

# Holiday Season Brings Four New Plays to Chicago Stage

## Famous Stars Add Glamor to Theater Bills

List of Yuletide Shows Begins with Mr. Howard's Production of 'Hamlet.'

By Charles Collins.

**L**ESLIE HOWARD in "Hamlet" on Christmas night, Jane Cowl in "First Lady" on the following afternoon (yesterday), James Kirkwood in "Mulatto" tonight, and Mme. Nazimova in "Hedda Gabler" tomorrow night—such is the program of theatrical premieres that the holidays have presented to Chicago's first nighters. It has been so arranged that no postscript comment, containing the deeper and more discriminating remarks appropriate to a drama critic's week-end, are possible today. One's final opinion on Mr. Howard's Hamlet, for example—whether it is better than Forbes Robertson's or milder than Michael MacLiammoir's (the last one visible in the Chicago arena)—is still a matter of the future.

This schedule has certain remarkable aspects. For one thing, it contains three of the major stars of the waning dramatic galaxy. For another, it runs counter to Yuletide custom in its strong emphasis on tragic themes. Three of these plays are tragedies of the most soul-wrenching type; "First Lady" is the only comedy in the assortment. Chicago's holiday play going will be largely in the serious vein during the Saturnalia of 1936.

Hamlet's lust for revenge against the "bloody, bawdy villain" who happened to be his uncle and father-in-law; Hedda Gabler's suicidal obsession with her military father's horse pistols; the curse of Cain on a southern plantation where a white father has several mulatto sons with inferiority complexes—these are among the subjects that the Chicago stage deals with in this season of merriment and Christian feeling. They may suggest that the American dramatic stage, like the prince of Denmark, has lost all its mirth; but their appearance in a solid phalanx is merely an accident of the curious booking arrangements by which attempts are made to keep Chicago's theaters filled during a portion of the year.

### Charlotte Greenwood as Life-Saver of Stage.

If you seek up to date wit and shrewd, satirical character studies of social and political life in the national capital, Jane Cowl will supply them in "First Lady." The only problem that will tax one's mind in this play is that of the relationship of the heroine to a personage in real life—is she meant to be Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt or merely Alice Roosevelt Longworth? If one suspects less majesty on the part of the authors, and feels an urge of fiery Democratic resentment toward such impertinence, let it be remembered that Mme. President herself saw the play recently and was vastly amused.

The new plays should not cause any arranger of a holiday theater party to overlook Charlotte Greenwood, who occupies the Selwyn theater with an ingenious and amusing work called "Leaning on Letty." This unusual actress came to Chicago late in November, scored an immediate hit, and since then has been keeping the stage alive single handed.

For a complete month, except for the mysterious and peculiar carryings on of the WPA theatrical projects ["It Can't Happen Here" at the Blackstone, and "O, Say, Can You Sing?" at the Great Northern], Miss Greenwood has been the Casablanca of the Chicago stage. She stood upon the burning deck whence all but her had fled. She has profited exceedingly by her intractability and she has prevented many loyal playgoers from migrating to New York.

### Theater's Debt to Basil's Ballet Russe.

No summary of theatrical opportunities in Chicago between this date and New Year's eve would be complete without reference to the Russian Ballet company now delighting dance mad multitudes in the Auditorium. Although usually reviewed by music critics and discussed as an esthetic cult by its

## HOWARD IN ROLE OF HAMLET



Leslie Howard, recent Romeo of the movies, now makes his Shakespearean stage debut in "Hamlet," classic test of tragic acting. He has begun a brief engagement at the Grand Opera house. [Vandamm Photo.]

