

GREENROOM GOSSIP

Miss Margaret Wycherley and "The Thirteenth Chair," the famous American mystery drama, have achieved a wonderful success at the Criterion Theatre, Sydney. It was, indeed, a triumph of the play and the famous dramatic star who created her role in America. The audience were amazed at the startling realism of the piece and the remarkable character acting of Miss Wycherley in the role of Rosalie Le Grand, the spiritualistic medium. It is long since such a sterling dramatic triumph has been made in Sydney.

Mr. George Tallis, writing from New York, referred to a number of productions which have been secured for Australia by J. C. Williamson, Ltd. Mr. Tallis said that "Oh, Boy," the musical play to be staged in Sydney next week by the New English Comedy Company, was still going strong after many months, and was a phenomenal success. Another big musical hit is "What Next," and a musical play with a strong element of novelty was "Going Up," a musical version of "The Aviator," in which aeroplaning is introduced. Mr. Tallis found the "Potash and Perlmutter" play, "Business Before Pleasure," doing tremendous business. In this, the two Hebrew partners are depicted with all their trials and tribulations in the picture business. Other comedies still running and which will be staged in Australia by J. C. Williamson, Ltd., are "The High Cost of Loving" and "Nothing But the Truth."

George Welch, the diminutive comedian, has apparently solved the problem as to how to be in two different places at the same time. Welch appears as Knopf, the cafe manager, in "Katinka," at Melbourne Her Majesty's, and is also a feature of the cabaret scene in the Muriel Starr production of "The Man Who Came Back," at the Theatre Royal. In this scene the comedian does an eccentric dance that brought down the house on the opening night. He is billed on the programme as "The Unexpected Guest," and introduces into the cabaret scene a good deal of enlivening humour as the inebriated guest who casually wanders in and proceeds to brighten things up in the vicinity.

The "Liverpool Courier," a copy of which came to hand by the last mail, records the success of W. S. Percy in "The Boy," the musical version of "The Magistrate," which J. C. Williamson, Ltd., have secured for production in Australia. "The play's chief figure," said the "Courier," "was a comedian who gave as funny a performance as anyone may ever hope to see. Mr. W. S. Percy, as Mr. Meebles, had not a moment during his long and frequent appearances that was not rich in comedy or by its delightful comicality did not prove an irresistible occasion for laughter. It was an extraordinarily good performance."

A return was recently compiled by the Fuller office of the number of people employed on the circuit in Australia and New Zealand, when it was found that just over 700 artists, musicians, stage hands, front-of-house attendants and cleaners were engaged, which is a pretty extensive salary list in these times. In addition to a big list of vaudeville artists, the Fullers are directing the following complete musical companies:—Paul Stanhope Company in Melbourne, Walter Johnston Company in Adelaide, Jack Kearns Company in Perth, Bert Le Blanc Company at Fremantle, Stuffy and Mo Company in Brisbane, Tom Haverley's Company in Auckland, Walter George's Company in Wellington, Harry Farrow's Company in Christchurch, and Al Bruce Company in Sydney, all doing splendidly. In the domain of drama the Fullers are directing Allan Wilkie's tour, besides playing a new piece every week at the Grand Opera House, Sydney, the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, and the Majestic Theatre, Newtown, so the executive staff of the concern have their hands full.

"Why did the great pianist refuse to play?" "Temperament. He got mad because his name was printed in smaller type on the programme than the name of the piano on which he was to perform."

Judging by the demand for the music of "Katinka," the J. C. Williamson production at Her Majesty's, Melbourne, is one of the greatest successes the firm has ever achieved. Thousands of copies of the complete score have been disposed of, whilst of the individual numbers, the pigeon song, "Rackety-Coo," is prime favourite. One well-known firm of music sellers likened the rush on "Katinka" music to that which characterised the "Merry Widow" boom at its highest. Meanwhile, at Her Majesty's, "Katinka" is still drawing packed houses, and is booming bigger than ever. Seats have to be booked days ahead.

The English Pierrots, who open in Auckland on Saturday, are not only decidedly musical and gifted with bright and breezy humour which is most infectious, but each member has the happy faculty of co-operating with his fellow in such a manner that the harmonious effect gained is entirely spontaneous. The repertoire of the Pierrots is most extensive, and many of the features have been written by the members of the company, of which there are ten performers, comprising singers, raconteurs and comedians.



MR. LESLIE HOLLAND AND MISS HILDA GUIVER, in a laughable episode in "The Bing Boys Are Here," the big J. C. Williamson Revue, now showing at His Majesty's Theatre, Auckland.

Simultaneously with the first production in Australia of "The Man Who Came Back," the production of this drama in New York was to commence the twentieth month of its run in that city. It is also being played at the present time in San Francisco, Boston, and in several of the stages.

Oliver and Lucifer Bing are discussing the attractions of life in their home town. "There's the circus!" exclaims Mr. Holland. "But it only comes once a year," retorts Mr. Cannot, "and the only flirt is the fat lady. No; I want to rise with the sun, and go to bed with the moon. It want to go to London to see the underworld."

Miss Valeska Suratt is the first American actress to receive a pilot's license to drive a hydroplane.

Lieutenant C. H. Bovill, Coldstream Guards, has been killed in action. He was well known as a writer of lyrics, and was associated with several popular West End (London) productions. One of his big successes was made with the Empire Theatre revue "Everybody's Doing It," which was written in association with Mr. George Grossmith.

WELLINGTON NOTES.

