

*The*  
**LITTLE THEATRE**  
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**MAGAZINE**

*Edited by* **Noëla Marienthal**

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**WILL SECRETARIES PLEASE NOTE:**

THIS issue contains a list of Plays written by members of Groups in the Movement, and rentable for production. Members may send in lists of plays for advertisement in this column. There is no charge for publishing in this list.

LISTS of Play can only be accepted from Secretaries of Groups, who will undertake to see that play-scripts are promptly supplied, and collect royalties. The fees suggested as equitable are: 7/6 for plays up to 20 minutes; 10/- for one-act plays of over 20 minutes duration; and £2/2/- to £3/3/- for full-length plays.

THE LITTLE THEATRE MAGAZINE Experts are willing to read and give helpful criticisms of plays submitted to the Magazine. In all cases stamped addressed envelopes, or labels, must be enclosed for letters, or returning manuscripts. There is no charge for this service. The Magazine accepts no responsibility for safety of manuscripts, and only accepts them on the understanding that copies are retained by owners.

SO far as possible the LITTLE THEATRE MAGAZINE will send experts to review all performances and studio evenings in Sydney and suburbs, on due notice being given to the Editor. Similar arrangements are being made for other parts of Australasia. All correspondence to be addressed to the Editor

Box 4059W, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W.

**FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS**

- The Experimental Theatre, Sydney**--September 23: Studio Evening in Private Theatre, 355, George Street, Sydney. November 2: "Lavender Ladies", Savoy Theatre, Sydney. December 6 & 7: "Duels of All Ages", Savoy Theatre, Sydney.
- Impressionist Theatre, Sydney**--October: "Cyrano de Bergerac", Criterion Theatre or Theatre Royal, Sydney.
- Junior Theatre League, Sydney**--October 5: "Some Young People of Shakespeare" November 2: "Children Orchestras and Toy Symphony Orchestras" (Madame Jensen). December 7: "The Plays of J. M. Barrie" (S. Elliott-Napier). Macquarie House, Sydney.
- The Sydney Players' Club**,--September 23: Last Performance of "When the Crash Comes", St. James' Hall, Sydney. September 28: Studio Evening. October 12: Play-reading. October 26: Studio Evening. November 2: Play-reading. November 11, 18, & 25: Sixth Public Season. December 7: Studio Evening. December 14: Play-reading. December 19: Nativity Play. December 21: Christmas Party.
- The Hobart Repertory Theatre**--Next Performance: "Mr. Faintheart", by Ian Hay
- Four Arts Theatre, Sydney**--Next Performance: "All our To-morrows".
- Canterbury Repertory Theatre Society (Inc.), Christchurch, N.Z.**---Forthcoming Productions: "The Return of the Prodigal", by St. John Hankin; and "Yellow Jacket", by Hazelton and Benremor.
- The P.J. Players, Sydney**--October 12: "A Knight in Love", Emerson Hall, Sydney.

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**THE LITTLE THEATRE MAGAZINE.**

THE Editor of the Little Theatre Magazine wishes to get in touch with group officials in the Little Theatre movement throughout Australasia, and to receive news for publication from them.

The Magazine is published solely in the interest of the movement, and is not the organ of one or more groups. All group news and notices are published free. Address on front cover.

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## MAGAZINE

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SEPTEMBER 15, 1933.

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### AUSTRALIAN PLAYS.

WITH so much scope for playwriting in Australasia one wonders why Australian plays are not of a higher standard than the majority of those witnessed to date.

Practically nine out of ten playwrights seem to have a penchant for writing sex plays, and they do not show the finesse and deftness which British, American and European dramatists exhibit in their work; that little subtle touch which embellishes a sordid sex subject into a brilliant work of art.

Australia lacks writers of comedy, witty and not vulgar, polished and not highbrow. The plays, taken collectively, show an amateurishness which must, before definite progress can be made towards a national drama, be overcome.

In a definite move towards improving the present standard of Australian plays we have arranged that all plays, forwarded to us under the conditions stated on the front cover, will be read by experts and a sympathetic, helpful criticism given. We are ambitious that Australia shall be equal to the older nations in drama. We believe a properly or-

ganised criticism will help largely to this end.

While we are willing to give every assistance to playwrights by reading their plays and obtaining the best possible opinions on them, we cannot undertake any responsibility regarding obtaining productions and letting plays on royalties, or collecting royalties. A scheme has been prepared which, with the co-operation of group secretaries and dramatists, we believe will be of great value. Details are published on the front cover; but briefly, we will advertise Australian plays, as those printed on pages 14 and 15, on condition that details are forwarded us by group secretaries, who undertake to see that script is kept ready for submission, and who will collect royalties on behalf of their author-members.

We wish to inform all readers that this Magazine has no connection with any individual Society, nor do we intend to affiliate with any particular Society. We are for the benefit of all Societies in Australasia and the Little Theatre Movement, in general.

The Editor.

### STUDIO WORK in the LITTLE THEATRE.

A LITTLE THEATRE organisation is presumably formed for the purpose of the study of all aspects of the drama, from the construction of plays to their presentation to the public. While the factor of entertainment value cannot be disregarded, the essential idea behind the Little Theatre is a development of an intellectual appreciation of the art of the Theatre. This cannot be brought about except by the most intense study of all the problems associated with the presentation upon the stage of living pictures of situations, emotions and reactions which "hold up the mirror to life".

