

REPERTORY, MUSIC AND DRAMA.

A Parade of Passion and Poverty

"The Laughing Woman" A Triumph for Two Talented Wellington Players
—Theatrical Activity in Auckland, Christchurch, Hastings and
Wanganui—Amateurs in "No, No, Nanette"

FROM the clash of passions and temperaments came a love that was as deep, as unreasoning, as strangely beautiful as anything this life might know. And so "The Laughing Woman"—neither parading morality nor immorality—points a way to many cherished virtues; sacrifice, hopefulness, love, honesty. This excellent play of Gordon Daviot's (Miss Macintosh still prefers that name, evidently) was produced last week by the Wellington Repertory Theatre, and it attracted thousands of theatregoers during the season.

Rene Latour is a hopeless kind of fellow—an artist with a temperament like a prima donna and as contrary as the devil. Which might have been all right if he had been a recognised artist. Instead he lived on crusts and sugarless cocoa and went to bed when the weather was cold. Into his life came Ingrid Rydman, a Swedish girl, and a student of philosophy. And now the fire blazed up, consuming everything that stood in its path, forging a love that made the great lovers of history appear as thin pale ghosts.

To whom must one give first praise: to George Swan as Rene Latour, or to Mrs. John Hastings as Ingrid Rydman? They were both magnificent and when they were on the stage everything else, everyone else seemed to fade out of sight. Whether it was in the poverty-stricken Paris garret, in the miserable London tenement, or in the elegant dining-room of Sir Cuthbert Graham's house, these two dominated the scene. Not consciously as actors often will, but with a naivete and charm that forced one's eyes to turn to the leading characters, no matter who else was on the stage.

THE Canterbury Repertory Society started its 1935 season of plays last week-end with the brilliant French comedy, "Dr. Knock." The title role, taken by Mr. W. B. Harris, gave ample opportunity to the promising actor to display his versatility in the various moods and characters which Jules Romaine, the author, had written into the part. Mr. Harris was supported by an exceptionally strong cast which included Misses Nance Alexander, Nonie Enright, Lucy Cowan, Barbara Griffiths, Elsie Waite and Peggy Maffey, and Messrs. T. W. Tothill, C. S. Salter, H. G. Cotterill, Selwyn Davies, C. H. Davies, C. W. Packer-Doust, W. F. Slack and Derek Russell. The production was produced by Miss Kiore King under the direction of Professor Shelley.

UNDER the baton of Mr. Colin Muston, L.R.A.M., the chorus of the Auckland Amateur Operatic Society has re-assembled for rehearsals of "Runaway Girl," a play which gives ample scope for the splendid chorus. The play is scheduled for early production and a particularly strong cast is being chosen to interpret the leading roles. The society this year is commencing operations much earlier than usual. The new chairman is Mr. C. B. Plummer well-known in musical circles in Auckland and a strong committee is giving detailed attention to

other departments of the production. There is a limited number of vacancies for tenors, basses and contraltos. Prompt application should be made to the secretary, W. Laird Thomson, 212a Victoria Arcade, Auckland.

THE Wanganui Amateur Society has now started rehearsals of "No, No, Nanette," which they intend to produce early in June. Mr. Gordon McBeth is conducting and Mrs. Tabor-Gregory, who produced "The Country Girl" and "The Belle of New York" for this society with great success, is again producing this play.

"THE ROSE WITHOUT A THORN," by Clifford Bax, which the Auckland Little Theatre will present as its 38th production and the first of its 1935 season, is considered to be possibly the most ambitious offering yet presented by amateurs in Auckland. Few greater plays have been written about Henry VIII's curiously contradictory character, and many of the scenes reach heights of emotional acting which calls for the resources of a talented cast. The role of Henry VIII will be played by A. J. C. Fisher, who will be remembered for his fine performance as Magnus in "The Apple Cart" last year, and Katheryn Howard will be portrayed by Noni Wright, another of the society's experienced players. Others in the large cast include Norton Hammond (Archbishop Cranmer), Peter Bathurst (Tom Culpeper), J. E. Machle (Sir Thomas Audley), Frederick Gaudin (Lord Hertford), Una Moore (Tilney), Helen Seabrook (Morton), Ann Manning (Anne of Cleves), and Freda Crosher (Mary Lassells). "The Rose Without a Thorn" is under the direction of Frederick McCallum, the society's producer, and will be presented for a season at the Concert Chamber from Saturday, April 6.

FOR the Auckland Playhouse Players 1935 promises to be a year in which the society will undoubtedly make a valuable contribution to the appreciation of the various aspects of dramatic art. Under the sympathetic and expert guidance of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Bailey, at whose studio the society meets, a comprehensive syllabus has been drawn up for the year. Included are proposed readings and productions of the works of representative contemporary dramatists, a number of the classics, and what should be invaluable to all amateurs, discussions of such questions as the Actor and his Art, the Actor and His Material, and the Drama and the Changing World. With a programme such as this, and the wealth of dramatic experience of Mr. and Mrs. Bailey at their command, one can understand the enthusiasm of the members and their determination to make the society a vital force in the dramatic life of Auckland.

A NUMBER of energetic and enthusiastic young Hastings people have banded together under the name of "The Hastings Players," and the initial play is to be presented at the Municipal Theatre there on April 11 and 12 next. It is the aim of The Players to organise one-act play evenings and play readings in the near future. New members are welcomed. Details of the forthcoming play: "A Damsel in Distress," by Ian Hay and P. G. Wodehouse. A sparkling comedy in three acts. Cast: Helen Waugh, Mrs. A. I. Rainbow, Cecily Bell, Margaret Marshall, Mary Rainbow, Mrs. Hugh Baird, Cynthia Jefford, Alex. Rockfort, Mick Clifton, E. E. Rivers, Russell Hobbs, Bill Bain, Ken Bayliss, A. Stanley Warwick, Hugh Baird, Brian Appelby, Hubert Browning, Eric Heaton. Producer: A. Stanley Warwick.



IN WELLINGTON AND AUCKLAND.—Mrs. John Hastings (left) who played the part of Ingrid Rydman in the Wellington Repertory Theatre's production of "The Laughing Woman" last week. Our critic's write-up on the play appears on this page. The other picture is of Miss Helen Seabrook, of Auckland, who is to play the part of Morton in "The Rose Without a Thorn," the first production of the Auckland Little Theatre's 1935 season.