

TALKING OF TALKIES

Triumph of Singer No One Wanted!

Grace Moore Wasn't Wanted by the Film Companies but Persistence Won Her a role in One of the Finest Talkies Yet Made — "One Night of Love" Given Premiere Screening in Wellington.

TO be quite frank, Grace Moore is a girl with guts. She made a picture several years ago—the story of Jennie Lind's life—but from that time she was given a miss in bank by all the big film companies. But Miss Moore wasn't sitting down and waiting for the talkies to come to her. She made it her duty to find out why she wasn't wanted. The film magnates were brutally truthful; she had a glorious voice, one of the best in the world, but she pulled faces when she sang, her figure wasn't right, nor her face nor her hair.

So she set to work to correct these faults. She sang in front of a mirror until she stopped pulling faces; she dieted, she looked to her face and her hair. Back she went to the studios after two years, a changed woman, but still with the same magnificent voice. But the film magnates were still lukewarm. At last the Columbia company offered to let her play in a film, but she wouldn't receive any salary—just a percentage of the profits. And so was born "One Night of Love," the film that has been such a winner all over the world that the "percentage of profits" is going to leave Miss Moore a wealthy woman.

"One Night of Love" was given its New Zealand premiere at a private screening at the State Theatre, Wellington last Sunday evening. There were hundreds of well-known people there, representing the Government, the Army, the Navy, the musical world and the professions. And seldom has a picture been so enthusiastically received. As Miss Moore's voice died away in her first song, a thunder of applause swept over the audience, and each succeeding number was rapturously received.

There is only one poor thing about the whole picture—its title. Who the night of love belonged to no one seemed to know. It was still posted as missing when the curtain went down on the final scene. However, the title doesn't matter very much, for the picture is so charming and provides such a feast of music that one wouldn't much care if it were labelled "A String of Onions."

Mary Barrett is a New York girl with operatic ambitions. After failing in a singing contest she decided to take her 500 dollars and try her luck in Italy. But Milan can be almost a hard-hearted as New York, and it is not long before the dollars have dwindled away and the necessity for finding a bread-and-butter job arises. The Cafe Romaine wants a singer, so to the cafe Mary goes to do a little singing between spells of waiting at table. Her voice is heard by Monteverdi, Italy's greatest music master, and he invades her dressing room with the offer of teaching. And so for two years she practises assiduously until the time comes for her to make an appearance in a provincial opera house. By this time Monteverdi has gained an almost Svengali-like power over the girl, and she only sings at her best and conquers her nervousness when he is at hand. She triumphs,

and soon she is scheduled to sing in Vienna. But by this time she has acquired all the temperament and pretty tantrums of a full-fledged prima donna, and she upsets the first night by threatening to walk out and marry a young and moneyed American cub. By a piece of skilful strategy she is brought back

Interesting Cables from London

"Iron Duke" is Huge Success: Fay Wray in England

TWO cables of interest were received in Wellington this week. The first, from the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation in London, said: "George Arliss's 'Iron Duke' most sensational success in British film history. Shrewd experts predict even bigger success than 'Rothschild.' Full details following."

The second, also from London, said: "Fay Wray has arrived in London and will play opposite Jack Hulbert in 'Alias Bulldog Drummond' at Shepherd's Bush."

to the opera house and achieves a real triumph in the roles of Carmen. The opening scene of the famous Bizet opera is shown on the screen and Miss Moore's voice has every opportunity of displaying its flexibility and power.

An offer comes from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York and, despite Monteverdi's warning that she is not ready, La Barrettt decides to accept it, a decision prompted by her jealousy of a girl who appears to have a claim on the maestro's affections. She is to appear in "Madame Butterfly," but the opening night finds poor Cho Cho San in poor voice and a bundle of nerves. She is missing her Svengali. Just as she comes down on to the stage she sees him in the prompter's box. Her eyes light up, her courage returns—and she has conquered New York! The cinema audience is treated to two appreciably long excerpts from the opera—the opening scene and the tragic scene when the little Japanese wife awaits the return of Pinkerton.

Of the charm of Miss Moore's voice, manner and appearance, one could write reams. This young woman has been an acknowledged star in the American opera world for some time and she has made many appearances at the Metropolitan Opera House. In "One Night of Love" she has the looks of a girl of 19, and the voice of the finest singer on earth. In the role of the maestro, Monteverdi, is Tullio Carmin-

ati, and he plays his part in a remarkably fine manner. The young and wealthy American who generously steps out of the way when he sees how the wind of love blows, is Lyle Talbot, a young man who should go far in the film world. Australia's Mona Barrie (daughter of Phil Smith, the comedian who was in New Zealand this year with the "Merry Widow" company) has a big part in this picture, and she handles it splendidly.

"One Night of Love" will be screened at the Plaza Theatre, Wellington, in January. It should enjoy a very successful season.

JOE MORRISON, who plays the featured lead in Paramount's forthcoming "Me Without You," and who recently was seen in W. C. Fields's "The Old-Fashioned Way," tried to crash Hollywood three years ago but was unsuccessful.

GERTRUDE MICHAEL, who plays the feminine lead in "The Notorious Sophie Lang," once started and ran a radio station in her home town. She did everything from playing the piano and violin, and singing and announcing, to giving cooking recipes.

MAE WEST is now writing "Now I'm a Lady," which is to be her next starring film.

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