The amount of work necessary to satisfactorily present even the simplest sketch cannot be realised by those who only know the theatre from the auditorium. First, a suitable play must be chosen, taking into consideration the limitations of settings, lighting and effects, the idiosyncrasies of the probable audience and the capabilities of the available actors. The producer must then read the play and determine how the ideas of the author may be interpreted. If he is lucky his caste will assimilate his ideas promptly and learn their lines without delay so that rehearsals may be carried on without books and movements worked out smoothly. Meanwhile a plan of the setting must be prepared, so that carpenter and electrician may do their work; all perhaps for a fifteen-minute play. In these things the benefit of Studio work is of great assistance.

Studio work, in its widest application, may be taken to include the abstract study of the drama, play-readings, lectures, design and construction of settings and costumes, stage-lighting, scene-painting, stage-carpentry, and the extremely important study and practice of acting. A course of voice production and diction is all very well, but the technique of acting can only be acquired by hard and intelligent practice under the direction of an experienced hand. One of the greatest English actor-managers is reported to have said that the technique should be thoroughly learned and quickly forgotten. There is not the slightest doubt that unless an actor has a thorough knowledge of technique his successful presentation of roles will be very limited. Even in the modern realistic style of acting an actor must give a representation of a personality essentially different from his own, and as in all the arts a convincing representation calls for technical knowledge on the part of the executant.

It is in the acquiring of technique that the studio activities are of such importance in the Little Theatre, and the regular production of one-act plays is of the utmost assistance in this regard. Until about the last decade the one-act play was seldom used except as a curtain-raiser to a shortish full length production. To-day, however, many programmes of one-act plays are performed in Little Theatres, sometimes in conjunction with other items, such as classical or acrobatic dancing, musical items, or lectures. Mr. Winchester Ford was the first to realise the

value of a programme of one-act plays in the Little Theatre and for the past ten years has given the greater part of his spare time to the development of the idea.

A programme of one-act plays is particularly suitable to the needs of a Little Theatre group with the courage to experiment. By careful selection from the large number available it is possible to give a note of variety to the programme, which will offset disappointment if the experiment proves a flop.

The main object of a Little Theatre should be to develop a fuller appreciation of the art of the theatre among the general public, and this end can be best attained by the competent production of good full-length plays continually or at regular intervals. The work entailed in producing full-length plays limits the number presented during the year. The one-act play is, generally, easier to produce, and the work may be divided between three or four producers. Further, a programme of one-act plays will employ many more actors than a full-length play.

This is an important consideration for the best training of dramatic capability is by practice on a stage, and while members may have a tremendous enthusiasm for abstract study most of them desire to put their study into practice. Many would not have an opportunity of doing so in a full-length play intended for public presentation if they had not gained experience in small parts in one-act plays.

A very large number of members of Little Theatre groups are anxious to take an active part in

productions, and if they are not accommodated are likely to lose interest and drift away. The Studio Evening of one-act plays provides opportunity for many and is of a more intimate nature between audience and players than the more formal public functions; for the audience, to a large extent, is composed of members and friends of players.

The infinite variety of one-act plays available makes possible work of the most interesting character in theatrical presentation, from call-boy to producer. "Practice makes perfect" may perhaps be too much of a generalisation when applied to stage work, for only few are capable of perfection, but it is true that practice of one-act plays in Studio Evenings is of the greatest value.

The other divisions of studio work are also of extreme importance from the cultural point of view. The abstract study of the literature of the drama cannot fail to be of benefit, when such study is undertaken by a small group of members among whom a full and free discussion may be enjoyed. The public reading of plays by members, each reading a character, also has definite value. Such readings may take the form of "walking rehearsals". Or the readers may be seated, rising to indicate their entrance and sitting to indicate an exit. Lectures; the study of settings, costumes, lighting and stage-mechanics, are all part of Studio work and their correct study must largely influence the value of public performances.

W. W.

**HOBART REPERTORY THEATRE.****"Juno and the Paycock."**

THE Hobart Repertory Theatre Society has in rehearsal Sean O'Casey's tragedy, "Juno and the Paycock", which will be produced at the Theatre Royal during September. A particularly strong cast, includes Dagmar Goddard, as Juno; Frederick Brough as Captain Boyle; petite Beattie Jordan, as Mary; Robert Hudspeth, as Joxer Daly; and Mrs. N. P. Booth, as Maisie Madigan. The production is in the experienced hands of Frederick Brough, who will also be responsible for the last effort of the season, "Mr. Faintheart", by Ian Hay. This will be in the way of light refreshment after the heart-stirring, thought-provoking work of Sean O'Casey.

Hobart players are sadly in need of a permanent home where their plays could be produced on schedule time. At present the Society is dependant on the fluctuating chance of the theatre being vacant when plays are ready for presentation.

**ANOTHER LITTLE THEATRE STORY.**

We were playing "As You Like It" at St. James' Hall. I was "Corin" -- the old shepard. Rosalind gave the cue: "Here come two people, a young man and an old." Nothing happened, so she repeated the line. Then the "young man" entered slowly, as if suffering from gout. Unfortunately the "old man" was still in the dressing-room, not knowing how close his cue was.

