

# MUSIC AND DRAMA.

## AUCKLAND SOCIETY OF ARTS.

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Open Daily, 12.30 to 5 p.m., 7.30 to 10 p.m.  
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MONDAY NEXT, JUNE 4.

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A PLAY OF GREAT HEART INTEREST, BY THEODORE KOEMER.

SEE THE GREAT CHILDREN'S SCENE Presenting a Remarkable Display of Vocal and Terrestrial Talent by THIRTY TRAINED CHILDREN.  
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Mr Geo. Barnes, the well-known business manager for Messrs Meynell and Gunn, arrived on Sunday by the Manuka from Sydney to make arrangements for the forthcoming season of "The Fatal Wedding."

Master Harry Ellwood, the clever young New Zealand violinist, has won the Trinity College (London) Open Scholarship. Master Ellwood, who is only 12 years of age, scored 94 marks out of a possible 100.

The attractions of a quiet wedding from her own home in Little Wales, are, it is rumoured, more potent with Miss Margaret Thomas than those that surround the marriage of a popular theatrical favourite in Australia, and she will therefore go back to England shortly.

Appropos of the Anderson success in Christchurch, Mr William Anderson is so pleased with the Christchurch season

of "Sinbad the Sailor" that he is making arrangements to extend the stay of his opera company in the Cathedral City over a longer term than had originally been intended. This is the company which opens its New Zealand tour in Auckland in August with "Tambour Major."

The other new theatre for Christchurch in Gloucester-street is to be modelled on His Majesty's, Sydney, the chief difference being a slight reduction in size. It will have a gallery as well as dress circle above the ground floor, with six boxes. The plans are not yet passed by the City Council, but I understand that every provision is made to provide the Cathedral City with a theatre that we shall be proud of. Directly the plans are passed, tenders are to be called for immediate construction.

The disorganisation caused by the San Francisco earthquake has enabled Mr J. C. Williamson to secure the engagement of Mr Charles Waldron, an American actor of much note, whom he had for a long time tried to induce to visit Australia. Mr Waldron, who will make his first appearance in Melbourne next July, will bring with him several other players to his support, and two important dramatic productions in "The Squaw Man" and "The Virginian." The former has met with a very pronounced success in the United States, while the latter is a dramatisation of Owen Winter's most popular novel of the same name, which has ever since its publication been widely read and appreciated in Australia.

Those who scan the amusement advertisements in the Melbourne daily press must have been somewhat surprised on Saturday last when they came to the announcement that Mr J. C. Williamson was charging "three, two, and one guinea" for the privilege of seeing the romantic mystery drama, "Parsifal," at Her Majesty's Theatre, on Tuesday morning, the 22nd of May, for the first time on any stage. The explanation of this departure from the ordinary run of things lies in the fact that a copyright performance of the Rev. T. Hillhouse Taylor's piece was necessary under the new Commonwealth copyright law. The performance, which was undertaken by the members of the Tittell Brune Company, was the very first of its kind in the annals of the Australian drama.

The news that Mrs Brough has with characteristic courage faced the situation created by the irreparable loss of her late husband, and looking up her sorrows determined to return to the stage, will surprise none who knew her at all intimately. A benefit was offered Mrs Brough by the entire profession, both in Melbourne and Sydney, and had these been accepted would unquestionably have been the vastest affairs of the kind ever known in the history of the colonies. Tickets might have been made any price whatever, and a mammoth house assured. However, with infinite gratitude, but becoming and gentle dignity, Mrs Brough refused the honour and announced her early return to the stage as already recorded. In view of the circumstances a tremendous welcome no doubt awaits this brave actress whom everyone admires.

Miss Mabel Munro, daughter of Mr. G. S. Munro, executive commissioner of the New Zealand International Exhibition, is the first New Zealand girl to appear in a secondary role in one of the principal London theatres. She is now playing in "The Little Cherub," Mr. Geo. Edwards' new musical play at the Prince of Wales' Theatre. Miss Munro, who is only 17 years of age, won the George Edwards scholarship in September, 1904, at Barrett's Lyric and Dramatic Academy, Oxford-street, London. The scholarship carried with it an engagement with Mr. Geo. Edwards. Miss

Munro joined the Prince of Wales' Theatre in December, 1904, and played through the whole run of "Lady Madcap," which ran 15 months, and then was given the part in "The Little Cherub."

A leading Australian daily, apropos of the children in the "Fatal Wedding," remarks that the management are to be congratulated on their efforts and success in training the children of the company. Over forty are introduced in the third act, in what is known as the "Tin Canmarig Band." These are specially cared for by Messrs Meynell and Gunn. They are boarded in the suburbs at a pretty water frontage house. They are sent to and from the theatre in a drag specially chartered for the purpose. Every morning they have school and music lessons, and two hospital nurses are always in attendance to look after their health and welfare. This really careful method of training theatrical children should be a lasting and good object lesson to other managements. Many of these little ones hail from Victoria, which enhances the responsibility of travelling and caring for them.

