

New Saroyan Play Hailed as Entertainment Masterpiece

"Time of Your Life" Is Drama Without a Plot

(Continued from page one.)

of life a prevalent diversion. There is no plot, and no more story than develops from the presence of the human drifters. Chief of these is a young man with money and a great sympathy for the ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-fed section of humanity. He keeps himself in a state of semi-intoxication by drinking champagne. Yet he knows what he is about.

In the play's most exciting scene at its close, he is able to rescue a frail sister of the streets from a vice squad and send her away to San Diego to marry an honest truck driver.

Otherwise this is an evening of comic and dramatic incidents, some good, some poor, all human. Mr. Saroyan writes in symbols. He offers you characters and you may weave your own stories about them. Nick the barkeep, McCarthy the policeman, Kitty the street girl, Joe the mystery man with money, Carson the old-time scout, Blick the vice man—they each represent their kind, and you with imaginations can make much or little of them.

Many of the things that Mr. Saroyan gives his assorted characters to do are interesting, and always a little pathetic. They are poor, ignorant, groping, wishful, puzzled, unhappy humans. None of them wants to be what he is.

We spend a part of a day and evening with them and, save for Kitty of the streets and the truck driver, we leave them practically as we found them.

Eddie Dowling, co-producer with the Theater Guild, plays the role of the compassionate champagne Joseph in the mood and manner in which he played the muddled stage hand in "Here Come the Clowns" last spring. It is a calm and thoughtful performance, convincing in its sincerity.

Julia Haydon, the wisp of an actress who was the devout worshiper of St. Bridgid in "Shadow and Substance," is Kitty in "The Time of Your Life," and it takes a bit of forgetting to picture her in the role. I doubt if she is happy playing it. None of her friends can be happy for her. Yet she does (Lucas-Fritchard photo.)

Len Doyle has a grand time giving a W. C. Fields touch to the scout and there are half a dozen well played bits.

We have also been playing with another bit of freakishness in the theater this week. That would be the production of something out of Dos-toevsky, called "The Possessed," by a newly organized Chekhov Theater, supported by the rustle of an American angel's wings shading checks.

Just why these enthusiasts of the theater insist upon bringing their dramatic oddments into the commercial competition I cannot quite understand, but I suppose it is the only way they can attract a satisfying amount of attention.

Michael Chekhov, a nephew of the great Anton and himself a disciple and graduate of the Moscow Art Theater, has charge of "The Possessed." He has been preparing for its production for months, having trained a cast of young American amateurs at considerable cost to some one.

He has achieved quite remarkable results in production. The scenery is weirdly sketched and hauntingly lighted. The players have been given such careful and intelligent instruction and have been rehearsed so painstakingly that their performances have been taken on the polish of experienced professionals.

But "The Possessed" remains a vague sort of thing having to do with the search for a leader among the revolutionists. They want one who, springing from extraordinary people, will be able to organize and direct a mob of ordinary people whose lives demand spiritual and physical adjustment.

Verkhovenski, a Mephistophelean type, shadows the movements and thought of Stavrogin, a superior per-

OPENS HERE NEXT SUNDAY



A week from tonight, Edward Everett Horton, film-dom's famous comic, will emerge upon the Erlanger theater's stage as the hero in a revival of Benn Levy's successful farce, "Springtime for Henry."

son of radical tendencies, seeking to force him into the revolutionists' party. Stavrogin, vacillating and uncertain, is more interested in the peace of his own soul than he is in the ambitions of his tempter. He eventually finds peace in a return to the simple religious faith of his mother. Her Christ, I think he decided, is a better leader than the man-God Verkhovenski would have him become.

The one scene of the play that comes to life shows a meeting of revolutionists. This is the sort of thing the Russians stage so realistically. There are twenty-odd characters in the scene and each of them becomes a definite part of the action. For a few minutes there is exciting theater. The rest of the time there is no more than the unusual stage pictures to hold attention.

After a two week postponement, due to what they have been calling a war on the other side, a missing half of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo arrived in port Thursday morning of last week. The dancers required immediately to the stage of the Metropolitan Opera house and went into a rehearsal of the night's bill. They kept at this practically until curtain time.

Their opening performance, while not flawless in the estimation of those dance critics who know more about this art than I do, seemed pretty fine to me. It was entirely satisfying also to a house bulging with enthusiasts.

