

REPERTORY, MUSIC AND DRAMA.

Outstanding Auckland Production

Auckland Catholic Repertory Society Wins High Praise For Production of "Autumn Fires" — Spanish Comedy in Wellington — Auckland to Have Its Own Repertory Theatre.

THE Auckland Catholic Repertory Society concluded its 1934 season recently with T. C. Murray's powerful study of Irish life and character, "Autumn Fire." Miss Ysolinde McVeagh, the society's talented honorary producer, deserves great credit for her artistic interpretation of one of the most difficult plays ever produced on the Auckland stage, by which she proved conclusively that the great success of "Charles and Mary," the society's last presentation, was no accident. A feature of the production was the amazing character study presented by a new amateur star, Mr. Peter Brennan, who infused power and force into the figure of Owen Keegan, the elderly farmer whose confidence in himself and in his own vitality leads him to ruin four lives by marrying a girl young enough to be his own daughter. Mr. Brennan's acting in the moving climax of the play showed a complete grasp of the essentials of sympathetic interpretation.

SPECIAL praise is also due to Miss

Doreen Saunders, who submerged her own personality completely in the difficult role of Ellen Keegan, a young girl embittered against the world through an early disappointment; to Miss Patsy Penty, who made the paradoxical character of Nance Desmond a tragic portrait which will not be easily forgotten; and to Mr. T. O'Shea, who played the part of the young son, Michel Keegan, torn between loyalty to his father and love for his beautiful step-mother, and infused into the role a rare and pleasing quality of restraint and sympathy. A delightful feature of the whole production was the natural, unaffected brogue of all the characters, which offered a welcome antidote to the atrocious "stage Irish" which is, alas, only too common. The play was performed to capacity houses and has been proclaimed by the Auckland Press as one of the society's most artistic productions.

THERE are six female and six male characters in the Quintero brothers' three-act comedy which is to be presented by the Wellington Repertory Theatre Society in the Concert Chamber this week. The cast is as follows: Currira, Miss M. Murray; Dona Marciala, Miss I. Wilson; Dona Pholmela, Miss H. Miles; Eulalia, Miss J. Dinnison; Carmen Campos, Mrs. S. Tansley; Rosa Campos, Miss K. Aldridge; Papa Juan, Mr. E. S. Baldwin; Trina, Mr. N. A. Byrne; Don Evaristo, Mr. G. W. L. Bullock; Antonon, Mr. V. Evans; Alonso, Mr. H. A. Painter; Manuel, Mr. G. O. Cooper. Mr. W. J. Conroy is responsible for the scenery, Miss Pauline Shotlander has supervised the dressing; the Misses Ailsa Newton and Kathlyn Smith are in charge

of the properties; and Mr. W. J. Johnstone is chief mechanist, with Mr. C. Watson as stage manager. The story of the play, which has been adapted by Mr. and Mrs. Granville Barker, tells of Papa Juan and his family. The former is arranging a party to celebrate his hundredth birthday. Out of this is constructed a picture of humanity, and it is impressed that age often finds redemption in philosophic insight.



IN AMERICA.—Dame Sybil Thorndike, who has been paying her third visit to America, starring in John Van Druten's "The Distaff Side," in New York. Her two previous visits were with the Ben Greet Shakespearean Company in the early 'nineties, and again in 1910 as a member of the cast supporting John Drew in "Smith."

while the fact that the scenes are laid in Spain emphasises the universality of the fundamentals of life. The production, which will be limited to four performances, will be under the direction of Mr. Leo du Chateau.

THE choir of the Christchurch Returned Soldiers' Association presented the second concert for the 1934 season in the Jellicoe Hall last evening. There was a capacity house, and an appreciative audience. During the evening, the Rev. F. T. Read, president of the Christchurch Returned Soldiers' Association, thanked the visiting artists and the audience for their attendance, and referred to the great improvement in the choir under the baton of Mr. Victor C. Peters. It was on occasions such as this, said Mr. Read, that one saw the returned soldier at his best. Rousing choruses and solos made up an attractive programme. Mr. Victor C. Peters was conductor, and the accompanist was Miss Aileen Warren.

THE story of the siege of Babylon and its capture by the Persian, Cyrus, is well known to all Bible students. When such a story is set to inspired music the result is a magnificent oratorio. "Belshazzar," the abridged edition of which is to be sung by the Royal Christchurch Musical Society for the first time in New Zealand on Wednesday, November 21, is one of Handel's masterpieces, containing rousing choruses, melodious solos, and dramatic recitatives. Mr. A. G. Thompson, the conductor of the Royal Christchurch Musical Society, hopes to give a first-class performance, and soloists of outstanding ability have been engaged.

AUCKLAND is to have its own Repertory Theatre, the project being estimated to cost £25,000. Already an option has been obtained over a suitable site in the city, and sketch designs have been prepared for a building that will incorporate all the most modern ideas from data of repertory theatres in Europe and America, while the headquarters of the British Drama League have provided great assistance as well. The auditorium is planned to seat 900, and is like the sector of a circle, the rear seats being lifted to form a gallery. The background for the flat stage is to be in the form of a cyclorama or great concave surface of white plaster curving horizontally on a wide radius. Its main use will be to represent the dome of heaven in outdoor scenes, and under suitable lighting to give the illusion of illimitable space. Special lighting effects will be introduced, allowing the presentation of any form of drama—from Shakespeare to Noel Coward. Dressing-rooms, a greenroom, a coffee-room, and a hall or ballroom in the basement, are also on the plans.

THE big musical production "White Horse Inn" is described as the most spectacular and elaborate ever staged in Australia. It is claimed by J. C. Williamson, Ltd., that "White Horse Inn" also includes the most beautiful stage settings and intricate scenic and lighting effects, as well as the biggest number of artists who have ever appeared in a stage show. Some indication of the scope of the production is given by the fact that there are no fewer than 15 different scenes in the three acts of "White Horse Inn," and 30 musical numbers, dances, and ballets. The golden-voiced Strella Wilson, the popular Australian prima donna, has a splendid role, and the lengthy cast includes Arthur Stigant, Sidney Burchall, Charles Norman, Jack and Sylvia Kellaway, Leslie Victor, Marie Doran, Victor Gouiniet, and others, together with the picturesque troupe of imported Tyrolean dancers.