In view of the fact that Mr. Andrew Black is now in New Zealand and has just commenced a concert season in Auckland, the following excerpt from the London "Daily Chronicle" of March 29th is interesting:—"There has been considerable speculation in musical circles lately as to the whereabouts of Mr. Andrew Black, the distinguished vocalist. His name has been absent from concert programmes for many months past, and it was stated that he was seriously ill. As a matter of fact, information was received in London recently to the effect that he is now in Australasia, and will return in time to fulfil engagements at the provincial musical festivals in the autumn. Mr. Black went away desiring a complete rest after the anxiety attending the fatal illness last June of his wife, a sister of Mr. Ivan Caryll, and to avoid being worried by correspondence he left no address."

I had a look over the Canterbury Hall the other day, writes "Prompter," and found the inside of the big building torn out, and Mr. Tom Pollard superintending the alterations which are to transform it into His Majesty's Theatre. It has frequently been said that it is impossible to change any building so that it will satisfactorily assume the qualifications of an up-to-date theatre. Mr. Pollard pointed out, however, that this argument does not hold good in the present instance. The Canterbury Hall is so much larger than is required for a theatre that, with the interior dismantled, there is ample room within the four walls to construct any style of building that may be desired, so that cost becomes the only consideration. I have not seen the plans, but it is only reasonable to assume, under the circumstances, that the proprietors will not allow a few hundred pounds to stand in the way of complete success. One thing is already certain, the accommodation behind the scenes will be exceptionally good, for the stage itself and the dressing-room facilities are all that can be desired. The cellar, too, is a magnificent one, roomy and well lighted, so that there is opportunity for the most elaborate stage mechanism. His Majesty's is to be opened by the Macmahon Dramatic Company, probably towards the end of July.

Two of the "electroplate" youth of Christchurch had a salutary lesson during the recent pantomime season of "Sinbad the Sailor." It is charitable to suppose that they had looked upon the whisky when it was yellow, for they proceeded to make themselves thoroughly objectionable throughout the performance, annoying and disturbing the entire audience. Mr Michael Josephus, Mr Anderson's smart manager, did not want to create a further nuisance by sending in constables, but when the interval came the jovial twain stumbling out for "joss" one more" were dropped upon with amazing suddenness and marched off to the manager's sanctum, where the Riot Act was read with much impressiveness, and an ultimatum issued—either pay £5 5/ between the two to the offended management, as an expression of regret, or to be summoned

in the morning as a common nuisance. Sobered by the terrific severity of the managerial aspect, and assisted by a couple of lung "soda straight" swallowed by order of the implacable Mr Josephus, the youths saw much trouble looming ahead at the office, in society, and at home, and sadly agreeing to cash up on the morrow returned home a much chastened couple. Next morning, the little cheque being forthcoming, £5 5/ was handed over to Nurse Maude for the Christchurch Consumptive Camps. Mr Josephus merrily smilingly, "Thus out of evil and the most unpromising materials good may come."

Two new English artists will be seen by Aucklanders in the production of the "Fatal Wedding." Miss May Congdon, the new leading lady, was originally educated at the Brussels Conservatorium of Music, but her preference for the stage induced her, about six years ago, to take up dramatic work, and she has since played Peggy in "Mice and Men," as well as leading parts in "A Marriage of Convenience," "Sunday," and many Shakespearean pieces. Mr Charles Vane was with his regiment in India in 1885, when "the sweet uses of amateur theatricals" taught him his powers as an actor. He then went to England, joined Mr F. R. Benson's Shakespearean Company, and did a great deal of useful work with various managers all over the country, and also visited South Africa. In 1901 he was with Miss Ellen Terry, and was then introduced to Sir Henry Irving, who included him in his company at the Lyceum Theatre. Mr Vane then toured the provinces with the Irving combination, and went to America, where he subsequently supported E. H. Sothern in "Hamlet" and "If I Were King." After a second visit to South Africa, the traveller joined Mr John Hare in England, and during his stay successfully produced a one-act play of his own. He is, in fact, an actor of considerable experience, who should be able to give a good account of himself during the forthcoming season.

The audience which witnessed the final production of "Veronique" at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, on Saturday, was one of the most brilliant, as well as the largest, the writer remembers to have seen gathered in that theatre. The dozens of Princess-street were in special force, and for Auckland the display of dress and diamonds was extraordinary. However, "the play's the thing," and it seems generally conceded that "Veronique" is the best thing done by the company on the present tour. The absence of a low comedian capable of playing Copeland (a magnificent part) to full advantage was certainly much felt, for Mr. Wallace, while a laborious and conscientious artist, toils too obviously after his laughs, and, tiring himself, makes tired his audience in his forced endeavours after fun. Spontaneous humour is not this gentleman's forte. Mr. Vernon, too, is scarcely ideal in Lousiot, being "tourjours Vernon," and, in brief—"loffy for breakfast" quotation applies. On the other hand, it would be impossible to overrate the quite admirable work of Miss Olive Godwin, both in acting and singing. She has some particularly fine advantages in both branches of her art, and uses both to the full. It is certainly not too much to say that she is responsible for much of the unquestioned success of the performance. Miss Castles was applauded as Veronique, and alias Helene de Solanges, and her acting was certainly capital. Other members of the company did well as did the chorus, and "Veronique" may be warmly recommended wherever the present company may appear.

Miss Tittell Brune is fortunate in having a manager who takes extreme pains to show her talents in a shining light. "Parsifal" is to hand—a dramatic arrangement of the famous Wagnerian opera, written by a Sydney clergyman—

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