

Prize



The biggest musical production since "Florodora," and perhaps the most brilliant audience house has held since that opera was seen here, and the records scored at the Salt Lake theater last night. "The Prince of Pilsen" is a wonder in its way. In these days of degeneracy in all things pertaining to stage musical presentations, it is an equal surprise and delight to meet with a comic opera company which actually includes voices, a libretto which is not all horse play, and a musical score interpreted by a full orchestra with a wealth of orchestration that makes it a constant pleasure to the ear. In all these regards, to say nothing of principals, mounting, scenery, costumes, and accessories, "The Prince of Pilsen" is a revelation. The audience from first to last greeted it with a whirlwind of approval. The big chorus, male and female alike, made up of ringing, tuneful voices, handsome girls, and good looking men, was rewarded again and again with the heartiest applause, and such numbers as the "Tally Ho" chorus which opened the second act, were admirable musical achievements, separate and apart from their comic opera settings.

The seven or eight principals are in such admirable hands that it is hard to pick out the artist who carries off the laurels. The comedian Mr. Dandy, who does not belie his name—in the part of the Cincinnati brewer, a character by the way, which he has assumed every night since the opera was first produced, drew forth the heartiest laughter. He is a comedian, one who makes the most of his opportunities without overdoing them, and his clever and exquisitely funny song, "It Was the Dutch," was one of the decided features of the night.

Mr. Donaldson as the prince, is a good singer and an excellent actor, and he too struck the fancy of the audience quite heavily. Mr. Taylor as the tenor—the opera actually includes a tenor soloist who can sing tenor solos—and one beautiful number, the "Violent" song, and he acquitted himself admirably. Mr. Clifford, the English lord, also did some especially clever work. Mr. Long's French waiter was an amusing sketch. Miss Prigana in the part of the widow, was a radiant spectacle to look upon and listen to, but we are wondering yet whether her singing voice is as charming as her speaking tones. We have a suspicion that the handsome chorus girl who was posted close by her side was responsible for some of those high notes that proceeded from her locality, but one forgave Miss Prigana everything when he heard her dialogue and gazed upon her gowns. She was especially charming in the introduction of the chorus girls representing the various cities, and here it should be said that the young ladies who gave up "Baltimore" and "Salt Lake" ought to be specially mentioned for the charm of their manner. Miss Peebles has a charming style and voice, and in her duet with Mr. Donaldson—the "Sweetheart's" selection which will be played, sung and whistled all over Salt Lake before the week is out—she did some beautiful work.

Miss Forest, the Vassar girl, is another excellent singer, and her duo with Mr. Taylor, with the accompanying business, formed one of the prettiest features of the night.

The orchestra, including a luscious cello, was a perfect poem of music. Any number of the choruses and concerted pieces might be named for special praise, and the whole was so good that it is difficult to distinguish. The chorus of "My Maryland," the male chorus with the orchestra (the unaccompanied chorus was scarcely so good) and the opening and closing of the opera deserve special commendation.

The final performance occur this afternoon and evening. The houses will be sold out before the curtain rises, as the attraction is of the sort that might easily have been booked for a week's run.

The part of Edith Adams, the Vassar girl, portrayed by Miss Forrest last night, is the role in which Rosemary Glass of Salt Lake appeared in the New York production. A number of Salt Lake girls saw her say her work was one of the hits of the piece, especially her singing of the "Violent" duet.

"Lady Audley's Secret" winds up the week at the Grand tonight. Tomorrow evening the veteran actor John S. Lindsay makes his home as a lecturer, occupying the stage of the Grand. Mr. Lindsay's topic will be "Shakespeare and his plays."

Monday night the house will be dark. Tuesday comes the farewell of the Apollo quartet referred to elsewhere. Thursday, Friday and Saturday the farce comedy "Spotless Town," will be the bill. This is presented by one of Morocco's companies headed by Leslie Morosco himself, and Miss Leila Shaw. The star sends word that his play might be called a "Fun Factory," from which some idea of its character may be obtained. It is full of music, specialty acts, chorus girls, glitter and variety.

The sale of seats for the Lindsay lecture is going on today.

THEATER GOSSIP.

The volatile James H. Decker, who is directing Lewis Dockstader's minstrel tour in a revival of that amusing form of entertainment, has been digging into its early annals and finds that several of the greatest men who adorned the American stage began their professional career in black face.

We give the substance of Mr. Decker's researches.

First of all, he discovers that minstrelsy was the earliest form of purely American theatrical entertainment. Then he presents the noble array of names given herewith:

Edwin Booth did his first acting in black face.

Edwin Forrest was a minstrel long before he thought of playing "Virginia" and "Othello."

Burnt cork played a large part in the early life of Joseph Jefferson.

John T. Raymond blacked his face and sang negro songs with a small minstrel company touring Maryland.

Joseph Murphy, for thirty years famous in "Kerry Gow," was celebrated as a "bones" man long before he became an Irish actor.

William J. Florence set in the first part for one night at the old Pike's opera house, Cincinnati.

