

# Music and Drama.

By BAYREUTH.

## BOOKINGS.

(Dates Subject to Alteration.)

**AUCKLAND—HIS MAJESTY'S.**  
Jan. 24 to Feb. 14—J. C. Williamson.  
February 21 to March 12—Carter the Magician.  
March 14 to 24—Harry Rickards' Company.  
March 26 (Easter Saturday) to April 16—Marlow Dramatic Company.  
April 18 to 23—Amy Castles.  
April 28 to May 14—J. C. Williamson.  
May 16 to 20—Allan Hamilton.  
May 20 to June 28—Meynell and Gunn.  
June 29 to July 6—J. C. Williamson.  
July 7 to 16—Meynell and Gunn.  
July 18 to 31—Hugh J. Ward.  
August 1 to 13—J. C. Williamson.  
September 1 to 3—Auckland Boxing Association.  
September 5 to 24—J. C. Williamson.  
September 26 to October 19—Allan Hamilton.  
October 20 to November 4—Fred Graham.

## THE OPERA HOUSE.

In Season—Fuller's Pictures.

## ROYAL ALBERT HALL.

In Season—Hayward's Pictures.

## WELLINGTON—OPERA HOUSE.

Jan. 20 to Feb. 10, J. C. Williamson.  
Feb. 21 to Feb. 25—Black Family.  
Feb. 26 to March 5—Harry Rickards.  
March 26 to April 16—J. C. Williamson.  
April 19 to April 27—Clarke and Meynell.  
April 28 to May 18—J. C. Williamson.  
May 19 to June 3—J. C. Williamson.  
June 4 to June 18—Allan Hamilton.  
July 4 to July 23—Clarke and Meynell.  
August 1 to August 13—Hugh J. Ward.  
Sept. 1 to Sept. 14—J. C. Williamson.  
Oct. 7 to Oct. 20, J. C. Williamson.  
Oct. 25 to November 5—Allan Hamilton.  
Nov. 12 to November 24—Fred H. Graham.  
December 24, six weeks' season—J. C. Williamson.

## THEATRE ROYAL.

Vaudeville (permanent).

## TOWN HALL.

March 17, 18, 19—Hosios of the Barn Band.  
Feb. 19 to 26—Esk Jubilee Singers.

## Revival of "Sherlock Holmes."

**S**HERLOCK HOLMES" was an interesting revival that punctuated two evenings of the J. C. Williamson New Dramatic Company's season at His Majesty's, Auckland, last week. It drew large audiences both nights. It is a matter of conjecture had Sir Conan Doyle ever written his remarkable series of short stories, whether the play itself would have stood on its own merits or its undoubted popularity run to revivals. Holmes was in the first place a creation of the literary and not the dramatic imagination. In the pages of a book he was infallible, mystic and impenetrable. He never wholly emerged from the shadowland of his greatness. It was the imagination of the reader fired by the skill and originality of the author, that made Sherlock Holmes a famous character. He hovered on the borderland of reality veiled in the shadowy mystic atmosphere that his literary creator delighted to present him. His secrets were never laid bare, the phenomena of his mind never subjected to searching analysis. Over all the acuteness of his observation and deduction, his fearlessness and power of intellect, there was the mystic personality that held the reader fascinated. Plunged into the glare of the footlights, and personified amid the realities of the stage, one sees only the man and misses the mystic. He lives in a world of stirring incident it is true. The vigour and daring of his personality when presented by a great actor are inspiring. The dramatic conception of the man is big. But the greater half is gone. He refuses to be drawn from the literary seclusion of the original. Sherlock Holmes, the mystic vanishes before the footlights. The characterisation of the play apart from the dominating figure does not always appear strong even though it is not lacking in merit and skill. Dr. Watson offers no vigour of personality nor wide range of human qualities such as one might look for in the friend of the remarkable character that Holmes was. Billy, his servant, certainly as he was presented by Mr. Rodge Carey, was easier to identify with caricature than realistic impersonation. Professor Mortgarty "The Napoleon" of crime, suggested more the brutalised criminal, coarse in craft and intellect, rather than a mind of superior devilish ingenuity, stopping at no crime—a brain

never at a loss for genius and daring to conduct the largest criminal organisation in Europe, much less plan the defeat and destruction of Holmes. Larabee and his wife are types more conventional than original. In fact it may be said without detrimental intent that practically all the characters were upon them the unmistakably literary impress of the author. Some of them appear vivid sketches from life between the covers of a novel, but on the stage as human beings they are neither convincing nor profound.

