

What Omaha Theaters Offer for the Week

(Continued from Page Four.)

to appear in "War Brides," a one-act drama, which critics regard as the most powerful protest against war that has been staged. To this famous Russian actress the European war is a matter intimately personal. "My brother has been with the Russian colors at Warsaw," she said in a recent interview, "and I have kinsmen with the Austrian army in Galicia. I received letters from Russia that reveal the extremity of war and suffering. A girl I know wrote to her reservist lover in this country not to return, but to ignore the call to the colors. The letter was opened and read. She was taken out one morning and shot as a warning to other women."

The play in which Nazimova is to appear is by Marion Craig Wentworth, and was published last February in the Century Magazine. At once the eminent actress surrendered her theatrical plans for the year and began to rehearse "War Brides," for the new play appealed to her as the most significant drama of her distinguished career. Her supremacy as an emotional actress is well known to Omaha playgoers. Originally she was seen here in a repertory of three plays, and her last appearance in this city was in "Bella Donna." In "War Brides" she is seen as a peasant girl, a bride whose husband has been sent to war. The role is said to be the most sympathetic Nazimova has ever portrayed.

Of the diversified entertainment to be offered this week, other acts will be the musical comedy pair, Johnny Dooley and Yvett Ruzel; the one-man vaudeville show, Joe Cook; the three Stenidel brothers, a trio of distinguished musicians, who give a short recital with piano, cello and violin; the noted Chinese tenor, Prince Lai Mon Kim; and William de Hollis and company, who are making their first trip to Omaha. The Orpheum Travel Weekly will depict scenes in the Vosges mountains, France, and along the banks of the river Eure at Maintenon, France.

Mary Roberts Rinehart's mystery story in five sensational episodes, entitled "The Circular Staircase," is the attraction at the Strand today and tomorrow. This story gives full measure of heart-thrills and thrills. Bessner, as Aunt Ray Innis, solves the mystery of Sunny-side and reunites four lovers. Selig has produced this picture extremely well and it has been well received wherever shown. In addition, Pathe's Weekly will be shown, as well as a clever comedy, Carl Lamp and his orchestra promise an exceptionally good musical program. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday comes Betty Nansen in "Song of Hate," which is adapted from "La Tosca," followed by Theda Bara Friday and Saturday in "Lady Audley's Secret."

"At Bay," George Scarborough's romantic drama, will be presented by Edward Lynch and associate players at the Brandeis theater for the week beginning tonight and the fifteenth week of their season at that theater. Through four acts of witty dialogue, intense gripping interest and novel situations, a true-to-life and romantic love story is woven most effectively.

Although the scenes of the play are laid in Washington, political problems

Woman's Share in War Theme of Nazimova's Splendid Play

A one-act play which is an effective protest against war is Marion Craig Wentworth's "War Brides," published in the Century Magazine for last February, and now being played by Alla Nazimova in vaudeville. The setting is a room in a peasant's cottage, in a village stirred by the departure of its first military units; the central characters, a mother who has sent her sons to war, her daughter, Amy, and her daughter-in-law, Joan, played by Nazimova. Something of the spirit of excitement that rules the community is transmitted in the first lines. Amy is leaving for the front at once to serve as a nurse, but there is opposition from two sources: her mother, who reminds her that Joan, about to become a mother, must be watched with during the long days of her husband's absence; and Herman, who urges her to become his war-bride for the sake of the fatherland. It is true that she has known him for but a day—but—

"Look me over. Don't you think I am good enough for her, mother? Besides, we can't stop to think of such things now, Amy. It's war time. This is an emergency measure. And then, I'm a soldier-like to die for my country. That ought to count for something—a good deal, I should say—if you love your country, and you do, don't you?"

This appeal to patriotism is sharply accentuated by the entrance of one Minna, radiantly happy, who has just become the wife of the village loafer. "There were ten of us. We all answered in chorus. It was fun—just like a theater. Then the priest made a speech and the burgomaster and the captain. The people cheered and our husbands had to go drill for an hour." She knew her bridegroom was worthless, but he is a soldier now, and to her, a hero.

Across this artificial fervor, and unthinking patriotism, with its vulgarization of matrimony and its forgetfulness of the fierce irony of "war marriages" to restock the land, cuts the entrance of Joan. She wants no more war. She is already half mad with dreaming that they have killed Franz. She is, moreover, of a different sort from these peasant women, for she has lived in a factory town and learned to think for herself.

"What," she questions Herman, "will happen to Amy? Have you thought of that? No, I warrant you haven't. Well, look. A few kisses and sweet words, the excitement of the ceremony, the cheers of the crowd, some days of living together—I won't call it marriage, for

play no part in the action. With the affable manner of an Irish free lance, Captain Lawrence Holbrook embarks on the task of winning the love of Aline Graham, daughter of the district attorney. His suit progresses happily, but Aline refuses her consent because of her secret marriage six years before to a Washington newspaper correspondent, Judson Flagg, a blackmailing society lawyer, holds one of Miss Graham's private letters, written during the time of her indiscretion. During the course of the story, Flagg is supposedly murdered and Captain Holbrook tries to shield Aline from suspicion of the act. Like a true Irish lover, he discovers the clues which would lead to her arrest. By a clever trick he gets the slides from the camera which has snapped Aline in the arms of the lawyer. He also gets possession of the compromising letters, and thus it goes, from one situation to another, until the police think they have

cornered him. Many comedy situations serve as a relief to the serious melodramatic trend of the plot, and in the end it luckily develops that Flagg's death was not murder.

Owen Davis' great play, "What Happened to Mary," is in rehearsal for next week.

