

REPERTORY, MUSIC AND DRAMA.

Sydney Scenery for 'The New Moon'

Invercargill Secures Original Scenery For the Play to be Presented Next Week — "Roberta" Has Gala Opening — Repertory Activity in Three New Zealand Centres.

ONE of the largest productions ever produced by the Invercargill Operatic and Dramatic Society is due for presentation on October 14. That bright musical comedy, "The New Moon," is the choice and the society can confidently look toward one of their best seasons in its forthcoming presentation. For the original production of "The New Moon" at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, the brightest star of the English musical comedy stage, Evelyn Laye, took the part of Mari- anne, and Gene Gerrard had the comedy role of Alexander. Easily the biggest show the society has tackled, there are eleven scenes, and the society has been fortunate in securing the original scenery used in Sydney at His Majesty's Theatre, where the play ran for a year. Incidentally this is the first time "The New Moon" has been produced by amateurs in New Zealand. The society has been very fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Howard Moody as musical director. Mr. Moody recently received a telegram from Messrs. J. C. Williamsons Ltd, requesting him to travel the Dominion with the Ritchard-Elliott Company, an invitation he had to refuse. As well as the very large and excellent cast (published recently in the "Radio Record"), the chorus has been augmented to eighty and the whole performance will be particularly strong musically.

AS producer for the three musical comedies to be played throughout New Zealand, Mr. Cyril Ritchard employs some unorthodox settings. In "Roberta," for instance, he introduces the novelty of velvet—hundreds of yards of it in a luscious blue shade—that forms a perfect background for the kaleidoscopic effect of one scene, and a marvellous frame for the beauty that parades before it. The present season, that opened in Auckland on Wednesday last to a gala house, promises to eclipse even the sensational success of "Blue Roses," "Maid of the Mountains," "Cabaret Girl," "Kalinka," "Katja the Dancer," "Merry Widow," and other Williamson triumphs. The Auckland season will last from October 2 to October 19; New Plymouth, October 21; Wanganui, October 22; Palmerston North, October 23; Hastings, October 24; Masterton, October 25; Wellington, October 26 to November 9; Christchurch, November 11 to 22; Dunedin, November 23 to December 3; Invercargill, December 4 and 5; Timaru, December 6 and 7. After "Roberta" there will be revivals of "Our Miss Gibbs" and "High Jinks," two very tuneful musical plays that have been modernised and accelerated.

THE announcement that Mrs. A. L. Haslam (Valerie Tennant) is to play Portia in the Repertory Society's forthcoming production of "The Merchant of Venice," has been hailed with

delight by lovers of the drama in Christchurch. Mrs. Haslam is a very capable and attractive amateur actress. Her husband was a former Rhodes scholar.

THE selection committee of the Wellington Repertory Theatre has selected "The Late Christopher Bean," a play containing an admixture of comedy, farce and drama, for the next production, which is to be directed by Leo du Chateau and presented in the Concert Chamber at the end of October. The "Late Christopher Bean" is an English adaptation of Rene Fauchois's "Prenez Garde a la Peinture." It was first presented in London at St. James's Theatre, where it drew crowded houses for nearly 15 months. The adaptor, Mr. Emlyn Williams, has made a big reputation for himself in only seven years. After leaving Oxford, where he was in the O.U.D.S., he made his first appearances in such notable plays as "The Silver Tassie," "Tunnel French," "French Leave,"

"The Case of the Frightened Lady," "Wild December," and "Etienne," the latter a delightful comedy from the French which the Wellington Repertory Society has already earmarked. Mr. Williams is also the author of "Night Must Fall," a powerful play which was produced by Miles Malleson at the Duchess Theatre early in the year, with the author in the cast.

THE recent revival of "The Geisha" in Dunedin as well as in Wellington showed that this musical comedy has not suffered any from age. Although portions of the dialogue could be rewritten to provide a much better effect, the music in the play is still as good as ever it was. The high standard of Dunedin's amateur talent was not wasted, large audiences being the rule during the season. A feature of the Dunedin Operatic Club's presentations has been the ballet work, and, as usual, it was of a very high standard in their latest production.

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