical productions are played and retire a millionaire.

The ingredients ARE known. I know them—but they're scarce. That's the trouble.

To begin with the negative side of the proposition, bow-legged girls are not beautiful, in the chorus or anywhere else; and it grieves me to say that a large part of the girl population, otherwise beautiful—more or less—is bow-legged. The other extreme—knock-knees—also figure.

On the stage, skirts won't disguise these serious structural defects. In the "Chorus of Amazons," where skirts are, of course, strictly taboo, a pair of bow-legs or knock-knees would positively shriek their guilty confession at the audience; and in the lawn party or society bazaar scenes, although swathed in skirts that sweep the floor, they are bound to reveal themselves in the characteristic awkward movements that go only with bow-legs and knock-knees. Therefore—

Ingredient No. 1: Fine, straight, shapely nether limbs.

Ingredient No. 2: Perfect health. How many girls out of a hundred, when you look at them with a trained eye, appear perfectly healthy? Instructed by my legal adviser, I refuse to answer!

Ingredient No. 3: A well-proportioned, beautiful figure, with a naturally graceful carriage.

Why, occasionally you read in the newspapers that some famous magazine illustrator has discovered such a figure and engaged her as his model. Soon you read that a rival magazine illustrator has stolen her for the same valuable service. And presently you read that she has been kidnapped by a third famous

magazine illustrator, who has clinched his argument by marrying her!

It takes more than one such to make up a chorus—and this is a monogamous country!

Ingredient No. 4: A beautiful face on a charming head which is poised on a slender, lovely neck.

These are not so difficult to find, but without all of the other ingredients included in the total they are only good for so many more empty seats in the orchestra and boxes.

As a matter of fact, I have recently plucked out, and there are now in my employ, forty-four of the most beautiful chorus girls in America. It was a labor of Hercules, going over the whole chorus girl crop of 1912 with a fine-toothed comb. There aren't any left to compare with them—not in the returns up to date. If others have incubated in out-of-the-way corners of the earth, they will be instantly engaged on application.

Inasmuch as the success of musical comedy productions spells beauty in the chorus, I have often been asked why I and other producers of this class of stage pieces do not send forth everywhere, into all classes of society, beauty experts empowered to seize perfect specimens wherever found and drag them into the footlights' glare.

If the stage is so hard up for beauty, they say, why wait for beauty to seek the stage? Why not do the logical thing and let the stage seek the beauty? The answer to that suggestion is that, as a general thing, parents and guardians do not approve of a stage career for the girls in their charge. They are sufficiently unwilling when the girls themselves take the initiative. As honorable and worthy as the profession of the stage is, it would be a brave, even reckless, manager who would, uninvited, carry such propaganda into any family where the subject had not been previously canvassed with favorable results.

One thing we producers can do, and are doing, and that is to, as much as possible, increase the comforts, improve the surrounding conditions and advance the opportunities of chorus girls. Their salaries are considerably higher than are those of the most capable chorus men, and there is now no prejudice in the acting profession which operates against their advancement, when competent, to principal parts. In fact, in musical comedy, frequently recruits to the ranks of principals are from the chorus—in the case of women. I could, offhand, name a dozen recent instances.

In England, where George Edwardes is famed as the greatest living organizer of beauty choruses for musical comedy, he has also been referred to as that country's most capable "matrimonial agent." Every newspaper observes the frequency with which English chorus beauties marry into the British peerage, or into millions.

To a lesser extent there is a similar tendency in this country for rich men, particularly rich men's sons, to look for, and to find, their heart's ideal in some beauty of the chorus. But no reputable manager could seriously hold that chance out as an inducement for pretty girls to enter his chorus.



Hazel Dawn, a Real Musical Comedy Star, Whose Beautiful Throat and Poise of Head Are Two Most Effective Details in the Make-Up of a Perfect Chorus Girl.

Probably there is a popular impression that a professional assessment of a chorus applicant's "points" of beauty is a lengthy process and difficult for her to undergo with equanimity. Perhaps a brief description of my own methods may remove this impression.

As the girl applicant enters the room I know in the first moment whether, in a general way, she would please an audience. If a girl makes that impression at first glance you may rely upon it she is beautiful. It really is a composite impression, a flash by which I note that she has a good address, which is a part of personality. The silhouette made by her figure in the door is girlish. She wears her clothes well and wears a pleasant expression. In brief, the flash pronounces her generally pleasing—she is beautiful.

As I talk with her for a few minutes there is a more or less conscious analysis. I note her height. She must be five feet five inches or more, but she must not be tall enough to be ungainly. She must be of the weight that I consider the right one for beauty—125 pounds.