(By "Lorgnette.")

WELLINGTON, July 15.

Jack Waller and his clever company opened a season at the Grand opera House last Saturday evening with a revised edition of his revue, "Look Who's Here." In the programme a special feature is made of a series of sketches entitled "In the Trenches," visualising the characters made famous by Captain Bairnsfather. Every item on the programme is absolutely new, being chosen from a library collected by Mr. Waller during his recent visit to Australia. Jack Waller still heads the list, and Fred. Dennett, Wylie Watson, Gregory Ivanoff, Howard Hall, Ada Smart, Cecilia Gold, Patsie Hill, Marjorie Simms and the three Whites all take their respective places, whilst Simms Waller continues to wield the baton at the head of the Purple Band.

The Wellington season of the J. C. Williamson pantomime "Dick Whittington" was in every way a record one.

The Wellington Amateur Operatic Society have decided that this year's

bination is one that does itself the greatest credit. Everyone is talented and a great worker, and there is a fine esprit de corps between them, which makes for that dove-tailing and complete harmony necessary to the success of any combination.

MUSIC NOTES.

(By "G" String.)

It is reported that Mr. Edward Branscombe, who sang in New Zealand with the Westminster Glee Singers some years ago, is joining the teaching staff of the Sydney Conservatorium. Mr. Branscombe's singing of "The Lowland Sea," with a charming tenor voice, is a pleasant memory of that tour. It might also be mentioned that Mr. Branscombe was the first to introduce the concert comedy company to the Dominion, and they were the original Scarlet Troubadours.

The Wellington Choral Union has decided to give a performance of "Elijah" in the Town Hall on August 14 as a complimentary benefit to Mr. Robert Parker, the well-known conductor, who is retiring from the arena of music as a conductor of public performances. As a tribute to Mr. Parker's long and honourable association with music in Wellington the net proceeds will be handed to him. Mr. John Prouse will once more sing his masterpiece and Miss Mina Caldow will sing the contralto music free of charge.

The musical world has sustained a great loss in the death of M. Wasili Safonoff, at the age of 66. M. Safonoff was a Russian, and visited England for his first time about seven years ago. At one time director of the Moscow Conservatoire, he achieved fame as a pianist and teacher, although the general public in England and on the Continent knows him best as the man who conducted without a baton.

It is not generally known that Miss Elsie Rosslyn, the cultured soprano of the English Pierrots, at present touring New Zealand, is a daughter of Mr. T. Jones, the city organist of Adelaide. Mr. John Lemmone, the eminent flautist, is Miss Rosslyn's uncle.

Madame Elsie Davies, the soprano who sang in Wellington last year under engagement to the Wellington Choral Union and who has appeared in leading roles in Italy, made her first appearance in Sydney with the Royal Philharmonic Society on Thursday, July 4. This singer is the wife of the secretary to the Consul-General of the Commonwealth for Italy, and only returned to Australia about two years ago. Madame Elsie Davies adopted the stage name of Italia de Medici because her husband's mother was one of the historical family of Medici and an operatic artist also. Madame Davies has sung in London with Landon Ronald's new Symphony Orchestra.

Estelle Aubrey and Mae Riche, two pretty and accomplished young American dancers appearing on the Fuller circuit, have played together in vaudeville for six years, resisting several invitations to join the "movie" forces. They have danced in every city in the U.S.A., and also given exhibitions in many of the Liberty theatres erected in the soldiers' training camps.

An echo of "The Bing Boys" is heard in the following incident: Two airmen flew from Scotland to London. Their journey was made at the call of duty. The visit to the capital was of short duration, but they decided to have one last glimpse of a revue before returning to Scotland preparatory to their departure for the front. So they went to see "The Bing Boys" at the Alhambra. Their journey had occupied a little under four hours, and they were only just in time for the night performance. They landed at an aerodrome in the north of London and went down west. The only seats they could obtain were in the dress circle, but when the revue began they found that they were both still deafened by the roar of the engines, and they could not hear a sound from the stage. They approached the manager and asked if they could be placed somewhere nearer. When he heard the circumstances he made it possible, and they sat the performance out to the end. An hour later two machines rose from the aerodrome in the north of London and sped off through the night to Glasgow.

production will be the fine Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera, "The Gondoliers." This decision should be received with unmixed pleasure after the amount of trashy stuff we have had served up to us lately. The fact that the Amateur Operatic Society are going to produce "The Gondoliers" recalls the first performance of the comic opera in Wellington by amateurs some 18 years ago, with the following cast of characters:—Marco, Mr. E. J. Hill; Guiseppe, Mr. George Parsons; Don Alhambra, Mr. T. M. Wilford; Duke of Plaza Toro, Mr. W. D. Lyon; Duchess, Miss Ettie Maginnity; Giametta, Miss Jennie Sheen; Tessa, Miss Leila Spiller; Luiz, Mr. Horace Stebbing; Casilda, Miss Rosa Bradshaw; Antonio, Mr. H. Plimmer—a really fine cast. Mr. W. D. Lyon was splendid as the Duke, whilst Mr. T. M. Wilford did some of his best work as the Inquisitor. If the Society can produce as good a cast of principals this year they need have no fear as to the result of the coming season.

Malini, the clever magician and card manipulator, opens a short season in the Town Hall Concert Chamber on Saturday evening next.

The English Pierrots finished a season of eight and a-half weeks in the Town Hall Concert Chamber last Saturday evening. This clever com-