

THE STAGE

HIS MAJESTY'S.

BRILLIANT MUSICAL FESTIVAL

GONSALEZ GRAND ITALIAN OPERA SEASON.

A musical event of great importance is the coming to Auckland on Boxing Night of the Gonzalez Italian Grand Opera Company, which, under the fuller direction, will open a season of 16 nights duration at His Majesty's Theatre. The success which attended the Gonzalez season in Melbourne was recently duplicated in Sydney, where the record achieved in the Victorian capital was beaten in the matter of performances, over 100 being given. Another record was achieved for opera—only one disappointment was experienced by patrons, and that was caused by an unlucky tram accident to one of the principals. Though 20 operas were produced, except in one instance the Gonzalez Company gave the performance advertised with the singers the public expected to see. A feature of the Sydney and Melbourne season was the enormous first night list, hundreds of patrons attending regularly throughout the season. There was little to choose in popularity between the operas produced, but those that proved themselves a little ahead of the others have been selected for the season. The opening will be marked by a gala performance of "Il Trovatore" in which the principal members of the company will be seen. On Wednesday "Il Trovatore" will again be staged, and on Thursday the ever-popular "La Traviata" will be the attraction with an entirely different cast of artists. On Friday patrons will see a double bill in "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "I Pagliacci." Saturday night is reserved for "Lucia de Lammermoor" and at the matinee "Cavalleria Rusticana" will be the attraction. The company is apparently rich in actors. In "I Pagliacci" there are two excellent examples in Balboni, the tenor, and Scamuzzi, the baritone. The former, vocally and dramatically, is a sensation, and in Sydney he received an ovation after "On with the Motey," wherein the poor clown describes how he must, with bursting heart, prepare himself to be the public's fool. Balboni is evidently a believer in Caruso's method of speaking rather than singing lines supposed to be uttered under the stress of great emotion. It is with indescribable pathos that Balboni, after the tragedy of the last act, renders the final words, "The comedy is finished." Scamuzzi, taller and slenderer, does excellent work, and his singing of the beautiful prologue is accompanied by gestures that proclaim the finished actor in "Cavalleria Rusticana," also as the coarse Alio, he does not stint realism.

Signor Bettino Cappelli, who was principal tenor at the Constance di Roma in Rome, and at the Grand Opera House in Turin, Parma, is recognised as one of the six leading tenors in Italy. Signorina Russ (contralto), who will sing "Azucena" in the opening production, "Il Trovatore," will, during the season play "Carmen." Signorina de Revers will be the Eleanor of "Il Trovatore." Signori Scamuzzi and Cacialli will also sing in "Il Trovatore." "La Traviata" will introduce Signorina Gonzalez and Signori Dagradi, Filipini and Petrucci. During the second week will be presented:—"La Boheme," "Un Ballo in Maschera," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Faust," and "Rigoletto," while for the last week are reserved "Carmen," "Mignon," and "Madam Butterfly." The box plans for the first five nights will be opened at Wildman and Arey's on Thursday morning, December 21.

Mr Harold Gregson, the well-known organist of Auckland, has been appointed musical judge for the 1917 festival of the Christchurch Literary and Musical Competitions.

OPERA HOUSE.

This week's programme is marked with an abundance of good things. Enriching it is Chris. Richards, comedian par excellence. His tactics are unlike anyone else, and his methods of making merriment are as original as they are plentiful. Every move of his hands and feet brings a laugh and with breezy patter, comic ditties and eccentric dances, he has

with much charm an excerpt from "La Boheme," "The Rosary" and "Until," while Mr. Baroen gave keen pleasure with his cello solo "Rhapsody" and his obligatos to his partner's songs. Wilfred Dubois, ratchet spinner and juggler extraordinary, made a reappearance, the warmth of his reception testifying to his place in public favour. Leeds and Le Mar, revue artists, made their initial bow and immediately captured the atten-

satisfaction by Dura and Judge in vaudeville tit-bits and the Zandellas in their high kicking specialty

KING'S THEATRE.