But while I am making these mental notes I am more sensible of her eyes than of anything else about her. They must be fairly large, and neither "pop" nor deep set. The color is not of great importance, though I prefer brown. Brown eyes reflect more sentiment than those of any other color. And the chief beauty, the absolute essential of beauty in eyes, is their expression. They must indeed be mirrors, with high reflecting powers. The mouth must be good. Its size does not matter, unless it be freakishly large. But the teeth must be white and regular, and the lips must have the trick of smiling readily, a smile that means something. I detest a trick smile, one of the machine-made sort that has no feeling, nor thought, behind it. A smile must show how you feel or what you think. A smile is no mere crack in the face.

The nose must be good also. By a good nose I mean one that is straight and not too large for the face that supports it.

The hair, as to color, matters little, but its becoming arrangement is important. I prefer brown hair. Miss Anna Held has beautiful hair. I dislike curly hair, and never engage a girl who has it.

I always notice whether the neck is long or short, that is, whether it matches the body. I dislike both extremes. But the neck should be well covered with flesh.

The shoulders should be inconspicuous and gently sloping, feminine. I don't like a broad shouldered woman. She looks massive. The chest should be full but without "bustiness." A "busty" girl, no matter what her age, looks mature. I would never place on my stage a short, strappy woman.

And the feet must be shapely and the ankles trim. I would never choose a girl with ugly feet and ankles. The most beautiful women I know are Marie Studholme, Lillian Lorraine, Edna May, Hazel Dawn, Marie Wilson and Lilly Elsie.

Marie Studholme's beauty lay in perfection of features and distinctness of coloring. Lilly Elsie's is that of a perfectly fashioned face. Edna May's was a saccharine beauty, but was classic of its kind. Camille Clifford was bewitching chiefly because of the curving lines of her figure. Marie Wilson's was the Junoesque type of beauty which still has many admirers among the artistic set. Lillian Lorraine's loveliness is largely in her smile. Her smile is absolutely unique, and is uniquely beautiful. Her eyes are also marvellously expressive.

These are standard beauties. By our admirations we are governed. Unconsciously, perhaps, I measure the applicants who come to my office by the high types I have enumerated, and, believe me, many approach it. To sum up: What is a beautiful chorus girl? As rare as a day in June!



Photo by Otto Sarony Co. N.Y.

Lillian Lorraine, Whose Eyes, "Unique" Smile and Graceful Figure Are Models of Musical Comedy Charm

Why Signor Mascagni Needs 176 Collars and 75 Dress Shirts

London, March 18. "CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA" at the Hippodrome conducted by the celebrated porer, Signor Mascagni, truly is giving the London public its money's worth. In fact, even a stone deaf person would get his money back several times in the joy of watching Mascagni conduct.

Mascagni conducts with every muscle in his body. His whole being is a quiver with musical feeling from the beginning to the end of each performance. The disastrous result suffered by his collars and dress shirts are visible to the whole audience—they begin to melt and run into each other before the opera is half through.

Nobody who has witnessed Mascagni conducting a performance of his masterpiece wonders that he carries with him in his professional travels a total of 176 collars and 75 dress shirts.

They have a special trunk all to themselves. As this trunk was missing on the maestro's arrival, for a few anxious hours it seemed that his first appearance at the Hippodrome would have to be postponed. Fortunately the collars and shirts turned up in time.

The importance of being always in communication with his special laundry supply is due to Mascagni's need of perfect ease of body. If his shirts and collars were of the normal stiffness he would not be able to obtain that freedom of movement which his eccentric conducting requires.

Mascagni's emotionalism is absolutely irresistible, and is transmitted not only to the instrumentalists, but to the singers and the audience as well.

In spite of rumor to the contrary, the great Italian is by no means outrageous in his gesture. In the beautiful overture his movements are quite subdued, and in the sublime prayer music and the popular intermezzo they are broad and dig-

nified, as befits the spirit of the music.

But when the tragedy is at its height, as when Turiddu brutally flings Santuzza aside and, in revenge, she betrays his secret to Alfio, then Mascagni's locks of black hair begin to quiver like springs, his face becomes charged with tragedy, and his baton becomes almost as threatening as the weapons of the two rivals.

Here is where his collar and shirt front visibly melt.

Curiously enough, the intermezzo—which no self-respecting barrel organ has dared to omit from its repertory for a decade, is not overloaded with exaggerated effects.

Yet its full beauty and power have not been fully realized till now.

Signor Mascagni looks surprisingly young, and at the end of his vigorous performance looked like nothing so much as an athlete who had just won a race—except, of course, that he was in evening dress.