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*They laughed when I
sat down at the piano*

—but they were amazed
at the music I played!

We had taken a "Surprise Party" for Aunt's birthday and wanted a sing-song to start the fun. No one could play—and thought I couldn't, either—and chuckled when I offered. But in a minute they were singing lustily to my accompaniments of many new and old-time songs. Soon I had them dancing; a fox-trot, a modern waltz, a one-step. Yet 6 weeks ago I couldn't play a note: that was before I started the quick, easy, PLAY-BY-EAR course with the Niagara School of Music. I've been invited to scores of parties since, so naturally I'm thrilled with what I've learned with so little effort, without tiresome scales and exercises.

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STATE OF THE ENGLISH THEATRE

Repertory Producer's Gloomy View

THE recent arrival from England of Frederick Farley, the newly-appointed producer for the Canterbury Repertory Theatre Society, provided *The Listener* with an opportunity of obtaining a first-hand account of conditions in the English theatrical world since the end of the war. Mr. Farley is a professional actor with considerable experience in both repertory and commercial theatre abroad, and one of the reasons he gave for leaving England at the present time was his dissatisfaction with what he called the disorganisation and lack of unity that exist now in the theatrical profession there.

"During the war the theatre in England, like all the arts, enjoyed a boom," Mr. Farley told *The Listener* in an interview in Wellington last week. "In those days London and provincial theatres were always packed, and there were plays in army camps, factories, hostels, canteens, and air-raid shelters. But although these new audiences are still there to-day, the economic situation of the theatre, always a hopeless muddle at the best of times, has deteriorated alarmingly," he said.

Theatre Monopolies

"Practically all the theatre buildings in London, and most of those in the provinces, are owned and controlled by a few big business syndicates who have established a monopoly which has made any kind of private enterprise virtually impossible. These syndicates are for the most part composed either of business men with no love for or knowledge of the theatre, or of managers

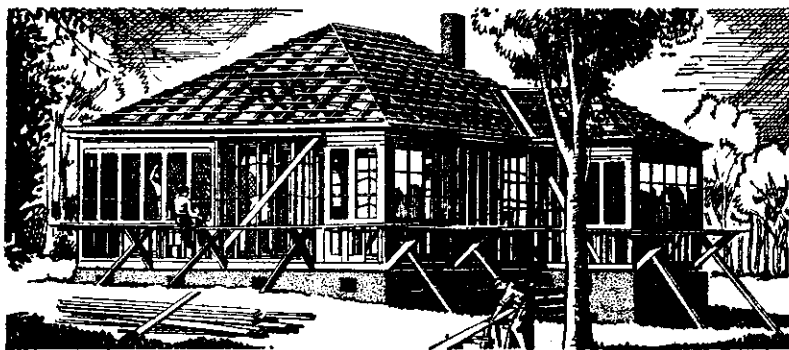


FREDERICK FARLEY
"Permanent companies are the real life of the theatre"

whose main interest is the variety and musical comedy stage. The business men regard their theatres as buildings to be let to the highest bidder, and the musical comedy managers are only interested in producing expensive musical concoctions in execrable taste. And I believe the situation is even worse in America.

"In London before I left they were holding a British Theatre Conference under J. B. Priestley. It lasted for four days, and they were trying to find some

(continued on next page)



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J. B. PRIESTLEY (chairman) addressing the conference, held at Caxton Hall, London, recently, to discuss the problems facing the British Theatre. Over 300 delegates attended

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