## "Follies" Singer

**P**ROMINENT in the "Ziegfeld Follies" cast, coming to the Grand Opera house, is Jane Pickens, soloist of the radio trio called the Pickens Sisters. This is her first appearance without her sisters. The trio, with Jane as featured songstress, appeared in "Thumbs Up" last year. Jane Pickens, who makes all the musical arrangements for the radio three, was coached in German, Italian, and French operatic singing by Richard Hageman. She was born on a plantation near Macon, Ga.

delirious followers, the ballet in this form is primarily an art of the theater and should appeal to any one with a taste for brilliant spectacle. The old school playgoers who think that this sort of thing is not in their vein, that it is "art" rather than "entertainment," are making a serious mistake. The Russian ballet, as interpreted by Col. De Basil's magnificent corps of young adepts, is one of the most stirring shows that the realm of the theater can offer. The programs for the seven per-

formances of this week [five nights and two matinees] contain sixteen ballets, representing all phases of the Russian repertory, classic, romantic and modern. The chief number of the season, the elaborate and fascinating "Symphonie Fantastique," will be repeated tonight and New Year's eve. "L'Après Midi d'un Faun," a much discussed revival of the year, also appears on the same bills.

This company of dancers, with their fine symphonic orchestra and rich stage settings, is unique in the world. Their presence in Chicago gives a thrill to the holiday amusement catalog.

### Theater Guild Veteran.

Dudley Digges, whose relationship to the Theater Guild dates back to its first production, "Bonds of Interest," in 1913, will be in Maxwell Anderson's "The Masque of Kings," now on the guild's schedule.

## New Connelly Play

**M**ARC CONNELLY, author of "The Green Pastures," will enter the producing managers' ranks in January with "Having Wonderful Time," a comedy by Arthur Kober. He will direct as well as produce the piece. Two years ago, with Frank E. Elser, Connelly wrote "The Farmer Takes a Wife," which was one of the Broadway successes of its season. Since then he has been in Hollywood in the employ of Warner Brothers, for whom he made the film version of "The Green Pastures."

"Having Wonderful Time" will have a company of fifty players, headed by Katherine Locke. The play will open in New York in the week of Jan. 25.

## Terrace Room Becomes Paris Casino Dec. 29

New Regime for Hotel Morrison Floor Shows Offers Gallic Troupe.

**T**he new Casino Parisien will open at the Morrison hotel next Tuesday night, in the former Terrace room, with an entertainment called "Revue Internationale," produced in the French Casino manner by Clifford C. Fischer, importer of French theater-restaurant performers. The following players will be on the bill:

Robin, pantomime clown, recently of "Jumbo," in a comedy act called "the walking music store."  
Rudi Geal, a European entertainer, now making his first appearance in America.  
Mary Raye and Naldi, a ballroom dancing team, new in America.  
Sara Ann McCabe, leading singer in the production numbers, who will introduce them in song of the show, "Parisians in the Rain."  
George Campo, a comedian of the French Casino productions.  
Eileen O'Connell, a ballerina who has just returned from a success in London with C. B. Cochran's "Follow the Sun." She is 17 years of age.  
Grace and Neco, a dance team which has had a successful tour of Europe.

Anderson and Allen, acrobats in a hand balancing act.  
Carmen Romero, a blonde Spanish castanet dancer who has been in French Casino productions in the east for the last two years.  
In addition, there will be twenty show girls, and six group numbers, each with a special stage set.

A New Year's eve entertainment in keeping with the tradition of the Blackstone hotel will be offered by the Mayfair room, where Al Kavellin's orchestra is having a record-breaking run. Georges and Jaina, the dancers, and Corinna Mura, the Spanish-American coloratura soprano, will introduce several new numbers from their extensive repertoires for the occasion. There will be five other cabaret acts.

Plans for New Year's eve at the Trianon and Aragon ballrooms include two famous orchestras at each ballroom—Ted Weems and Al Morey at the Trianon, and Freddy Martin and Billy Baer at the Aragon. Each ballroom will also present a show, featuring vaudeville acts. On the entertainment bills are the Frances Allis dancers; Paul Nolan, in juggling tricks; the Florentine Trio; Charles and Helen Stone, dancers; Nice, Florio, and Lubow, comedy trio, and the Empire Four, harmony group. The celebration begins at 8:30 o'clock on Thursday evening.