The stairs of the hall are very narrow. Prompt and producer came down them for me; I started to go

up in haste, wearing my wig back to front. Of course, there was no room for me to pass, so I had to wait while they turned round and ran back. Flurried at keeping the stage waiting, I ran on quickly; then remembered I was supposed to be an old man, so started to hobble. The house roared, and I was quite pleased at the applause that greeted me-- But was it deserved?

Paul Johnstone.

**EFFTEE FILMS £250 PLAY.**

THE conditions governing this Competition are as follows:

(1.) The Judges for the Competition are; Professor Osborne, of the Melbourne University; Mr. Gregan McMahon, producer at the Garrick Theatre; and Mr. Bernard Cronin, President of the Society of Australian Authors. (2.) Manuscripts must be typed and forwarded to Efftee Films before December 1, 1933. (3.) The Competition is open to any person who has been resident in Australia for a period of six months. (4.) The play must be non-musical; but there are no restrictions as to the location of settings. (5.) The play, in the opinion of the Judges, must be of sufficient merit to justify its commercial production on stage or screen. (6.) Efftee Films have the right to the first refusal of any play submitted, either for stage or screen production. (7.) In addition to the prize of £250 the usual royalties as between producer and author will be paid for stage production only. (8.) The stage play must be of 2¼ hours duration. (9.) The author's complete copyright becomes the property of Efftee Films.

### A FIRST APPEARANCE. Tha Terrible Last Minute.

THE excitement of dressing and making-up had taken thought from the ordeal that lay before me--up those few steps and out on the stage, before the audience in the theatre. A final look in the glass; a touch here and there on costume and make-up; and I turned to the door.

Would that bell never sound--that bell that was to summon me to face my first audience! I had hurried over my dressing, believing I was late--and now I was waiting! The little clock on the dressing-table ticked loudly, almost scornfully, at me, in the silence of the room. When WOULD that bell sound?

Was THAT the bell? It sounded so strange and indistinct; not at all like it did on the night of the dress-rehearsal. Yes, it was the bell; and I tried to move forward. Something held me fast to where I stood. For a second I gasped; then, making a big effort, I grasped the door-handle.

The passage leading to the wings looked strange and forbidding--and yet during the past month I had traversed it many, many times. Gathering my courage, I moved forward. I came to the steps, and could hardly lift foot to them. Only by supreme will-power I forced myself up them, draggingly.

I found myself in the wings, looking on to the stage. The curtain was down but I could hear a multitude of voices beyond it. The orchestra instruments sounded strangely distinct and individual.

Suddenly there came a silence, followed by a creaking of pulleys. People appeared on the sec-

tion of stage before me. I heard familiar words--phrases I had heard again again during the past weeks. Someone pushed me gently and I moved forward. I knew that I had heard my cue, but--what had I to do? My mind was a blank!

All about me were lights; blinding, blazing lights. They came from overhead, before me, beside me; flooding me, dazzling me, overwhelming me.

Someone spoke to me loudly, insistently. I knew I had to answer. Then a voice answered; it sounded from close beside me. Again came the loud voice--to be immediately answered in the words of the play. I moved, gesticulating. Dimly I understood something was happening--something I knew well, and in which I had a part. But, it was not myself who moved and spoke--some strange, intangible power was using my limbs and voice. I had no power to resist.

Suddenly some cloud lifted from my mind. I understood. I was speaking, moving. I was of the play--speaking the words, making the motions I had learned. The maze that had enveloped me cleared and I recognised familiar faces around me. They were smiling encouragingly--a man up-stage moved his hands, in silent applause.

I was thrilled--interested! The lights lost their harsh glare; I could see faces beyond the footlights, and they were kindly. I was acting--ACTING! Words came easily. I moved as if I trod on air! Forgotten were the pains and terrors of those awful first seconds.

J.O.Y.



**JUNIOR THEATRE LEAGUE.**  
**Performance of Prize Plays,**  
**Second Annual Drama Contest.**

FOR weeks prior to the performance of the winning plays at St. James' Hall, Sydney, Judges had been viewing plays in the Junior Theatre League's Second Annual Drama Contest. The decisions were as follows:

Section (girls): "Back to the College", (produced by Miss M. Head). Section B (boys): "The Monkey's Paw", (produced by the players). Section C (mixed groups): "Mary Queen of Scots" (Miss G. Johns). Section D (school groups): "The Toy Shop" (Miss Rosalie Collins). Section D (Dickens plays): Mrs. Corney's Tea-party" (Miss Margaret Jonson). Section F (Australian plays): "The Storm" (Sumner Locke-Elliott). Section G (musical plays): "The Magic Wood" (Miss Mollie Kirwan). Section H (10 years and under): "Catherine Parr" (Brunton Gibbs).

During the interval Dr. George Mackaness, and the Assistant Under-Secretary for Education (Mr. Hicks), who presented the prizes, congratulated the winners and the League on the success of the Competition. Miss Vinia de Luitte, who recently became a patron of the League, made an impromptu "first appearance" and spoke warmly of the League's work.

Interest centres on the plays produced, in reference to the League's objects. In nearly every case they were marred by long speeches. To the audience, every character appeared to have a long speech with which to answer long speech--true conversational dialogue was almost entirely lacking. Time and again modern dramatists have insisted

laid down the rule that the modern play progresses on short, crisp, witty dialogue--one authority declaring that dialogue should rarely exceed twelve words at a time. This is a point worthy of the League's thoughts.

