

The Ideal Programme

Three Entrants Tie in Musical Comedy Competition

THE musical comedy programme competition, which closed on August 5, attracted entries from practically every part of the Dominion, and, as in the case of the earlier competitions, nice discrimination was needed by the judges to decide to whom the prize should be awarded.

As the competition called for musical comedy items only, there was less margin for error on the part of competitors, most of whom covered a wide range of theatrical success in their programmes. The arrangement of the various items also left little to be desired, though in some cases a lack of contrast marred otherwise excellent efforts.

The term musical comedy is not easy to define; it is difficult at times to draw a line between musical comedy, comic opera, light opera and musical plays. Even the gramophone record manufacturing companies at times issue "vocal gems," or selections from what they term "musical comedies," but which the actual score of the work describes as a comic opera or a light opera.

Realising the impossibility of drawing a hard and fast line between theatre successes of this nature, the judges did not penalise competitors for including excerpts from works which in their (the judges) opinion were light or comic operas

and not strictly musical comedies.

One thing is certain, however—the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan do not come into the category of musical comedy, and lack of recognition of this fact spoiled the chances of many competitors.

One of the best programmes submitted in any of the three competitions so far held was submitted by a thirteen-year-old competitor from Masterton, who shares the prize on this occasion. If the entry were the unaided effort of this juvenile competitor, it shows that he (or she) has a decided "flair" for compiling an attractive, well-balanced programme, as well as possessing a remarkable knowledge of theatre successes of the past 25 years—and even further back.

Mr. Broad submitted three programmes, each of them of a very high standard. This competitor admittedly had a substantial handicap in the competition, as he has had a lengthy experience on the stage, and toured New Zealand and Australia as a member of the

Oscar Asche company in 1910-11. The first of Mr. Broad's three programmes was fully annotated and included a talk, "Happy Recollections of Musical Comedies of Other Days." The second of Mr. Broad's programmes was rhymed throughout—a novel feature—and the third took the form of an imaginary theatre relay of selections and vocal gems from various theatre successes, listeners to be asked to vote on the particular musical comedy which made the greatest appeal to them.

The programme submitted by A. Hancock, of Wellington, was another highly entertaining and well-balanced programme, its author showing a wide knowledge of the theatrical world. This programme was also fully annotated, and the various items were arranged in chronological order from "The Belle of New York" to George Gershwin's "Tip-Toes."

Entries for the next competition—an operatic classical programme—close on Saturday, September 2.

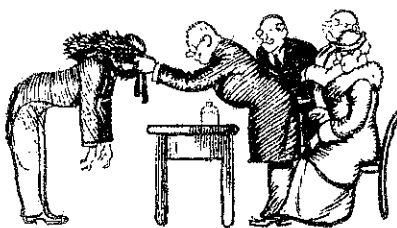
The remaining types of programme in the series are as follow (closing dates being given in parentheses): An orchestral and instrumental programme (September 16); a recital programme by individual artists, not exceeding four in number (September 30); a "theme"

programme, i.e., a story or recital with appropriate musical numbers interspersed (October 14); a one-hour dance programme (old or modern) (October 28); a one-hour children's session (November 11).

The talk submitted by one of the three winners, Mr. F. G. E. Broad, deals with musical comedy recollections of other days and demonstrates that Mr. Broad knows almost everything there is to know about the stage—from "The Merry Widow" to the present day. Mr. Broad's interesting talk will be published in the "Radio Record" in the near future.

It must be distinctly understood by competitors that any matter submitted in the competition series becomes the property of this journal, whether the entry is awarded a place or not.

PRIZE WINNERS:



E. M. Rogers,
41 Essex Street, Masterton;
F. G. E. Broad,
Port Albert Central, North Auckland.
and **A. Hancock,**
C/o Burch & Co., Ltd., Wellington.

(These three competitors were bracketed first equal.)

Highly Commended:—**J. MITCHELL,** North Auckland; **F. A. COKER,** Gisborne; **E. M. JOHNSTON,** Auckland; and **G. MILLSON,** Blenheim.