The staging was excellent, the dark curtain both at the beginning and close of the acts being a distinctly artistic innovation of the casts. Mr. Thomas Kingston as Holmes, and Miss Ethel Warwick as Madge Larabee, were readily conspicuous. Mr. Kingston's interpretation on the whole was very good as colonial standards go. Occasionally he sacrifices restraint to theatricality, but none the less his talents are consistent, vigorous and intelligent. Miss Warwick made the most of a part where neither dialogue nor character are strongly drawn. She is vivacious and pretty, whilst her impersonation was full of quality. Mr. Harry Plimmer as Larabee verged on the melodramatic at times, but he was restricted by the limitations of the dialogue. Mr. Gregan McMahon invented the personality of Professor Moriarity with individuality and strength, but it was more than probability that had Mr. Titheradge appeared in the part the representation would have been more human than melodramatic. The impersonation of Alice Faulkner by Miss Ethel Gordon had its meritorious moments, but was capable of more sympathetic treatment.

## The Triumph of Romance and Illusion.

Setting the current of one's ideas directly against what circumstance and custom fix in us as habitual modes of thought, is in everyday affairs a dangerous practice. It stamps a man as revolutionary, sometimes catastrophic. But when the process is applied to the comedy stage and an inverse order of things takes place behind the footlights in diametric opposition to the accepted and conventional, we are convulsed with laughter. The case in point is "Brewster's Millions," which the J. C. Williamson New Dramatic Company revived to a delighted and tickled audience at His Majesty's, Auckland, on Saturday. The spectacle of any sane mortal cursing his luck because an outside horse he has backed heavily wins on an outside price, or demanding to know what the classic realm is wrong that stocks into which he has plunged badly should go leaping up point upon point, is grotesquely inhuman. Those who live in the world and work and do not, perchance, own shares in the Waihi gold mine, the Auckland Tramways, or sundry gas companies, get a very bad habit of thinking about accumulating cash. It dominates the life of the million the wide world over. We of that million are vassals to the great monster of necessity. It puts forth its tentacles, and we are surrounded by economic problems of rent, food, fring, employment, and all that. The bulk of the million do not want to bother their heads one bit about such commonplace realities. Life was surely made for better things than that. So to the theatre, into the radiance and glitter of the footlights. The beautiful women and the handsome sonorous voiced men lure them kindly away from problems personified in unctuous landlords and greedy gas collectors. They gleefully embark in pursuit of illusion instead. What is the reality of any boy-faced milkmaid demanding cash on the fifth of the month to the glamour of youth and maid reclining on an imaginary yacht in a limelit Mediterranean, talking of love and marriage like the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman"? What matters the case-hardened real estate dealer, beside such a fantastic creation as Brewster spending at the rate of £700 a day, and becoming tragically despondent in the necessity of knocking down £250,000 in less than twelve months? Marie Corelli and with her others, frequently bewail the destruction of romance and illusion in this age of men, machines, materialism, mothers, landlords, and bookmakers. Many of our

fair spinsters are reputed to no longer sigh for an age of vanished chivalry, with its real lace sleeves instead of imitation lace curtains. Many of our youths are said to discard Shelly and the Florentine Beatrice for football, and mixed bathing. Yet where is romance and illusion more keenly sought, more eagerly demanded, than on the stage and the animated picture sheet. All our turgid realities are engulfed in such a night, when the delirium of "Brewster's Millions" stalks from the wings and shakes the multitude with laughter, or the romance of its love-making is left to tell its own sweet tale above the soft sympathetic throbs of a hidden orchestra.

All this in passing to demonstrate that a public whose conception of the stage is based on flimsy and garish sex motives, interwoven in an unending succession of comedies and farce, have been denied the opportunity of grasping the deeper side of the stage. So long as opportunity is denied, realisation is impossible. There were moments in "Sherlock Holmes" for instance, intended to be profound and serious, that sections of the audience considered it the proper thing to laugh at as the moment of shrieks in comedy had arrived. There were a number of people who, on the other hand, understood the reality of those moments and endeavoured in a burst of remonstrance to silence the loud laugh, but it was no good. Empty vessels truly make the most sound. The theatrical public of New Zealand have yet to realise that all plays are not comedies and that sometimes from laughable and grotesquely amusing productions like "Brewster's Millions," it is impossible to avoid a very different set of observations than what ordinary journalistic custom dictates. With this apology, the rest can pass.

## The Future of the Music Hall.

Mr. Arthur Bourchier, who is the latest actor of distinction in London to respond to the call of the variety theatre or music hall, is delighted with the result of his experiment.

The Palace audience recently greeted Mr. Bourchier, at the production of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones' tragedy, "The Knife," with a welcome that his own audiences at the Garrick Theatre would find hard to equal.

"My debut at the Palace," said Mr. Bourchier subsequently, "was altogether a delightful experience for me, and the enthusiasm of the audience on Monday night I take as a happy omen for my future appearances on the music hall stage.