How wearisome long speeches become, unless uttered by a dramatic orator, is shown in "The Storm", written and produced by Sumner Locke-Elliott, a boy of fifteen years.

In this play is much thought, excited by an intelligent imagination. There are tense situations, very well conceived--but the situations are spoilt by the wait caused by the actor's unnaturally long sentences. Time and again good work failed to get over, for want of some closely pruned, virile dialogue. In fact, the play tended to become "words" not "acting".

Master Sumner Locke-Elliott has shown in "The Storm" that he has good dramatic sense. A careful study of the leading modern writers--and a grounding in stage craft possibilities and limitations--should enable him to produce something really worthwhile.

The enthusiasm of the actors was decidedly refreshing and did much to make for the performance's success. Many of them were really "acting"--lost to stage and audience; really living the characters portrayed.

It is reasonable to suggest that the leaders of our Little Theatres take some interest in, and keep a watchful eye, on this nursery of dramatic art. On the stage at this performance were "juniors" who with more experience would make some of our L.T. actors look to their laurels.



**THE SYDNEY PLAYERS' CLUB.****Fifth Studio Evening.**

FIVE one-act plays, all of them written, produced and acted by members of the Club, comprised the programme of the Fifth Studio Evening of the Sydney Players' Club for the current year, held at St. James' Hall, on Thursday, 10th August, 1933. All five plays were very well received by the large audience.

"Enchanted Heights", written and produced by Winchester Ford deals with a romantic couple who plan a holiday at Palm Beach. Instead of the chaperon there arrives a strange man who claims the house has been let to him. At the opportune moment the stranger discloses that he is a detective and arrests the masquerading Don Juan. The play was well produced and held interest, although the dialogue was at times pedantic and unnatural. The caste was Betty Hickey, Wilfred Blacket and Arthur O'Keefe.

"Talk of the Devil", written and produced by Mac Luker, pictured a small-town dramatic society. The dialogue was short, snappy and witty, keeping the audience well amused. The caste comprised Beatrice Wines, Jess Arneman, Trixie Gore, Winsome Way, Marjorie Cumberland, Nora Assheton and Wilfred Blacket.

"Second Rhapsody", written and produced by Ellen D. Cusack, had a rather unusual setting, suggesting the back view of a theatre box. The play deals with the eternal triangle: the woman, the man she should have married, and the husband. Through the end of the play winds the strains of the Second Rhapsody---delightfully played off-stage by Mr. S. Bret-

nall. The authoress, Jack Saul and Gordon Forsaythe comprised the caste.

"Dayspring Mishandled", written by Mrs. Alan Clunies-Ross and produced by S. R. Irving, showed the lengths to which a mother might go to save her son from the nerve-shattering experiences of modern warfare. The story deals with the "next war", and the mother adopts an efficient means to render her son "unfit for service". The caste of the play was Doris Williams, Mary Hickey, Margaret Wailes, Olive Collins, Winifred Wragge, Arthur O'Keefe, Horace Salier and Harry Godolphin.

"It Never Rains but....", written by Myrna Dickey and produced by William Craufurd recounts the experiences of a young male visitor in a country town. He attracts the attentions of certain ladies who make flattering overtures to him, which result in really comical situations. Then the young man's wife arrives on the scene, to make up their quarrel. The first scene, with the slavey is hilariously funny, but a little pruning would improve later scenes. The caste was: Wendy Woolfrey, Joyce McTavish, Viola Wilding, Joyce Cooper, Kathleen Dickey, and Jack Appleton.

Special praise is due to the stage-crew, under the direction of Jack Appleton, for erecting and changing the settings with admirable efficiency and despatch, and the smooth-working control of lighting and stage effects.

**FOUR ARTS THEATRE.**  
**"The Love Scent."**

LOVE is said to be sublime, but when it comes out of a bottle--it is Farce: and farce "The Love Scent", produced by Paul Furniss and Althea Glasby for the above Theatre on August 30, 1933, at the Emerson Hall, Sydney, certainly was.

A word of praise must be given to the author, Paul Furniss. The play, while on rather unoriginal lines, went with a swing and gave delight to a large audience. In brief, Terance Sweetlamb, an African explorer, brings to his aunts' school for young ladies certain native curiosities, among which is a phial of love-scent. The quality of the scent is that whoever uses it will fall in love with the first member of the opposite sex seen afterwards. Mistresses, pupils, visitors and servants yield to curiosity, and the result is comical. Sundown puts a period to the scent's powers--and the play. The honors of the evening went to Agnes Paulton (Sophia Sweetlamb), and she was ably supported by Ida Caunter (Miss Lavinia, her sister). They were the pivot on which the play turns, and ably accomplished their task. Special mention should be made of Essie Davis (Maud Emily, the maid). She played excellently and with due restraint a part which could have been badly over-acted. Her big fault was in speaking and looking continually at the audience instead of at the actor she was addressing.

John L. Davis (Basil Mogoridge, a dancing teacher) did not appear in good characterisation. Made up, and acting, like a super-lac-

kadassical foreigner, he greatly over-acted, and for periods was indistinct. Althea Glasby (Pheoby Sweetlamb, the niece) kept the play moving at an exciting rate while on the stage. A little more restraint would have decidedly improved her performance--yet she well satisfied her audience.