Mildred Bailey, "Red" Norvo and his orchestra, Romo Vincent, comedian, and the Ambroses, dancers from the current entertainment bill at the Blackhawk restaurant.

Roger Pryor continues as maestro and ringmaster of the College Inn's "circus" cabaret show. The Varsity Eight, col-

## ACTOR BECOMES BAND LEADER

Roger Pryor, well known as an actor on the stage and screen, has become a dance band leader, and is now the star of the cabaret program in the College Inn. His father, Arthur Pryor, was famous as a musical director in the brass band era of the last generation.



[E. A. Bachrach Photo.]

Others in the show are Lane, Tree, and Edwards, comedians; Gillette and Richards, comedy dance team, and Edna Errico, song stylist, and Nino Rinaldo's orchestra. Three shows nightly.

Royale Frolles—Second edition of revue starring Dolly Kay, blues singer. Others are Sid Tomack and the Reis Brothers, comedians; Wood and Bray, ballroom and adagio dancers; Marilyn Marlowe, tap dancer; Barbara Belmore, specialty dancer, and the Gould Sisters, a dance team. Forty ballet girls, Henri Lishon's orchestra, and Charles Engle's dance band. Four shows nightly.

Colosimo's—Ada Leonard and Tracy, Gale and Leonard, comedians, are the headliners. Others are Princess Ahi, dancer; Muriel Love in songs; Bankoff and Cannon, comedy ballet dancers; Peggy Moore, dancing soubrette; George Everett Hale, baritone; Eileen George, soprano, and Una Cooper, specialty dancer with the ballet of 16 girls. Bob Tinsley's band. Four shows nightly.

The Stevens hotel's New Year's eve celebration will be the biggest since 1929. The entertainment in the Continental room will be augmented by Continental Fredrick Schewepe, baritone. In the Continental there will be dancing to Frankie Masters' orchestra, and two floor shows starring Maurine and Norva, Florence Kope and Donna Dae, Continental Trio and His Masters' Voices. Formal dress is expected.

New Year's eve at the Edgewater Beach hotel will have two dance orchestras, George Olsen's and Earl Hoffman's band, providing continuous music from 10 p. m. to dawn. Floor shows from a "traveling stage" will be an inno-

vation. The performers will include Harris, Claire and Shannon, dancing trio; Alfred Lytell and "Tige," a comedy act; and Harriet Smith's ballet. A strolling band will serenade each table. The party will be formal, of dress.

With Herb Buteau's orchestra, a crowd of young people will welcome 1937 in Guyon's Paradise ballroom. Buteau and his "Victorians" were formerly at the Palmer House. Bob Kirk, saxophonist and clarinetist, is the featured vocalist.

A Parisian type of revue opened last Friday night at the Chez Paree, with Morton Downey as star. The chief comedian is Jerry Lester, from the Hollywood restaurant, New York. Emily Von Losen and the Chez Paree ballet appear in special dances. Beverly Bemis, dancers, and the comic team of Harris and Shire are also new principals. Henry Busse's orchestra continues.

Merry Garden Ballroom—The New Year's eve celebration will feature three orchestras—Stan Norris', Werner Peete's, and Johnny Long's. Continuous dancing from 8:30 until closing. Floor shows in both ballrooms. Regular dance nights are Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

Brevort Hotel—On New Year's eve, Bert Rammett and his orchestra will be featured in the Mural room; Joe Gerken's band in the Gold room. The entertainment will include: Evelyn Driggett and Margaret Conrad, accordion and violin; the Jaros Sisters, harmony duo; Grace Kater, accordionist.

Ivanhoe—Hal Munro and his orchestra. Also the Four Night Hawks, strolling entertainers.

Limehouse—Floor show nightly. Barney Richards' dance band.