"There was only one thing which at first rather disconcerted me, and that was the glow of hundreds of cigarettes and cigars, which showed up plainly in the auditorium. It gave the impression that I was playing to a vast course of glowworms."

Mr. Bourchier takes an interesting and suggestive view with regard to the steady encroachment of the music halls into what has hitherto been the sphere of legitimate drama.

"The audience," he said, "struck me as being very similar to the audiences that attend the plays produced on the 'legitimate' stage. I am convinced that the people who visit the halls appreciate the merits of serious drama, and that the influx of 'legitimate' actors to the West End vaudeville theatres is greatly due to the growing demand of the public for really good crystallised drama.

"In past years managers were under the false impression that the audiences of music halls were inferior to those who attended the drama. In many cases, too, actors who have crossed over laboured under this idea, with the result that comparatively few plays on the music hall stage have achieved really great success.

"The West End public want good stuff and good acting, whether it be in the music hall or the theatre."

The music hall engagement will not affect Mr. Bourchier in his capacity as an actor-manager.

The story of "The Knife" is the tragedy of Sir Mark Ridgway, surgeon. Sir Mark is about to perform a perilous operation on his friend Archie Kingsway, and a few minutes before this operation he discovers that Kingsway is his wife's lover. Yet he uses all his skill and saves the man's life.

That is all, but in twenty minutes are packed emotions sufficient for three hours. The difficulties of compression are evident, and Mr. Jones has been forced to the use of obvious stage arti-

free to hurry the situations, but the characterisation is excellent, and there is no false sentimentality.

## The Coming Opera Season.

Signor Hazon, who is to be the musical director of the J. C. Williamson Italian Grand Opera tour, that is due in New Zealand about Easter-tide, is expected to arrive at Fremantle next Sunday, while the principals are due to leave Genoa next week. The company gives promise of being an interesting and attractive one. Mdlle. Bel. Sorel and Mdlle. Eily Barnato, the two leading sopranos, have both a wide experience in their profession. The former is a young Frenchwoman, who has appeared in grand opera in leading centres in Europe, and the latter has to her credit an undoubted success which she achieved at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York about a year or so ago. Another member of the company will be Mdlle. Maria Pampari, whose reputation as a singer in Italy is established. Of the tenors, Signor Zerga has earned for himself a place of high standing in Berlin, as well as in Italy, while Mr. E. H. Blayney is a young Englishman well known and appreciated in the Italian world of music. Of the baritone, Signor Zanchi, Signor Hazon speaks in very high terms, saying that he is a singer of delightful poise, breadth, and sensibility. The chorus is already well advanced, and by the time Signor Hazon arrives they should be quite familiar with their work. The operas will include Puccini's "La Boheme" and "Madame Butterfly"—two of the greatest Covent Garden successes in recent years. They are quite modern, and both very charming.

## A Child's Romance.

A thirteen-year-old composer of European fame, Master Moritz Lutzen, has been so delighted with the dancing of Miss Mary Glyne, a child actress at the Strand Theatre, London, that he has written the music of a new pantomime specially for her.

Master Moritz Lutzen told an interviewer recently how he came to write the music of this new rendering of "Cinderella."

"I went to see Miss Mary Glyne—the little girl who dances and acts so prettily in 'The Merry Peasant'—and at once I wanted to compose something to match her dancing," said the young composer.

"I was in a box with Mr. Austin Fryers, the author, and I told him what I wanted to do. He said he would write the 'book' of a pantomime if I would write the music.

"So I went home and did it. Then I brought the music to the manager of the Strand Theatre here, and told him Miss Mary Glyne would make it very real and good. And he smiled.

"When he heard the music, however, he agreed, and I am proud to have been able to write for my girl friend.

"That is all there is to tell," said the boy-composer simply. "I have been writing music since I was five years old and it is great fun."

The pantomime was to have been given three special matinees a few days after the mail left.

Master Lutzen was born in Birmingham, and has been educated in England. He is the son of Hungarian parents, and has in his brief experience been commanded to play before several crowned heads, and once, at Professor Loubet's request, conducted the band of the National Guard.

## "Fallen Fairies"—The Gilbert-German "Success."

For some inexplicable reason, the cable man in London informed us that the Gilbert-German opera, "Fallen Fairies" at the time it was produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, was a great success. The critic of the "Musical Standard" puts a very different complexion on the piece.

"With every desire to welcome a success at the Savoy," he says, "it must reluctantly be confessed that this new opera, written by W. S. Gilbert, and composed by Edward German, makes entertainment which is very far from brilliant. Expectancy ran high last Wednesday night, for it is a long time since a new production was so extensively paraphrased and hoisted beforehand as this was, and, in addition, the names of Gilbert and German naturally aroused great interest. We were, however, doomed to considerable disappointment, and although a certain leading daily was pleased to head its criticism of the work, 'Brilliant success,' this