Marjorie Scott (Irene Ware), Joan Brenton (Claudel Blair), Mary Holmes (Nita Ray) and Joan Wilson (Dulcy Delaine) were the school-boarders, and well staged their parts. Paul Furniss (Terence Sweetlamb) played well but with rather too rapid a delivery. Little Theatre actors have a decided tendency to hurry lines, apparently forgetting that the audience is not acquainted with plot and has to learn as action and lines progress. Apparently they infect professionals who play with them with this fault.

Wal. Gentle (Gerald Milgate, Terence's friend) was not convincing, mainly owing to not infusing strength and certainty into the character. Albert Hine (Sam Hopkins, the gardener) played his small part competently; and May Bailey was satisfactory, although inclined to be colorless.

The Four Arts Theatre is to be congratulated on a distinct advance, compared with their previous presentation, on July 21 last.

**ON MAKE-UP.**

WOULD it not be to the advantage of actors and presentations if scrutiny of make-up was made from various angles? Some side-views, especially with false hair, are like nothing on earth!

### THE REPERTORY CLUB (Inc.), PERTH, W.A.

ON August 3 we gave our opening programme in our new Theatre and the occasion proved resoundingly successful from every point of view. The audience appreciated the comfort and intimacy of the accommodation and found the programme interesting above the average, and the acting on a high level.

We played four one-act plays, which combined to make up the best selection we have yet achieved. The first: "Enter Melpomene", by Albert Kornweibel, a West Australian writer, is a vivid little drama in the life of a violinist who receives the news of his wife's love for his accompanist in the middle of the concert which is to establish his reputation. If the author can extend the range of his writing and retain its compactness, his future work will prove most interesting.

"When the Whirlwind Blows", by Essex Dane, is a tense play, full of character, involving three women--aristocrat, servant and peasant--in a country in a state of revolution. If the general idea of the play is not out of the ordinary, the details are original and the action exciting.

The finest play of the evening was "Symphony in Illusion", by J. W. Bell. This is in a modern convention traversing all the emotions, through bright chat to deeply moving poetry, yet retaining unity and power throughout. The production, with fine lighting effects, achieved a note of real distinction, and deservedly enthusiastic applause.

The last play presented was one

of Schnitzler's sparkling Anatol plays: "The Farewell Supper". It's bright, continental wit made a good, contrasting finale for the evening.

The difficulty of selecting suitable one-act plays is so great, and we often find our audiences points of view so varied, that the success of this programme may be of interest to other Little Theatres. All the plays have high merit, and "Symphony in Illusion" is a splendid test for amateurs who are ambitious to attempt something well above the average in interest.

### CASTING.

IF opportunity were given to Little Theatre producers and casting committees to watch and listen to the debates in professional offices on the selection of castes, Little Theatre presentations would improve fifty per cent. At the same time it is possible many world-wide reputations would suffer.

In his script, and conversations, the author fills in the personality of characters that are not indicated by the lines. And, contrary to the opinions of many L.T. producers he is listened to with grave consideration. In the choice of two "possibles" he usually has the final say.

Too many L.T. productions, are ruined by unsuitable castes. It is impossible for a L.T. actor to devote the time to characterisation his professional comrade may; nor has he the technique. It is therefore necessary, in L.T. casting to fit actor to character as closely as possible. This is a matter deserving attention.

**EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE.****Sixth Studio Evening.**

THE Experimental Theatre, composed of students and directors of The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, held their sixth Studio Evening on August 2 at their Private Theatre, 355, George Street, Sydney. A large audience of guests thoroughly enjoyed a lengthly and interesting programme.

The proceedings opened with a sketch entitled, "The Old Lady Shows her Muddles". A vein of real comedy lies in Mrs. Parrish's attempts to talk modern slang to her son's fiancee. The caste was: Isabella Nazzari, Patricia Nall, W. J. Stapleton and David Yarroll.

The "Negro Spirituals", sung by Miss Therese Desmond, accompanied by Miss N. Ranclaude, was the attractive feature of the evening. There is very much a "wrong way" of singing these spirituals, and we have had to bear often with this wrong way in Australia. Miss Desmond has found that low, crooning, undercurrent of voice that makes these melodies so popular in old Virginia, and, in fact, throughout America.

"Playgoers", by Sir Arthur Pinero, was the second dramatic item of the evening. The Mistress decides that her household staff must have amusement, and plans for them an evening at the theatre. How the news is received by the staff makes delightful witnessing. The caste was: Eileen Devir, Muriel Dains, Pauline Budge, Barbara Young, Doris Wood, Frances Barclay, Dominic Harnett and W. J. Stapleton.

Two short scenes from "Monsieur Beaucaire" followed the interval. These were delightfully staged

and well acted. The caste was: Audrey Schinnick, Shirley Hatton, Rosemary Needham, Jean Brodziak, Frank Stuart, Edward Howell, E. H. Dean, C. E. Street, Dominic Harnett, R. Cupples and A. Watson.

Next followed an exhibition of Tap-Dancing by Misses Alix Lamb and Mary Mansfield. The dancers gave a very fine exhibition, showing excellent training. The audience showed that they appreciated this turn greatly.

The programme concluded with a sketch entitled "The Sponge". This gave Miss Desmond great opportunities, of which she availed herself to the full. The caste supporting Miss Desmond was: Helen Dale, Bessie Nerea, Dominic Harnett and Edward Howell.