The Ballet Russe is starting its annual tour of America. Its first program included a revival of "Le Lac des Cygnes," which would be "Svan Lake" to us; "Devil's Holiday," which is "Le Diable s'Amuse" to them, and "Gaité Parisienne," a favorite and colorful revelation of the gayeries of Paris, including such a can-can as our burlesque theaters have never equaled.

The one newcomer among the dancers that I saw is a tall youth named Andre Egleyevsky, whom I suspect will be sensationally acclaimed in the near future. Otherwise the older favorites, including Leonide Massine, the popular director, came in for the expected ovations.

Miss Cornell Is Returning to City Tomorrow

(Continued from page one.)

was tried out publicly for the first time last March in the English theater in Indianapolis. After 24 weeks at the Ethel Barrymore theater in New York, Miss Cornell and her company began a cross-country junket early in October—and here they are.

"No Time for Comedy" creates a double suspense as it approaches the Harris theater stage. Not only have we been forced to remain total abstainers from Cornell for an unusually long period but for many seasons before her long vacation we had not known her as an actress in comedy—if the period comedy of "Candida" be excepted. We have associated her almost wholly with plays presenting serious characters and serious themes, whether from the pen of Shakespeare or of Rudolf Bessier. Now we are to see her in drawing room comedy, in the part of an actress married to a quixotic and hard-to-manage playwright.

Guthrie McClintic has brought together a superior group of players to appear as Miss Cornell's colleagues. Francis Lederer, last seen here in "Seventh Heaven" last summer, is the playwright, with his name changed in the script from the original Easterbrook to Esterbrook, to match the foreign twist of his excellent English diction. Margalo Gillmore, who acted with Miss Cornell as far back as "The Green Hat" (in New York, but not in the earlier Chicago performance, when Ann Harding played Venice Pollen), returns to the Cornell-McClintic fold to impersonate Miss Cornell's rival. The other supporting players are Gee Gee James, an irresistible Negro actress who is seen as the maid, John Williams, Tom Helmore, and Larry Fletcher.

At tomorrow night's opening of Maurice Evans' unbridled "Hamlet," and at all evening performances during the fortnight's engagement at the Grand Opera house, the curtain will rise promptly at 7:30. The Wednesday and Saturday matinees will begin at 1 o'clock. The performance runs approximately four hours from first to last curtain.

A few additional marginal references and footnotes to the uncut "Hamlet" are in order. Public attention is being called to the important discovery of Prof. Napier Wilt of the University of Chicago, that the Evans production celebrates the centenary of the first "Hamlet" performance in Chicago. The swamy little pioneer city first saw Shakespeare's tragedy on Oct. 15, 1839, eighty years earlier, in July, 1750, the first recorded American performance took place in Philadelphia, which was then both the political and the cultural capital of the new world. A play called "Hamlet" was presented in London, probably by Thomas Kyd, as early as 1594. The defective First Quarto edition, a pirated edition apparently set down by the lines as well as the words, shows plainly the extent to which Shakespeare made use of the earlier, more melodramatic play. Most of Mr. Evans' composite text

CHICAGO PLAYBILLS

OPENING: "Hamlet," uncut version of Shakespeare's tragedy, with Maurice Evans; Grand Opera house; opens Monday.

"No Time for Comedy," comedy, by E. N. Behrman, with Katharine Cornell and Francis Lederer; Harris theater; opens Monday.

CONTINUING: "My Dear Children," farce comedy, by Catherine Turney and Jerry Horwin, with John Barrymore; Selwyn theater; twenty-fourth week. "The White Steed," drama, by Paul Vincent Carroll, with Whitford Kane; Erlanger theater; third and last week.

COMING: "Springtime for Henry," revival of Benn Levy's comedy, with Edward Everett Horton; Erlanger theater; opens Nov. 12. "Leave It to Me," musical comedy, by Samuel and Bella Spewack and Cole Porter, with Victor Moore, William Gaxton, and Sophie Tucker; Auditorium theater; opens Nov. 20. "Outward Bound," revival of Sutton Vane's drama, with Laurette Taylor and Florence Reed; Harris theater; opens Nov. 27.

comes from the more authoritative Second Quarto (1605) and First Folio (1623).

In his extensive peregrinations in Shakespeare repertory Sir Philip Ben Greet alternately gave the complete First Quarto text and the complete Second Quarto edition. So far as records show, only the Second Quarto was presented in Chicago, in two performances in 1905. In the "Hamlet" of Forbes Robertson, no less than 1,300 lines were deleted. Nearly as many were missing from the Edwin Booth version.