"NO MOTHER TO GUIDE HER."

King's Theatre has its regular devotees now who place themselves in the hands of the Brandon-Cremer Company for their dramatic fare. Saturday night sees many familiar faces looking forward to each new piece, and applause is liberally meted out to the performers. "No Mother to Guide Her" has all the qualities to commend it from a sensational point of view, and its popularity on its initial production was never in doubt. The plot centres round an ill-treated flower girl, named Nan Bunch, whose mother—with a past—had discarded her and left her to the tender mercies of a criminal. How the daughter frustrates her mother's evil plans later on in life gives rise to some intensely thrilling situations, which ultimately, however, work out to a happy ending. Miss Kathleen Arnold, as Nan, has one of her best roles, and enlisted the ardent sympathy and co-operation of her admirers. Mr. Frank Neil, who is stage manager as well as valued member, was coupled in favour as Nan's cheery and faithful friend. Villainy had suitable exponents in Mr. Edgar Kenna, Miss Mabel Hardinge and Mr. W. J. Coulter, while the victims of their persecution were convincingly portrayed by Miss Alice Rede and Mr. Maurice Tuohy. Miss Abbie Taylor's orchestra again supplied excellent music.

"THE BEGGAR GIRL'S WEDDING."

The Brandon-Cremer Company will present for the first time Walter Melville's four act drama "The Beggar Girl's Wedding," a play that has proved a remarkable success in England and Australia. The Melville drama seems to be the most popular at King's, where, during a season that has lasted some nine weeks, four of them have been offered to the public, and in every case they have proved most acceptable, drawing excellent houses. In this drama the principal event is a wedding, which is regarded by most of those concerned, as ill assorted, and a plot built upon this incident makes a play of intense interest providing also some most amusing incidents. The first production is fixed for next Saturday's matinee and it will be the attraction to be offered on Saturday and Boxing nights.

The Hale Hamilton Company farewelled an appreciative audience on Monday night with "The Boomerang," a comedy original in conception and brimful of entertainment. A doctor's prescription for jealousy and its reaction on himself was the theme. Mr. Hamilton, as the doctor, and Miss Myrtle Tannehill, as the fascinating nurse, were seen in characterisations that will leave distinctly pleasurable memories in the minds of play-goers. Mr. Donald Bowles, as the patient, added to his gallery of artistic studies. At the close of the performance the principals received a hearty demonstration, Miss Tannehill being presented with numerous bouquets and parcels. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton left on Tuesday for a short visit to Rotorua.

That star of entertainers, Miss Wish Wynne, had to postpone her return to England owing to the sudden illness in Wellington of her husband, Mr. Ewart Watts. Consequently the fuller management engaged the celebrated English actress for a week each in their Dunedin and Christchurch theatres.

Mr. Edward Branscombe, the promoter of the "Dandies" companies, was married to Miss Clarke in Sydney the other day. The bride is well-known in the nursing profession.



SIGNOR GUIDO CACIALLI, phenomenal basso, who will appear at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland, on Boxing Night, in his fine characterisation of Ferrando in "Il Trovatore" with the Gonzalez Grand Opera Company.



A TENSE SCENE IN "HER MATERNAL RIGHT," a powerful drama screened at Everybody's Theatre, Auckland, this week.

a turn that is a whole bill in itself. Monday's audience left no doubt as to their approval and Mr. Richards had to respond to vociferous applause. Another new-comer was Cestria, a comedy waiter, who, from his altitude on stilts, successfully combined his calling with a few neat acrobatics. The Belgian musicians, Mr. Arthur Baroen and Miss Blanche Rosetti, had a great hearing again for their high-class offering. Miss Rosetti sang

of the audience with their entertaining qualities. Edwards and Parkes are back again and going with all their accustomed zest. Mr. Edwards had a special tribute for his stirring recital of Dennis' poem "The Singing Soldier." Miss Dorothy Harris made her usual score in a budget of bright songs. Tsuda's clever balancing act elicited hearty applause, and the bill was completed to general