The production was in the very capable hands of Miss Desmond, assisted by Miss Agnes Duncan and Mr. Frank Stuart.

The pupils showed careful and painstaking tuition and it was almost unbelievable that to quite a number this was a first appearance before footlights. The judge's decision on the pupils' ability placed Miss Frances Barclay first, Miss Barbara Young second and Miss Eileen Devir third.

**The Little Theatre Magazine.**

In regard to the many rumors lately current regarding the ownership of The Little Theatre Magazine, I emphatically state that I am sole owner and that I have appointed Miss Noela Marienthal editor. No person has title to represent the Magazine unless bearing our d written authority. The Magazine is not connecte with any one L.T. organisation.

Aidan de Brune.

## THE SYDNEY PLAYERS' CLUB.

### "When the Crash Comes."

WHEN the curtain fell on the last scene of "When the Crash Comes", presented by The Sydney Players' Club at St. James' Hall, Sydney, on September 9, one wondered. Had a great play been witnessed? Reflection, on the way home, decided that Beverley Nichols had failed--there was a sense of indecision over scenes and characters, detracting from value.

The play is evidently a sly dig at the English propensity for "Compromise". We are shown England at the beginning of a parliamentary revolution--the Communists undecided how to use their unexpected success; the old aristocracy bewildered at the instability of all they held impregnable. A wonderful beginning for a "big" play. Beverley Nichol tried to solve his problem with satire--and compromised.

The play is interesting, containing witty and smart dialogue. The production is good; very creditable to William Craufuird. One or two of the groupings in Maxwell's death scene could be improved, but the general effects were excellent.

In the play, one character stood out prominently--that of Mrs. Maxwell (Nija Firth). This study is one of the best witnessed on Sydney's Little Theatre stage for a long time. So strong is this character that one wonders how the author missed seeing how Mrs. Maxwell could "steal" so much strength from the central figure--James Maxwell. In make-up, discreet action and studied restraint Miss Firth gave a notable performance.

James Maxwell, played by Wil-

fred Blacket, is the storm centre of the play. The "advanced" agitator who has suddenly attained power, firm that nothing shall stand before his ideals, yet not sure how those ideals can be attained, and bewildered by the indecisions of those he tries to lead. Mr. Blacket gave a clever study, well thought out and capably rendered. The quarrel scene between him and Celia, across the dinner-table was played with admirable restraint, where one false step would have made farce, by both actors.

Beatrice Wines, playing Lady Poole, gave an excellent rendering of the bewildered aristocrat faced with the upheaval of all she believes stable. Her scenes with Mrs. Maxwell were subdued, but full of power. In these scenes Miss Wines deserves credit for the manner in which she played to her opposite actor.

Myrna Dickey gave a good study of Ivy Maxwell, a cockney girl, defiant of all she did not understand, quick to resent apparent superiority. Her delivery was fast at times, but she retained good control of her scenes.

Muriel Steinbeck played an excellent Celia Poole, extracting everything possible from a rather unsympathetically-drawn character. Her scenes were well rendered.

Jack Needham, as Hon: Robert Poole, was not convincing. A lot more restraint and aloofness would have improved his characterisation. The same must be said of Harry Godolphin's rendering of Captain Vernon Ash. He was certainly not definite enough for a guardsman, and not bewildered enough for an aristocrat with his order tumbling to pieces. Horace Salier made a creditable butler.

**A.M.P. SOCIETY  
MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC CLUB.  
"After Hours."**

ON August 29 and 30 the A.M.P. Musical and Dramatic Club presented a Revue entitled, "After Hours" to a packed house at St. James' Hall, Sydney.

The Revue was produced by Mr. Edward Howell, musical and ballet numbers being arranged by Miss Kitty Schroder.

The opening item was entitled "A Geisha's Life", Beatrice Gerdes playing the part of Mimosa. Possessing a nice voice, Miss Gerdes handicapped herself with nervousness. The geisha chorus was excellent, and the number very pretty.

"Russian Ballet" followed and was well performed in the main, some dancers falling out of step. This item could well have been longer.

A sketch, "His Wives", was the third item. The sketch, itself, was good, but the actors variable. Of them, Joyce Browne and Ralph Lane were easily the best.

"The Dude's Chorus" suffered one fatal defect--the members were mainly out of tune. It was followed by "The Shawl Ballet"; certainly one of the prettiest and most attractive items of the Revue.

Another sketch, "Out of the Ether", followed. This was somewhat novel, and would have proved a "star" turn had the spot-light displayed fewer vagarities. Laurence King was easily the best of this group of performers.

"A Spanish Interlude" preceded the interval. In this Joan McWilliam played the part of Frasquita, with a chorus of señoritas and senors. Miss McWilliam pos-

sesses a light, pleasing voice, and acted prettily. Her efforts could not save the scena from the blunderings of her chorus, who appeared to be giving more attention to the audience than their work.

The second part of the Revue opened with one of the prettiest turns of the programme entitled, "An Evening in Caroline". This item was well-staged. Elizabeth Kerr made a decided hit with her part of Virginia.

"High Jinks" was good and pleased the audience mightily. The one objection found with it was that it was too short. It was followed by a sketch, "Muddlin' Thru". The sketch was decidedly clever but the acting was not quite up to the mark.

The "Black and White Ballet" followed and proved good. The succeeding sketch, "The Celebrated case of the Diamond Necklace", was not good. The story of the playlet is weak and the acting did not redeem it.