With his melodrama called "On Trial," Elmer L. Reizenstein succeeded in overturning the tradition that the incidents of a dramatic plot must be set forth in chronological succession. The popular reception of this play has made it plain that any playwright may henceforward safely venture to reveal a story backward, whenever, by so doing, he can increase the suspense and the intensity of his narrative. It remains as true as ever that the great majority of dramatic stories may be set forth most effectively

JOAN: Then one day you will stop giving you men. Look at me in one month and none of you ever asked her if she wanted war. You keep us here helpless. We don't want dreadnoughts and armies and fighting, we women. You tear our husbands, our sons, from us—you never ask us to help you find a better way, and haven't we anything to say?"

BEAUCHAMPEL: No, war is man's business. JOAN: Who gives you the men? We women. We bear and rear and agonize. Well, if we are fit for that, we are fit to have a voice in the fate of men we bear. If we can bring forth the men for the nation, we can sit with you in your councils, and shape the destiny of the nation, and say whether it is to war or peace we give the same we bear.

BEAUCHAMPEL: (chuckling) Sit in the councils? That would be a joke. Mother, I see, you are a little bit forward and suggestively. Sit in the councils with the men and shape the destiny of the nation. Ha! Ha! JOAN: Laugh, captain, but the day will come, and then there will be no more war. No, you will not always keep us here, dumb, silent drudges. We will find a way.

The ending of the play is a tense enforcement of her words.

Semi-hysterical, Joan begs before her imprisonment that she may write a message to the war lords, and is humored. As they read what she has written—"I refuse to bear my child until you promise there shall be no more war"—a shot is heard in her bedroom.

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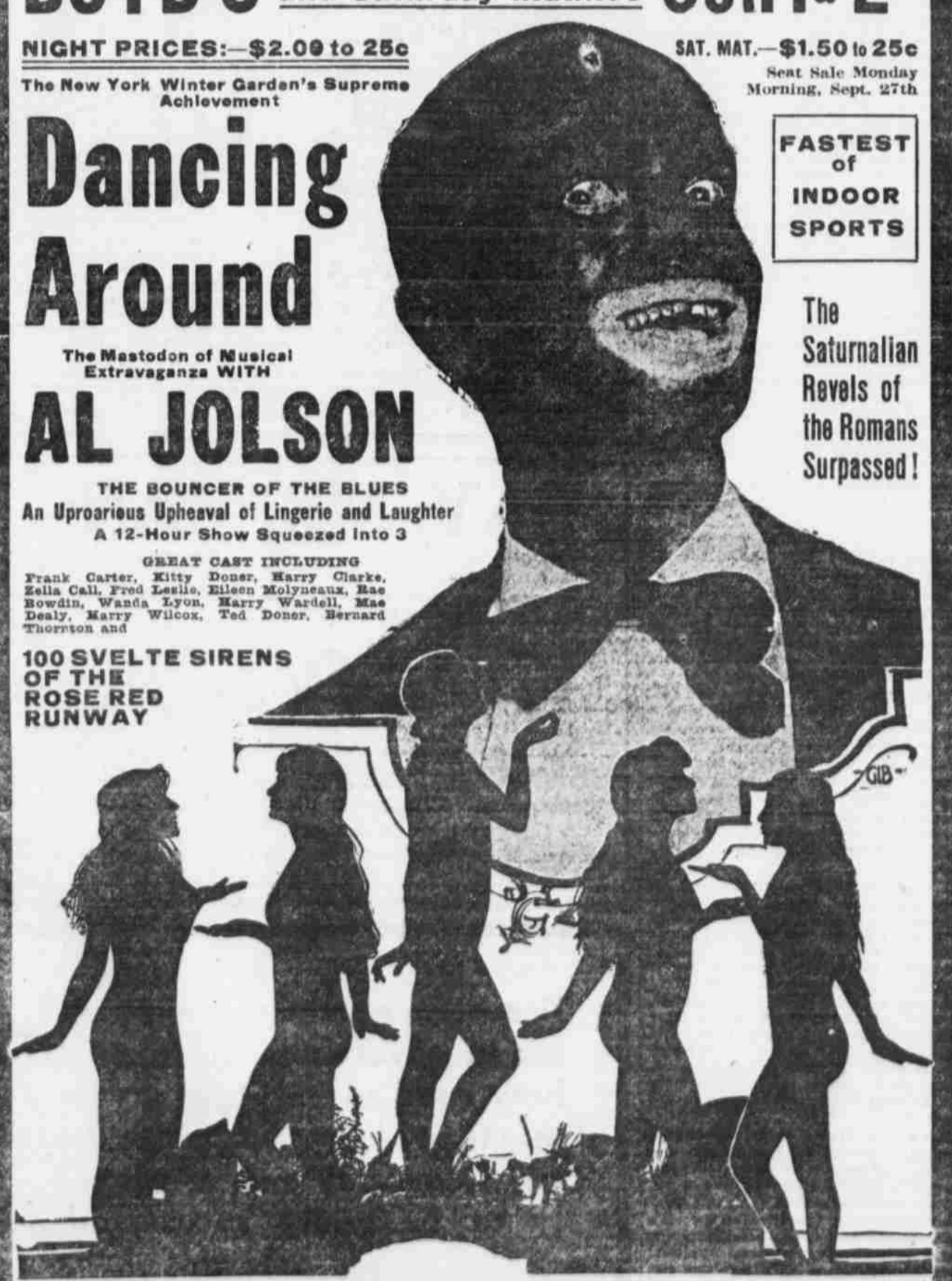
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