

Lily of Killarney

Harison Cook and his company are to present excerpts from Benedict's opera, "The Lily of Killarney," at 2YA on Monday, March 14. These excerpts will include the famous "Cottage Scene," complete with dialogue. Those taking part in the presentation will be: Kathleen Jansen, Joan Ryan, Richard Maunder, Egerton Pegg and Harison Cook. The whole performance will take place under the direction of Mr. Cook.

IT would be difficult to find anything more suitable than the "Lily of Killarney" for presentation during what has been called "St. Patrick's Week."

Always a prime favourite in all operatic tours in Ireland, it also had many staunch supporters in England and Scotland. This was due to the wonderful manner in which Benedict wove delightful old Irish melodies into his score and the ideal play by Dion Boucicault, "The Colleen Bawn," upon which the opera is founded.

Few operas are blessed with such advantages as those with which "The Lily of Killarney" has faced the world for successive generations of theatre-goers. A good plot, plenty of wholesome Irish humour, and a wealth of Irish melody have undoubtedly been responsible for the fact that this opera is still a favourite though written so many years ago.

Benedict was born a German, but became thoroughly English, so much so that it was said that "only a very few knew that he was a born German."

He was conductor at Covent Garden and also at Drury Lane. While at the former he produced his "Lily of Killarney" and at the latter Balfe's famous "Bohemian Girl."

THE plot is an easy one to understand as it follows Boucicault's play very closely. Briefly it is as follows:—Hardress Cregan, a young Irish landowner, has secretly married Eily O'Connor (the Colleen Bawn), a beautiful peasant girl of Killarney but, unfortunately, the Cregan estates are heavily encumbered so, to repair the fallen fortunes of the House of Cregan, the mother of Hardress arranges to marry her son to the "richest heiress in Kerry," Miss Anne Chute.

The distracted Hardress endeavours to get Eily to surrender her marriage certificate. This attempt is thwarted by Father Tom, the

parish priest of Garryowen, and Myles-na-Coppaleen, a humble lover of Eily.

Hardress's devote henchman, Danny Mann, now tells Hardress that if he will, at any time, only send him one of his gloves "in token," the Colleen Bawn shall worry him no more. Mrs. Cregan, not knowing the full import of "the token" gives Danny Mann the glove, and Danny takes Eily to the Water Cave and there demands the certificate, and when she refuses he throws her into the water. Myles, who is poaching in the vicinity, fires at what he imagines to be an otter and hits Danny Mann. He then goes into the water, finds Eily and rescues her.

In the last act Hardress is about to marry the heiress when Corrigan, a "middle-man," causes the young man's arrest on a charge of murdering Eily, whose cloak has been found in the lake. Myles and Father Tom, however, appear with the living Eily and a death-bed confession from Danny Mann that he attempted the murder.

Hardress realises that he truly loves his wife, and the young couple are reconciled by Myles, who places Eily's hand in that of Hardress and says the famous lines:

"TAKE her, wid all my heart. I may say that, for ye can't take her widout. When ye cease to love her may dying become ye, and when ye do die, lave yer money to the poor, and yer widdy to me, and we'll both forgive ye."

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Harison Cook, who is producing the "Lily of Killarney," is one of the most interesting personalities in the N.Z. musical world. He has had a long and varied experience in Grand Opera, commencing his career on the professional stage in 1906. In 1914 he sang at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden—a distinction he shares with only one other New Zealand artist. Following his demobilisation at the end of the Great War, he became principal bass and stage director of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, and for seven years toured Great Britain in this capacity. His most valuable operatic training was gained, however, as principal bass of the Moody Manners Operatic Company. He has sung in nearly 90 different roles, and has produced over 60 different operas, grand and comic.

