

REPERTORY, MUSIC AND DRAMA

Thriller Produced in Wellington

Excellent Acting Performances in Well-Produced Drama — Nine Bands Provide Entertainment for Charity in Christchurch — Grenadier Guards' Band Well Received.

THE latest production by the Thespians in Wellington, Patrick Hamilton's thriller "Rope," was excellently received by its audiences; one newspaper critic asserting that in comparison with many of the touring theatrical companies which have appeared in Wellington the Thespian production gained all the honours. "Rope" is a thriller, but it is written from a most unusual angle. Briefly, two students at Oxford, feeling bored during their vacation, have decided to bring the principles of Nietzsche on "living dangerously" into practice, and they strangle a young fellow-undergraduate, concealing the body in a chest. Brandon, the leader of the two, believes that they have committed the perfect murder, a motiveless murder, that will never be traced, but his vanity proves his undoing. He invites five of his friends, including the father and aunt of the murdered youth, to have supper, serving the meal from the very chest in which his victim's body is hidden. Unfortunately for him, one of his guests, whose favourite pose is that of the affected intellectual, is far too clever for him, and the crime is discovered.

It is on Brandon that the play eventually must depend for its success; he is practically never off the stage throughout the evening, and he must portray a number of extremely varying emotional moods. If Mr. Carl Watson was not at all ways entirely successful in this, he gave a very clear and understanding interpretation, and made his outrageous action entirely plausible. As Rupert Cadell, Mr. Norman Hannah made a triumphant success, his flippant drawl in the first two acts was perfectly managed, and in the final scene his denunciation was declaimed to excellent effect. Another difficult part fell to Mr. Ralph Hogg, as Granillo, and his convincing breakdown in the third act was a fine piece of acting. The smaller parts were all capably handled, Mr. E. R. Render giving an appealing performance as the father, while Mrs. Joye Taylor's deliberate semi-idiotcy as the murdered student's aunt provided some of the best humour of the evening. Two lightly humorous parts were well done by Miss Marguerite Thompson and Mr. Myles Wright, as the other two guests, and a little gem of characterisation was provided by Mr. Redmond Philips as the French waiter.

The play was given a very effective modern setting, with scenery and furniture designed and constructed by members of the society, while the lighting effects considerably aided the creation of the right atmosphere. The play was produced by Mr. Victor S. Lloyd, who now has a long list of successful Wellington productions to his credit.

THE manner in which various organisations came forward quite voluntarily to assist in the Christchurch Rotary Club's well-known Christmas appeal was particularly gratifying this year, and already success-

ful concerts have been given by the Commercial Travellers' choir and the Royal Christchurch Musical Society.

In addition, nine bands consented to devote the whole of last Sunday afternoon to the club's work. The Woolston Brass Band, Derry's Military Band, the Christchurch Municipal, Stanmore Silver and New Brighton bands, the band of the First Canterbury Regiment Infantry (by kind permission of the officer commanding), and, in addition, the Scottish Society's Pipe Band, the Caledonian Pipe Band and the Christchurch Scottish Pipe Band assembled in the Square at 2 p.m., and marched at short intervals to the hospital grounds.

THE band of the Grenadier Guards, which has received such amazingly enthusiastic welcomes all over Australia

and New Zealand, added another to its list of triumphs when it arrived in Wellington last week. A large crowd lined the route from the station to the Town Hall, and cheered wildly as the bandmen, in their brilliant uniforms and immense bearskins, marched along the streets. Audiences at the concerts have all been delighted at what has proved a revelation in military band music; the perfect tone and balance, whether the band is playing grand opera, Gilbert and Sullivan melodies, stirring marches, or hymns, being especially commented upon. One of the masterpieces of the repertoire is the hymn "Abide With Me," which has been greeted with thunders of applause whenever it has been played. The band is now starting a short tour of the South Island.



GRENADIER GUARDS.—Major George Miller, musical director of the band of the Grenadier Guards, which is at present touring New Zealand.