The Trocadero Casino, a new night club at Erie and Lake Shore drive, opened last Wednesday. It will be in operation for luncheons, cocktail hours, dinners and suppers. The opening show has Francisco and Maria, in Spanish dances; the Four McNalles, a girl dance team; Violet Love, in "blues" songs and ballads, Pat Chandler, master of ceremonies; and Wanda Winsum, prima donna. The dance music is by Don Fernando's band, and Ramon Arias' rumba band. Three shows nightly; dinner show at 9.

### AMUSEMENTS.

#### ERLANGER 2 Weeks ONLY

127 N. Clark, STA. 2451  
The Dramatic Event of the Season



## NAZIMOVA

1st Week Commencing Mon., Dec. 28  
IN ISBEN'S

### "HEDDA GABLER"

HARRY ELLERBE—MCKAY MORRIS  
EDWARD TREVOR—VIGLA FRAYNE  
LESLIE BINGHAM—GRACE MILLS  
Directed by MRS. NAZIMOVA  
Setting by STEWART CHANEY  
FINAL WEEKS BEG. MON., JAN. 4  
IN ISBEN'S "GHOSTS"  
POPULAR PRICES FOR THE HOLIDAYS  
Even., 55—82—1.10—1.65—2.10  
Mats., Wed.-Sat., 55—82—1.10—1.65  
TICKETS ON SALE AT BOX OFFICE  
Engagement Positively Ends Sat. Nite, Jan. 9

### 3 WEEKS ONLY

Beginning Jan. 11th  
5th Play Theatre Guild and  
American Theatre Society  
THE THEATRE GUILD  
Presents

## JANE EYRE

Helen Jerome Danvers  
Director of the  
Classic English Drama

## KATHARINE HEPBURN

IN PERSON  
and a distinguished cast  
Directed by Worthington Miner  
Settings by Lee Simonson  
Mail your orders now! Prices \$1.10,  
\$1.65, \$2.10, \$2.65, \$3.20. Mats. Wed-  
nesday & Saturday, \$1.10, \$1.65, \$2.20.  
Seat Sale Opens Monday, Jan. 4th  
Main floor and 2nd bal. seats available  
by mail order for 1st and 2nd weeks.  
All prices available for 3rd week.

### NEW YEAR'S EVE

#### CIVIC OPERA HOUSE

### 'CARMEN'

COE GLADE, TOKATYAN,  
FRUHL, SANDERSON, BROWN, BULLOCK,  
FRINK, CAVENDISH, OLIVERO, LEVICH,  
DE VERMOND, LUNDGREN & BELLET,  
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CIVIC OPERA HOUSE  
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"Terrific! exciting!"—GAIL BORDEN,  
Daily Times.  
"It may well become the best attended  
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"A terrific, enthralling performance."  
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"It Can't Happen Here"

By J. C. Moffitt and Sinclair Lewis  
Dec. 28, 29, 30, 31, 1936. 8 p.m. at 8:30  
A Federal Theatre Unit, Harry M. Blum, Director

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MATS. TODAY AND WEDNESDAY  
THE SEASON'S GREATEST SUCCESS  
The Critics Have Raved as  
Never Before—The Public  
Response Is Enormous  
S. HURON COL. W. DE BASIL'S  
PRESENTS

## BALLET RUSSE

### DE MONTE CARLO

Tonight, 8:30—Concurrence, Scuola di Ballo,  
Aurora's Wedding.  
Tonight, 8:30—Pavillons, Symphonie Fan-  
tasique, L'Anne Mid d'un Faune, Gipsy  
Dances, Mon.-Pavillons, Tricorne, Beau  
Danube. Tues.—100 Kisses, Scherzando,  
Chorvartium. Wed. Mat.—Lac des Cygnes,  
Boutique, Fantasio, Aurora's Wedding.  
Wed. Eve.—Concurrence, Scherzando,  
Cimarostana. Thurs.—100 Kisses, Sym-  
phonie Fantastique, L'Après Midi d'un  
Faune, Beau Danube.  
EVENTINGS .....55c TO \$3.30  
MATTINEES .....55c TO \$2.75

### CHICAGO STADIUM LAST TIMES TODAY

MATINEE 2:30—TONIGHT 8:30  
THE 5th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL  
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Galaxy of Foreign & American Skating Stars  
Prices 55c, \$1.10, \$1.65, \$2.20; Boxes \$2.50 (Tax Inc.)  
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### AMUSEMENTS.

