

## MUSIC, REPERTORY AND DRAMA

# Leading Lady Gets a Broken Nose

Nice, Florio and Lubow, Dancers with Frank Neil Revue Company, Don't Always Land Softly—Charles Florio Keeps an Interesting Scrap-Book—New Zealand Repertory.

NICE, Florio and Lubow, the spectacular American dancers with the Frank Neil Revue Company now touring New Zealand, have thrown each other about on stages in the four corners of the earth—and they smiled slightly when a "Radio Record" representative asked them about the gentle art of being landed on one's face on the stage without getting hurt.

"There's no art about it," said Charles Florio. "Sometimes we get bruised pretty badly—and Miss Lubow has had her nose broken twice. The last time was in Liverpool and we just had to throw a curtain over her and finish the act ourselves."

All the time the young dancer was hurrying into an evening suit, with a celerity that is born only of long practice—the hour was about three p.m. and a matinee was in progress. "Here you are," he said, "cast your eye over our press cuttings while I'm away—" and he tossed a book in my direction. Now, I've looked at books of press cuttings in dressing rooms all over the country, and I've generally found them inexpressibly dull. But Mr. Florio has adopted the principle of putting his own comments beside the newspaper write-up and I found the book as interesting as a prima donna's confessions.

It was begun in Paris and included a snappy programme from the Montmartre Club labelled "Toute la Nuit." The trio then crossed the Channel to the Holborn Empire, London, where they appeared on a variety bill with Jack Hylton. Says Mr. Florio in his comment: "What a push over audience here. Hope all our dates are as good. America, I won't see you for some time." From the Holborn Empire, Nice, Florio and Lubow went on to the Palladium, where "we had our names in lights for the first time—and right next to Jack Hylton's." And then started a tour of the provinces, the scrap-book showing cuttings from papers in Brighton, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and a dozen smaller towns. At the Manchester Hippodrome they were on the same bill as Will Hay, the comedian whose work is known to New Zealanders by his appearance in "Those Were the Days," screened here recently. Of the Manchester visit Mr. Florio writes: "Marvellous audience and marvellous conductor. He should be at the Palladium in London. Rented a cottage and discovered that night that it contained no gas, electricity or heat. I went to bed by candle-light. Was I prehistoric?"

Ireland was the next port of call—the Theatre Royal in Dublin—and Charles Florio says: "Very good band—very good date. Stopped the show every night. The man that wrote the song about 'Ireland Must be Heaven' should be shot for lying. Ever seen the River Liffey? Dirty—and how!" And then back to Paris for a spell,

to Juan-Les-Pins to the Casino there, to Monte Carlo, to the Savoy Hotel in London, and so on to another tour of the provinces.

But in the meantime Frank Neil, of Sydney, had arrived in London on the



**TREAT 'EM ROUGH.**—This seems to be the slogan of all three people pictured above. But it's only part of the game which makes them the outstanding act in the Frank Neil revues now being staged in Wellington. They are Nice, Florio and Lubow, American dancers, and an interview with them appears on this page.

look-out for talent Nice, Florio and Lubow came; they were seen, and Mr. Neil was conquered. He got their signatures on the dotted line, told them about a town named Melbourne that was about to celebrate its centenary—and asked them to pack their bags as soon as possible. And so the trio sailed across half the world to Melbourne, where they opened at the Tivoli in October of last year. And, after a triumphant season in Melbourne, the company moved on to Auckland, where it was the Christmas attraction.

By this time the act was over and the two men came back to the dressing-room. "Here's a painting I did of a bit of Auckland Harbour," said Mr. Nice, producing a very creditable little water colour. "There were two old hulks in the foreground, but I didn't like 'em much, so I left them out."

Miss Lubow came in, too, and sat

on the dressing-room floor. "I like this country of yours," she said. "The people in Melbourne told us that New Zealand audiences were the hardest in the world and I was just about scared stiff by the time we opened in Auckland. But they've been wonderful—I'd like to come back again, quite soon. Yes, we've had a look at a few spots of New Zealand scenery. Had a rush through Rotorua—such a rush, in fact, that I didn't care if the lakes were green, red or purple, or if the colours ran into each other, by the time we had finished being guided around. And, oh, boy! it's a great climate you keep down here."

At the moment Mr. Florio's hobby is gazing at things through a microscope. He's collected a set of very small insects and he's getting quite a kick out of investigating the family life of a woolly aphis. And he's rather keen at the moment on a new record which has Cab Calloway and his band, the Mills Brothers and Don Redman on the one disc. It's hot music of the 100 degrees variety.

**REPERTORY** has been enjoying a lull in New Zealand during the holidays, but the various societies are now getting to work and drawing up the schedules that will carry them through the year. Members of the Wellington Repertory Theatre are hard at work rehearsing "The Laughing Lady," while the Canterbury Repertory Society also has a new play in hand. Smaller societies in the provincial centres are busily laying plans for increasing their memberships.

**YET** another play about Disraeli has been staged in London, "Young Mr. Disraeli," by Miss Elswyth Thane, author of "The Tudor Wench." Mr. Derrick de Marney interpreted the chief character in the first presentation, at the Kingsway Theatre. It is not in the least surprising that the Disraeli character should be perennially attractive as a theme for playwrights, for there is more drama in every ten years of his life than in many even conspicuously eventful lifetimes. The present play deals only with one of the earlier phases. It stops short when Disraeli was 34, still 29 years from Prime Ministership, and still a dazzling, eccentric (and, in some quarters, very much distrusted) young man. The production turned out to be a good attraction.

**MISS GERTRUDE LAWRENCE** has decided that at the moment her film claims are more pressing than her stage claims, and the London run of "Moonlight is Silver," which may be seen later in New Zealand, finished earlier than was expected. The stage on this occasion was forsaken for the filming of the scenario from the world-famous "Vie de Boheme," called "The Latin Quarter." Miss Lawrence is co-starring Douglas Fairbanks, junior.