The advent of Maurice Evans' "Hamlet" must inevitably stir up a feeling of nostalgia in Whitford Kane. For it was in order to play the Grave-digger in this very Evans production that Mr. Kane gave up the rich part of Canon Lavelle in "The White Steed" after the Philadelphia opening last winter. Despite his success in "The White Steed" at the Erlanger theater (where it now begins its final week) Mr. Kane cannot fight off a twinge of regret over leaving the "Hamlet" cast. He is perhaps the most celebrated and experienced Grave-digger in the history of the 20th century American stage. Besides Mr. Evans, he also has played the part with both John Barrymore and Walter Hampden. Too bad Mr. Hampden is not in town so that Mr. Kane could revive old memories with all three of his Hamlets at one time!

Mr. Barrymore, by the way, receives a lot of interesting correspondence over at the Selwyn theater, where "My Dear Children" keeps zooming along in its fantastically successful run. A recent letter from a young Chicagoan, C. G. Arnold, seems interesting enough to publish in part: "My dear Mr. Barrymore: Whatever I can say will be a 'classic of understatement.' 'A roommate of mine at the University of Illinois, from Boston, told me about the legitimate theater. Until then I was a characteristic midwestern hick, having never seen a professional job done on the stage. All amateur plays fall flat when one is accustomed to the movies.

In short, Mr. Barrymore, you can do more for the theater right here in Chicago by acting than you could by donating millions to a New York theater.

Unlike Father. Winston Churchill's daughter Sarah, who made front page news some time ago by marrying a vaudeville artist, has taken to the stage herself. Recently she took over the leading role in an English road company of Robert Morley's comedy, "Goodness, How Sad." According to the critics she was miscast, consequently not being very successful, although they gave her credit for a good personality and technique and for being more than a mere society amateur.

Graham Sattire. Martha Graham, American dancer, has never performed abroad, but such is her fame that she is the object of a satire in Herbert Farjeon's "Little Revue," currently running in London.

There Is Little to Do About the La Salle Music

The Little man was very much there last week when the Hotel La Salle introduced a new band in its smart Blue Fountain room. Out of the dark ages of crystal sets and hand cranked phonographs came that Little man to remind Chicago of the days when "Because They All Love You" and "Hold Me" and "Jealous" were the hit songs. And with him came an orchestra picked from the modern crop, to prove that the Little man not only was there the other day but doesn't intend to go away.

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There Is Little to Do About the La Salle Music

The Little man was very much there last week when the Hotel La Salle introduced a new band in its smart Blue Fountain room. Out of the dark ages of crystal sets and hand cranked phonographs came that Little man to remind Chicago of the days when "Because They All Love You" and "Hold Me" and "Jealous" were the hit songs. And with him came an orchestra picked from the modern crop, to prove that the Little man not only was there the other day but doesn't intend to go away.

Little Jack Little has come up to fame the hard way. Starting as a financially embarrassed University of Iowa medical student he took the keyboard air line into show business. His resonant, deep voice and lively fingers made him a natural radio attraction and before long the nation's earphones were reproducing the music of "Jack and Paul, Little and Small." The Jack Little-Paul Small duet had a counterpart in the Little Jack Little-Tommy Maling combination which made "Jealous" so famous. There it was Little as a single and at the head of his own band.

Wisely combining the nostalgic with the new, Little features the old songs every one has liked for years, but introduces them with a strain from Ravel's "Bolero," which is now his trademark. He plays them, further, in solid swing that gets into difficulties only when its creators, due to laudable but overemphasized zeal, drive the customers to singing "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" Kathleen Quinn, a class blonde singer who seems always to have just finished a plate of jumping beans, adds a pleasing dash of oomph to the almost continuous proceedings. The opening night crowd liked Little a lot.

To augment the new revue that opened Friday night in the Walnut room of the Bismarck hotel, Art Kasel, who continues to break house records for attendance, is planning a revival of his popular steeplechase game. The midweeking audience stunt proved popular last year as a prize contest. Geraldine Ross is the dancing hostess of the new show.

The "So-That's-It" Department: Tommy Dorsey, sentimental sensation of the Palmer House's gay Empire room, offers this definition of swing: "Rhythm is the result of accented and unaccented tones in regular order, and hence is common to all dance music styles. However, style depends upon the phrasing or the grouping of these accented and unaccented sounds. Thus swing is mechanically created by the way the notes are grouped for emphasis and nonemphasis." Like relativity.

Paul Haakon, whose ballet is again a breathtaking hit in the Chez Paree

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