

# Leslie Howard and Jane Cowl in Christmas Spotlight

## Rival Players Exchange Bows Over Openings

Miss Cowl Postpones Her "First Lady" Premiere in Favor of "Hamlet."

By Charles Collins.

AN exchange of courtesies between Leslie Howard and Jane Cowl has solved the problem of Christmas first nighting which Chicago's stage schedule recently contained. Miss Cowl, correctly taking the view that a distinguished actor's debut in "Hamlet" should have precedence over her own offering of a clever modern comedy, has postponed her premiere until the following afternoon, Saturday, Dec. 26.

Her decision followed a graceful endeavor by Mr. Howard to persuade the dramatic critics to attend Miss Cowl's opening instead of his own, which failed to achieve its purpose because such matters are controlled by judgment of news and art values and cannot be arranged on any other basis. Certainly Mr. Howard and Shakespeare have the call for Christmas night, and Miss Cowl, whose acting of the rôle of Juliet fourteen years ago is the proudest passage of her brilliant career, is to be congratulated upon her decision. Her postponement offers her the agreeable consolation of attending the rival premiere and discovering how Mr. Howard acts Hamlet.

In New York Leslie Howard came into conflict with an experienced and impressive Hamlet from London—that of John Gielgud—and the critics made him unhappy with their invidious comparisons. The incident of the two Hamlets on Broadway has been the most discussed event of the theatrical season in the east; its echoes have traveled across the nation; and American playgoers are, oddly enough, manifesting an intense interest in the tragedy of the Prince of Denmark. "Hamlet" has suddenly become news in spite of the movies and the night clubs, and Shakespearean scholars are vastly enjoying this revolutionary occurrence.

### Howard's Theory of Staging Classics.

Mr. Howard's own statement of his approach to his difficult task deserves quotation as a foreword to his brief Chicago engagement in the Grand Opera house, which is limited to eight night and three afternoon performances. In an article contributed to the Stage magazine he has written:

"When an actor, one who is completely lacking in the remotest form of classical training, attempts the preparation, production and performance of a Shakespearean chef d'oeuvre, he saddles himself with a responsibility which is both dangerous and formidable. It is dangerous because he may be revealed [after many satisfactory years of deception] in his true colors as no actor at all in the 'important' sense, or at best as one whose claim to attention has been based on an attractive personality, a pleasing voice, or some other originality of bearing. . . .

"In regard to the method of presentation and performance of Shakespeare there are volumes that can be said. We start with two extremely opposed schools of thought on this problem. . . . There is the die-hard school which insists that there is one way, and only one, to do Shakespeare, and that it is the way it has 'always been done,' the classical way, with rhetorical-poetical acting, and a background of rich realism. . . . In opposition we find the modern radicals, or such as them who have any use at all for Elizabethan drama. With them it is held that nothing should be retained of earlier methods. The plays should be cut, rearranged, scenes and lines transposed, characters modified, new meanings discovered, settings made abstract and significant and symbolic.

### "As One Man of Theater to Another."

"I must confess to a lack of sympathy for either of these extremes. The nineteenth century methods, whatever their merits, are dead and gone and could find no sympathy or understanding in the modern theater. . . . On the

### Ibsen Actress

SINCE 1891, when New York had its first glimpse of an Ibsen play ("A Doll's House"), there have been sixty different productions of his plays. "Hedda Gabler," which has been revived by Mme. Nazimova, has been seen often than any other of the playwright's works.

In the history of Ibsen in America there is no actress who has done more for the playwright than Nazimova. She has played most of his important heroines, including Hedda in "A Doll's House," Hilda Wangel in "The Master Builder," Nora in "A Doll's House," Hedvig in "The Wild Duck," and Mrs. Alving in "Ghosts."

## FAMOUS STAR OF "FIRST LADY"



Jane Cowl, one of the most famous actresses of the American stage, comes to the Harris theater next Saturday in "First Lady," a satirical comedy of society life in Washington, D.C. She is making a coast to coast tour.