Special praise must be given to little Patricia Pye for her Drum Major in "The Parade of Toy Soldiers", finishing the Review. This item was interesting and made a good climax.

A word of praise is due to the orchestra, consisting of Miss E. M. M. Kendall, and Messrs R. Wilkinson and R. Orchard. They had a strenuous evening's work and contributed greatly to the success of the programme.

J.

### CANTERBURY REPERTORY THEATRE SOCIETY (Inc.).

THE Hon: Secretary, Canterbury Repertory Theatre Society (Inc.) Christchurch, N.Z., writes under date September 7, 1933:

"I am desired by my Committee to express to you their thanks for your kindness in sending copies of your magazine. They congratulate you upon your enterprise and hope that you will be well supported. . . .

"You are no doubt aware that the Little Theatre movement is making great headway in New Zealand. This Society has been in existence for nearly five years and has 625 members. We have just staged 'Socrates', by Clifford Bax, and though we were doubtful as to probable box-office results (our revenue is derived to a considerable extent from the public) we had full houses for each of the three performances. Of course, Professor Shelley (our first subscriber to your paper) was a great draw in the name part. He is a marvellous actor, with a great reputation all over New Zealand. The settings, designed and also to a great extent made by him, were wonderful.

"Our two remaining productions for this year are 'The Return of the Prodigal', by St. John Hankin, and 'Yellow Jacket', by George Hazelton and Benremor."

(We thank the C.R.T.S. for the good wishes conveyed in the above letter, and also for the very handsome list of subscriptions enclosed. We trust to hear often from our New Zealand friends with details of their work. We heartily reciprocate their good wishes for success.--Ed. L.T.M.)

### THE P.J. PLAYERS.

THE next production of this Society will be "A Knight in Love", to be produced at Emerson Hall on October 12. The play is an American comedy and the cast will include George Carden, Sheila Macdougall, Irene Beattie, Enid Youngman, Gwen Griffiths, Myra Nettelbech, Tom Lowe, Paul Johnstone, Geof. Cole and others.

Paul Johnstone is arranging to hold a big Revue in November, in aid of charity. Mr. Johnstone has had much experience in this line of work. The Company will be greatly enlarged, to include ballet show girls, comedians, sketch artists, &c. Anyone interested is advised to get in touch with Mr. Johnstone.

### "DUELS OF ALL AGES."

At the Savoy Theatre on December 6 and 7 The Experimental Theatre, under Mr. Edward Howell and Miss Therese Desmond, will produce "Duels of All Ages". The book of the feature has been written by Mr. Edward Howell, in collaboration with Mr. Frank Stuart, director of the Swords Club, who will also direct the expert side of the production. The feature will be divided into ten episodes, showing duels from 100 B.C to the present day.

### A Correction.

We regret that in the review of "Tobias and the Angel" (August issue) by the Sydney Players' Club the names of Edward Cavill and Jack Saul were inadvertently transposed. Edward Cavill played Tobit and Jack Saul Tobias.



**THE FEMINIST CLUB.****Plays by Students of  
The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.**

A Musical and Dramatic soiree was presented on September 14 at the Feminist Club, by Miss Alice Prowse and Miss Therese Desmond.

The programme opened with a group of duets from Grand Opera, with a running commentary by Miss Lute Drummond. The singers were Miss Jean Drummond, Miss Alice Prowse and Mr. Charles Nicis. They are to be complimented on their rendering of items by Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini.

The second half of the programme was in the form of two one-act plays by students of The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, assisted by the Directors, Miss Therese Desmond and Mr. Edward Howell.

Unfortunately the stage lighting was much against the players, and they could see more of the audience than the audience could see of them.

The first play, "The Sponge", tells of the selfishness of a great prima donna, and in this character Miss Therese Desmond gave an example of the fine acting of which she is capable. Mr. Dominic Harnett, as Ralph, was a little undecided, while the parts of Katherine and Bettina were well played by the Misses Helen Dale and Bessie Nerea respectively. Mr. Edward Howell, as Alfredo, gave a fine interpretation of a vague musician.

The second play, "The Playgoers" was well acted by the whole caste. Mr. Dominic Harnett and Miss Eileen Devir gave good interpretations of The Master and The Mistress who wanted to give their servants a treat but did not know just how to go about it.

Miss Devir would greatly improve her study by speaking slower; she would be less difficult for the audience to follow and would gain in flexibility. The servants were rather an unusual lot, and Miss Muriel Dains, as Cook, and Miss Doris Wood, as Housemaid, did very good work; Miss Barbara Young, as Parlormaid, was excellent. Miss Noela Marienthal, as Kitchenmaid, was a poor, squashed little thing, and Miss Frances Barclay, as Useful Maid, gave a good interpretation of a run-down, hysterical type. The Odd-Man, played by Mr. Edward Howell, was the only one who remained faithful to the end.

J.

**AUSTRALIAN PLAYS****To be Let, on Royalty.**

THE following plays can be obtained for performance, on payment of royalty to the author's society. The editor accepts no responsibility whatever.

Abbreviations: m, minutes; M, male; F, female; c, comedy; d, drama; f, farce.

Experimental Theatre, 355, George St., Sydney:

By Edward Howell:--

"Bondage" (30m, d, 3F, 1M.)