Sol Smith Russell sat in the middle and on the end with a permanent minstrel company located at St. Louis.

"The Prince of Pilsen" has never been properly presented in English, and when he opens the Lyric next month he intends to show a translation of the play which will follow the original almost literally.

While there is much talk in this country of the theater, a national art theater that shall be free from the commercialism of managers, Sara Bernhardt says that Paris needs an American theater, conducted with American enterprise, as a contrast with the Parisian playhouses, that are like "mire barracks."

Maxine Elliott is home. Effusively greeted by husband Nat Goodwin. Several pounds lighter because of recent illness. Will begin rehearsing "Her Own Way" at once.

Grace Elliston will be Richard Mansfield's leading lady this season.

Charles Frohman has on his weekly salary list in England 1,176 people.

Paul Heyse's drama, "Mary of Magdala," in which Mrs. Fiske has won such success, is in press and will be published by the Macmillan company of New York. The right to publication was secured from Mr. Harrison Grey Fiske, who controls all English rights in the play.

Mr. Robert Edson, who recently presented "Soldiers of Fortune," in Boston, has discovered that college boys are not at all bashful about inaugurating a little excitement in the theater when the spirit moves them. His stage manager advertised for a number of supernumeraries, and among the applicants were a group of boys from one of the preparatory schools there.

Their eagerness to "go on" and their intelligence secured them an advantage over their competitors, and they were enrolled in the army of Olancho, which is scheduled to make nightly trouble in "Soldiers of Fortune." When the boys made their first appearance their schoolboy friends stationed in various parts of the house, called them by name and made audacious comments on their stage make-up. The boys, not to be outdone, waved their guns and smiled at the people out in the front.

At the close of the act, when the curtain fell, Mr. Edson requested the soldiers to stand in a line just back of the canvas that separated them from the audience. As soon as he had them lined up, Edson gave the signal for it to be raised, at the same time stepping behind the scene, leaving these red-headed soldiers to face their fellow students. As the star remarked afterwards, "I never saw such a shame-faced lot in my life. They actually blushed under their make-up."

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And my revenge for their lack of dignity in the scene in which they took part was complete when I heard the yell of their comrades and noticed their own confusion.

Mary Anderson writes that the reports that she had accepted Robert Grau's offer for an American tour are absolutely false, and that she has no intention of returning to the stage.

On September 3, Blanche Walsh started her second season in Batfille and Morton's "Resurrection," in which she scored one of the strongest hits known in New York in several years. Although this play is almost brutal in some of its scenes it teaches a moral lesson. No drama of late date has caused more discussion and no impersonation has been seen on the American stage in a long time equal in intensity and power to the Maslova of Blanche Walsh. It was in this play that the late Joseph Hawthorn scored the last and best success of his career.

"Alexander the Great," a new play by Rupert Hughes and Collin Kemper, was successfully produced by Louis J. J. and Frederick Ward last week for the first time on the stage. Mr. James, as the world-famed warrior of history, and Mr. Warle, as Ptolemy, an Indo type of character, have rarely been seen to better advantage. There are six massive scenes. One of these showed the besieging army of Alexander outside the walls of Malla, in which are depicted the battering rams, catapults, war chariots and other implements of ancient warfare, and is brought to a climax by a realistic storming of the fortified walls of the city. Another scene is that showing the despairing army encamped among the snow peaks of the mountains above the clouds, in which occurs an electrical storm and a blizzard. A charming love story gives coherence to the episodes.

The next attraction at the Theater will be West's Minstrel week after next. All of next week the house will be dark.

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"Ulysses" is to be seen will no doubt be filled without cessation, but whether the galleries will be crowded or not is something of a question. The play is performed here by an admirable company, including Tyrone Power, Rose Coghlan, Edgar Eelwyn, Adelaide Prince, Ralph Delmore, Olive Oliver, William Owen, Leonore Harris, Fuller Melish and numerous other principals, besides a force of "extras" as large as the roomy stage of the Garden can possibly accommodate.

BELASCO'S MAGNIFICENCE.

Mr. Belasco, not satisfied with having expended upwards of \$100,000 last year upon the task of remodeling and superbly decorating the theater bearing his name, has been making still further alterations and improvements during the past summer. These are particularly noticeable about the entrance and facade of the structure, the external view of which is now one of the most imposing in all New York. Before Mr. Belasco took over the old Republic from Mr. Hammerstein, it was a severely plain building with a lobby of low-roofed that blunt persons would have described it as "squat." But the author-manager has made one addition after another until he has produced an effect not alone in its exceedingly picturesque in an architectural sense. The Belasco was reopened on Wednesday evening with Blanche Bates as the attraction in "The Darling of the Gods" and the performance went off quite as smoothly as though there had been no vacation period at all. Miss Bates will remain in New York for a limited engagement and will then visit the principal cities elsewhere in the Belasco-Long Japanese play. An innovation at this theater is the introduction of Thursday matinees, which were tried experimentally last year with few successful results as to warrant their permanent adoption. With Weber & Fields playing on Tuesdays and Saturdays, there is "something doing" almost every day in the week along Broadway.