[Hal Phisic Photo.]

other hand, departures as attempted in Moscow or Berlin represent to me a still worse evil, in that they are freakish to eye and ear, and go directly counter to the poetry, the living truth and beauty, and the simple homeliness which constitute nine-tenths of the appeal of Shakespeare. . . .

"I have gone to Shakespeare as one man of the theater to another. I have tried to understand the methods of his craftsmanship and the conditions under which he worked. I have been governed by a spirit of reasonable humility but not of slavish reverence. I have had the nerve to consider the two of us co-workers in a theatrical enterprise, and have tried to forget that my partner is separated from me by over three hundred years of time and ringing fame."

Mr. Howard's company is rich with players of wide experience in both classical and modern drama. Here are thumbnail sketches of some of the principals:

Mary Servoss, who acts Queen Gertrude: An actress who has played many leading rôles on the American stage; last seen here in "Tobacco Road." Among her long run plays were "Street Scene" and "Counselor at Law." She has acted Portia in "The Merchant of Venice" with David Warfield; and the Queen in Norman Bel Geddes' staging of "Hamlet" several years ago, with Raymond Massey as the star.

Wilfrid Walter, who appears as King Claudius; probably the most accomplished and versatile Shakespearean actor of the period. He has played nearly all of the great rôles during years of association with the "Old Vic" theater in London and the Shakespeare Memorial theater at Stratford-on-Avon. He has appeared in Chicago as one of the leading figures in the Stratford Festival company.

Stanley Lathbury, who appears as the First Gravedigger: He has been Stratford's favorite Shake-

spearean clown. He has acted all the comedy rôles in five Stratford-on-Avon festivals. He has not been seen on the American stage since 1914.

Joseph Holland, who acts Horatio: He has figured in Katharine Cornell's productions of "Romeo and Juliet" and "Saint Joan." Last year he appeared with Philip Merivale and Gladys Cooper in their stagings of "Othello" and "Macbeth."

It brings James Kirkwood, veteran star of the stage and the silent movies, and a cast which is said to be first rate. Its appearance in Chicago marks the transfer of the lease of the Studebaker to Martin Jones, a young impresario who attracted attention along Broadway last spring with a revue called "New Faces." His arrival may turn out to be a much needed blood transfusion in Chicago theater management.

Studebaker Theater Gets New Management.

A Christmas premiere which should not be disregarded in the profusion of holiday offerings will

be that of the drama called "Mulatto," at the Studebaker theater. This is a work of tragic drift which deals with an aspect of the miscegenation problem in the south, and it received respectful attention in New York last year.

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MARTIN PRESENTS AN UNFORGETTABLE DRAMA BY LANGSTON HUGHES

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## Night Clubs Prepare Star Holiday Bills

Veloz-Yolanda Return to Palmer House; French Revue Arrives Dec. 29.

TWENTY mannequins and show girls, twelve ballet dancers and many principals will be seen in Clifford C. Fisher's "Revue Internationale," staged by Jean Le Seyoux, with ensembles and dances directed by Maria Gambarelli, when it opens in the Casino Parisis of the Morrison hotel on Tuesday evening, Dec. 29. Eileen O'Connor, a young ballerina who has just returned from a success in the London revue, "Follow the Sun," will make her first appearance in Chicago in this production. Mary Raye and Naldi, ballroom dancing team from Europe, new in America, will also be prominent on the bill.

Veloz and Yolanda, famous dancers, will begin an engagement in the Empire room of the Palmer house next Wednesday evening. They again bring their own orchestra, this time directed by George Hamilton. They will be marking up their 1,500th performance in Chicago when they take the floor for the first show. Altogether they have danced a total of fifty-six weeks in the Palmer house. Twenty-two of these weeks were in 1933 when they made their Chicago debut. The remaining 34 weeks of this total formed their record breaking 1935 run.

A new night club called the Trocadero Casino, at 445 East Erie street and Lake Shore drive will open next Wednesday. The entertainment bill will be led by Francisco and Maria, a Spanish dance team who have never played in the United States before. Other performers will be the four McNally Sisters; Violet Love, a blues singer; Pat Chandler, master of ceremonies, and Don Fernando's orchestra. The Trocadero Casino has a capacity of about 500.