## GRAND OPERA HOUSE LAST 8 TIMES

ENGAGEMENT POSITIVELY ENDS SAT. NIGHT, JAN. 2  
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### PERSONAL VISIT

## LESLIE HOWARD

### "HAMLET"

ORIGINAL NEW YORK CAST and PRODUCTION  
OPENING NIGHT! SEATS NOW!  
MONDAY, JAN. 4 AT BOX OFFICE  
Nights \$1 to \$3.50. Matinees Wed. and Sat., \$1 to \$2.50 (Plus tax)  
Greater 1937 Stage Edition

## ZIEGFELD FOLLIES

FANNIE BRICE • BOBBY CLARK  
RUTH HARRISON and ALEX FISHER • CHERRY and JUNE PREISSER  
STAN KAVANAGH • CASS DALEY • HUGH CAMERON  
MARVIN LAWLER • JAMES FARRELL • BEN YOST'S VARSITY EIGHT  
JANE PICKENS • 123 OTHERS • GYPSY ROSE LEE  
Huge, smashing revue, direct from Broadway saloons. The biggest Winter  
Garden hit in nine years. It comes with a trailload of stars and beauties.  
AND 60 GLAMOUR GIRLS OF 1937!  
GRAND GLAMOUR GIRLS OF 1937!

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#### 3 MATINEES THIS WEEK

WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY  
EXTRA MATINEE FRIDAY  
(New Year's Day)



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## JANE COWL

IN THE MUSIC BOX COMEDY HIT  
"FIRST LADY"

By Katharine Dayton and Geo. S. Kaufman  
DIRECT FROM 1 YEAR IN NEW YORK  
Nights (ex. New Year's Eve) \$1 to  
\$2.50. Mats., Wed., Sat. & New Year's  
Eve, \$1 to \$2. New Year's Eve (Dec.  
31), \$2 to \$4. (Plus 10% Tax.)  
HARRIS SEATS NOW ON  
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### Great Northern

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"Lloyd Lewis, Daily News."  
"A night of good show things all  
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"Astoria Stevens Amer-  
ica."  
"mood of gusto which a revue re-  
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"Charles Collins, Tribune."  
"please the most particular."  
"Gail Borden, Daily Times."  
"bravest musical comedy."  
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Frink, Herald & Examiner."  
"Time magazine, entertaining moments"

### "O SAY CAN YOU SING"

—CAST OF 250—  
A Spectacular Musical Comedy Revue  
Eves. (Ex. Mon.) 8:30, Special Mat. Sat. 3:30.  
Popular Prices: 25c, 50c, 75c, \$1.10. Seats  
New Selling for New Year's Eve.

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The whole Town's Talking!  
AMERICA'S INCOMPARABLE  
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"PLOT IS A PEACH" — Astoria Stevens  
"A NEW LETTY" — Charles Collins  
"BRISK AND EXCITING" — Lloyd Lewis  
"A WHALE OF A SHOW" — Gail Borden  
"A FARCE THRILLER" — Carol Frink  
"YOUR MONEY'S WORTH" — Claudia Cassidy

By Popular Demand!!  
2 SHOWS NEW YEAR'S EVE  
FIRST AT 8:30—SECOND AT 11 O'CLOCK  
Extra Matinee—NEW YEAR'S DAY—3 P.M.

### STUDEBAKER MATINEES—WED. and SAT.

#### NOW PLAYING JAMES KIRKWOOD

Never in the History of the  
Studebaker Theater  
Has a Play Been More  
Enthusiastically  
Received—The Four  
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PRICES Nites 50c—\$1.00—\$1.50—\$2.00  
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