

MUSIC, REPERTORY AND DRAMA.

Won Admiration of Critical House

Philip Hargrave Conquers Wellington Audience That Was Present Mainly Out of Curiosity—Repertory Theatre Presents Five Splendid Plays—Plays and Players for N.Z. Soon.

THERE is no doubt that the 12-year-old Philip Hargrave is a remarkable pianist, and from the moment he stepped on to the stage at the Grand Opera House, Wellington, on Saturday evening he completely captivated the audience with his winning, boyish smile. Dressed in white shorts, a short-sleeved silk shirt, white socks and black pumps he was a delightfully refreshing change from the usual stage celebrities. Curiosity, it much be admitted, was the principal reason for the crowded house, but as soon as Master Hargrave had opened the concert with the Bach C Sharp Major prelude, curiosity was immediately changed to admiration. The evenness of tone in this and the fugue which followed was remarkable, and was equally evident in the neat cross-handed work in the A Major Sonata of Scarlatti which was given as an encore. Ardent applause of Beethoven's Sonata in C Sharp Minor brought two encores, the A Major Waltz of Levitski and the Chopin D Major Waltz. In the former waltz, Master Hargrave showed technical ability, but his playing naturally lacked the fire and artistry of a more matured artist such as Levitsky himself. There is little doubt that this fire will come to this brilliant child as the years mark him with experience. Following the interval, were two Schubert numbers, the B Flat Impromptu and the F Minor of the "Moment Musical." The impromptu in particular was excellently rendered and the scale-passages and arpeggios of its variations were played with zestful sparkle. A gavotte by Hoffman was given as an encore. The final items on the programme were all by Chopin, the "Fantasie Impromptu" in C Sharp Minor, the "Berceuse" and the "Harp" study. In the "Berceuse" Master Hargrave reached his greatest height of the evening. It was a magnificent performance and, as all agreed, it would have been worthy of any artist in the world. The final encores were the E Flat Study by Paganini-Liszt, the Brahms A Flat waltz and Liszt's "Forgotten" waltz. The double octaves in the study were played in masterly fashion and to watch this child's hands playing was to realise the true beauty of what hands can portray.

Mr. J. Alexander Browne, the Melbourne baritone, was the assisting artist and gave as his programme numbers the "Prologue" from Leoncavallo's "I Pagliacci," Hageman's "Do Not Go, My Love," and Keel's rousing "To-morrow." His artistic expression of these made a tremendous appeal, and he was recalled to give several popular encore numbers. Mr. Gordon Short accompanied Mr. Browne most effectively.

ONE of the most interesting repertory evenings in Wellington for some time was spent last Friday, when the Wellington Repertory Theatre presented, in the Town Hall Concert Cham-

ber, five one-act plays, produced by members of the society and considered to be the best presented at the monthly social evenings held throughout the year. The plays were: "Mild Oats," a comedy by Noel Coward, produced by Mrs. Vera Horton; "El. and O.E.," a Grand Guignol play by Eliot Crawshaw-Williams, produced by Mrs. Mary Mackenzie; "So This is Paris Green," a Grand Guignol burlesque by Kenyon Nicholson, produced by N. A. Byrne; "The Twelve-Pound Look," by J. M. Barrie, produced by Mrs. John Hastings; and "The Dumb and the Blind," by Harold Chapin, produced by G. H. A. Swan.

The first, "Mild Oats," was attractively, if quietly, played by Ngaire Horton and B. R. O'Brien, the most being made of Noel Coward's witty dia-



OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE.—Mrs. John Hastings, whose performance in the Grand Guignol burlesque, "So This is Paris Green," produced at a Repertory Theatre evening last week in Wellington, was outstanding.

logue. The Grand Guignol play was a notable presentation, the mixture of horror and comedy being admirably sustained by the players, and the climax well contrived; Mr. G. O. Cooper in this play handled an extremely difficult part very well indeed. Especial praise is due to Mr. Norman Byrne for his production of "So This is Paris Green," the clever Grand Guignol burlesque. The effects were achieved with a minimum of stage properties and excellent use of lighting; aided by splendid acting, from Mrs. John Hastings in particular, the play became one of the highlights of the evening.

Barrie's "Twelve-Pound Look" was in marked contrast to the plays which had preceded it, but it was delightfully performed and produced. Mrs. Ina Allan's charming stage man-

ner making it fine entertainment. There is perhaps more to look for in "The Dumb and the Blind," which, incidentally, won the British Drama League Festival in Wellington recently. It is an excellent play—a difficult blend of comedy and pathos, deftly performed; an outstanding cast made this the treat of the evening. Mr. F. G. Hayes-Townes, Miss Coralie Smythson, Miss Edna Purdie and Mr. H. A. Painter all played their parts to perfection. One of the features of the evening was the work of Mr. P. Keesing as stage manager; the five plays presented all demanded very different settings, some of them most elaborate, but the work of changing the scenes was carried out with amazing dispatch.

MOST of the musical societies in Christchurch will give their final recitals and concerts this month. The programme for the Aeolian Club's concert will include some of the vocal and instrumental works of Bach, Haydn, Weber, Chopin, Schumann, Grieg, Jensen, Lane Wilson, Arnold Bax and Hinrichs. Included in the Laurian Club's programme will be a sonata for cello and piano, a pianoforte quartette, piano trios, and a Haydn symphony. Several new numbers will be rendered by the Male Voice Choir and some old favourites by request.

THE Russian Ballet, under the management of J. C. Williamson, Ltd., has opened its Australian season in Brisbane, and a veritable sensation has been aroused by Spessiva, the celebrated star who is the legitimate successor to Pavlova. It has been said of her: "In the vivid and exquisite expression of her art is the spirit of the dance." Spessiva is a striking and beautiful brunette. Her features are finely chiselled, and she is full of life and vitality, with a vivid personality. Seasons in Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand will follow the visit to Brisbane.

"BLUE MOUNTAIN MELODY," the all-Australian musical comedy, which is to be staged at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, by J. C. Williamson Ltd., following the season of "White Horse Inn," will include the biggest collection of stage celebrities ever brought together in one production: Madge Elliott, Cyril Ritchard, Gus Blunn, Leo Franklyn, Frank Leighton, Agnes Doyle, Marie La Varre, Don Nicol, Charles Zoli, Eric Bush, Athol Tier, Arthur Clarke, Lois Green, Mona Potts, Mona Zeppel, the Kelly Trio, George Moon, and others. The play is written by J. C. Bancks, the famous creator of "Ginger Meggs," music and lyrics by Charles Zwar, the young Melbourne composer. It has been produced by Frederick Blackman.