The holiday revue which opened last Friday in the Congress hotel's Casino contains Mitz Green as star. In the two years since she ceased to be a child movie actress, she has made personal appearances in theaters. Now, at 16, she looks like a Hollywood ingénue. Featured with her are Gomez and Winona, ballroom dancers, Gus Arnheim's orchestra supplies the music.

New Year's eve at the Stevens hotel will be celebrated in the Continental room. There will be dancing to Frankie Masters' orchestra, and two large floor shows starring Maurine and Norva, Florence Kope and Donna Dae, the Continental Trio and His Masters' Voices. Formal dress is requested. In the Stevens ballroom, Ralph Foote's 12-piece orchestra will provide dance music, with a floor show in addition. Dress is optional. On Christmas and New Year's day, the Continental room will offer concert music by Margaret Conrad's ensemble from 2 until 5 o'clock, and dance music and entertainment from 6 p. m. to midnight.

Morton Downey will head a holiday revue which opens at the Chez Paree on Christmas night. This will be his first Chicago café

## IN NEW SHOW AT MORRISON

Eileen O'Connor, who will appear in the "Casino Parisis" show at the Hotel Morrison, is a 17 year old ballerina. This entertainment will start a new regime in entertainment in the former Terrace room on Dec. 29.

[Sasha (London) Photo.]



appearance in several years. The supporting cast for Downey includes Billy and Beverly Remis, young California dancers; Jerry Lester, a comedian from Broadway, and Emily Von Losen, specialty dancer.

Sheila Barrett and Pat O'Malley will be the headliners of an augmented floor show for the Christmas holidays and New Year's eve in the Gold Coast room of the Drake hotel. In addition to Gower and Jeanne, dancers, Ethel Dixon, and Dick Jurgens orchestra revue, additional acts will be booked.

## Chicago Playbills

### OPENING:

Leslie Howard in "Hamlet"; Grand Opera house; opens next Friday night (Christmas).

"Mulatto," drama, with James Kirkwood; Studebaker theater; opens next Friday night (Christmas).

Jane Cowl in "First Lady," comedy; Harris theater; opens next Saturday, afternoon and night.

### CONTINUING:

"Leaning on Letty," comedy, with Charlotte Greenwood; Selwyn theater; fifth week.

"It Can't Happen Here," dramatization of Sinclair Lewis' novel; WPA production at Blackstone theater; ninth week.

"O, Say Can You Sing," revue, staged by WPA, Great Northern theater; second week.

### WEEKLY CHANGES:

Palace theater: Cinema and stage show; Earl Carroll's "Mardi Gras" revue.

Chicago theater: Cinema and stage show; new bill.

State-Lake theater: Cinema and stage show; Jackie Green, headliner.

Oriental theater: Cinema and stage show; new bill.

Rialto theater: Burlesque, Mae Brown in "Her Own Big Show."

### COMING:

Mme. Alla Nazimova in Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler"; Erlanger theater; opens Dec. 28 for one week; Ibsen's "Ghosts," second week.

"Ziegfeld Follies," with Fannie Brice and Bobby Clark; Grand Opera house; opens Jan. 4.

Katharine Hepburn in "Jane Eyre," drama; Erlanger theater; opens Jan. 11.

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**CHARLOTTE GREENWOOD**

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5th 2 SHOWS

New Year's Eve

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NIGHTLY (incl. Sun.) 8:30-MATS. WED. & SAT. 2:30

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CAST OF 25

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Tues., Dec. 22—Les Sylphides, Symphonie Fantastique, Le Beau Danube.

Wed., Dec. 23—Pavillon, Symphonie Fantastique, L'Ayres Moli d'un Faune, Gypsy Dances.

Fri., Dec. 25—Les Sylphides, Petronella, Spectre de la Rose, Prince Igor.

Sat. Mat., Dec. 26—Les Sylphides, Petronella, Boutique Fantastique.

Sat. Eve., Dec. 26—Scenola di Ballo, Scherzades, Chacabon.

EVENINGS . . . . . 35c to \$2.50

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**OPENS SATURDAY**

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