"Exchange" (20m, c, 1M.)

"An Interview" (15m, c, 2M, 1F.)

"The Dill Pickle" (20m, cd, 2F, 1M.)

Australian Theatre Society, 183, O'Sullivan Road, Rose Bay, N.S.W:

By Dulcie Deamer:--

"In The Mind of a Child" (10m, d, 3M, 3F.)

"In the Heart of a Woman" (10m, d, 1M, 4F.)

"In the Soul of a Man" (10m, d, 5M, 3F.)

(continued on next page)

**THE LITTLE THEATRE MYSTERY.**

by Aidan de Brune.

## Chapter 11.

Detective Robert Bronson bent over the prone man lying before the footlights of The Little Theatre. He had been in the audience at the time the shot was fired, and had immediately run round on to the stage. A moment's examination of the man and he straightened himself.

"Is there a doctor in the audience?" he called. Two men stood up. "Will you gentlemen please come on the stage. Ushers, close all doors and let no one in or out. Understand? I am a police officer, and murder has been committed here."

Very slowly he allowed his eyes to wander over the rows of expectant faces lifted to him from the auditorium. Somewhere in that house was the person who had fired the shot; yet, how could that be? How could anyone, surrounded on all sides by strangers, aim and fire revolver or automatic?

"What message shall I convey to Police Headquarters?" asked a voice at the detective's side. "There is a telephone in the stage-office on O.P. side."

Bronson nodded, appreciatively. Here was someone retaining a level head. He glanced round and recognised George Alton, the juvenile lead.

"Tell them what's happened and to rush the homicide squad here. Tell whoever answers I'm here-- Detective-Inspector Bronson--and that I've taken charge."

Abruptly he turned from the man, facing again the agitated audience.

"I must ask you all to remain

seated, ladies and gentlemen, and to be as quiet as possible. We have murder here and. . . ." He paused significantly. ". . . and from the appearance of the wound I can only conclude the fatal shot came from the audience. . ."

He held up his hand, motioning for silence, as a rustle of comment and uneasiness ran through the house.

"The murderer is in this house. I have not the slightest intention that he shall escape under cover of any confusion. I admit that I am alone and unarmed. I came here for an evening's amusement, and find. . . ." Again he paused, concluding almost in a whisper. ". . . tragedy."

Carefully the keen grey eyes scanned the front rows of the stalls; then lifting quickly, searched the upper portions of the house.

"I ask all ushers to lock the doors they are guarding and to bring the keys to me. You gentlemen," He indicated three men in the audience. "Will go to the left stall's entrance. One of you will pass out to the vestibule; the other two will remain in the house, on guard and will only open to an agreed signal, when the police arrive."

Almost instantly a breathless silence fell on the house. In a few moments a young man walked down to the stage and handed a key to the Inspector. Others followed quickly. Of each usher, as he handed over his keys, the

**Australian Plays (cont.)**

"Easter" (10m, d, 5M, 2F.)

By C. L. Cunnington--

"The Cudgewa Outlaw" (20m, d, 6M, 1F.)

detective asked one question:

"Has anyone left the theatre since the shot was fired, to your knowledge?"

In every instance the reply was in the negative. Holding the keys, Bronson stared at the many faces watching him, much perplexed.

If the ushers were correct, then the murderer was still in the house. But in that theatre were nearly a thousand people. How could he pick out the guilty person?

The weapon! True he could have every person searched. But had the murderer retained the weapon? The auditorium was full of hiding-places. It was impossible to believe the crime was not premeditated. The murderer would have some hiding-place prepared--some place completely disassociated from himself.

He must have the theatre searched, and that before one person left the building. That was a matter of ordinary routine. But for such a search he would require trained men. He would have to wait until the police came. In the meantime he had to keep these people quiet. He shrugged. Almost, he thought, they looked at him as if expecting some startling feats of detective deduction. Well, he must do his best.

"evenin' Bronson." A short, stockily built man strolled down the aisle to the front of the stage. "Got a problem, eh? 'course your edict doesn't apply to the press? The 'Mirror' readers will want to read of this tomorrow morning--and there's only an hour to dead-line."

"Goes for everyone, Kent." The Inspector spoke shortly. I'm

holding everybody for the present. Sorry!"

"But . . . Say, Bronson . . ." The man expostulated. "I . . ."

Again Alton intervened.

"I think we can accommodate the press, Inspector. There is the telephone in the stage-office. You have no objection to these gentlemen communicating with their newspapers by 'phone?"

"Good for you, Alton!" Percival Kent, dramatic critic for the "Mirror" exclaimed. "I'm keen to try my hand on a dinkum murder. A change from writing up these shows."

"Allright!" Bronson laughed. "You can't do much damage with what you know."

"What can you give us?" asked Kent. "You're not holding out on the press, are you?"

"Nothing doing," replied the detective shortly. He turned suddenly. "Say, who locked the stage exits?"

"Andrew Blex." A man standing on prompt side spoke. "He left us directly you ordered all doors to be locked."

Bronson nodded. He looked down at the collection of keys in his hand. Were the stage-door keys among those he held? He did not remember anyone on the stage handing him keys.

"Funny," observed Alton, after a moment's silence. "I saw Blex leave the stage, but I don't remember him returning."

"What's that?" The Inspector spoke sharply. "Where's Mr. Andrew Blex?"

(To be continued.)