



### THE OPERA COMPANY.

"Tannhauser!" The name conjures up visions of magic, magic of music and magic of drama. It sends a thrill through those who heard this famous masterpiece, of Richard Wagner's before, and it rouses a desire to hear it in those who have so far been deprived of that treat. The opera is one of the "star" items of Quinlan's repertoire, and forms one of its biggest attractions.

### WAGNER.

Wagner was one of the greatest German composers of the second half of the last century. He totally revolutionised operatic music, and, like all epoch-making men, like all geniuses, he had at first as many, if not more, adversaries than followers. Unlike the composers of his time, he wrote the librettos of all his operas himself, for he was originally intended for literature, and even in this respect he opened new paths to poetry by the powerful manner in which he wrote. Born 1813 in Leipzig, he ventured to compose, at the early age of nine, an overture, and when he had already composed a sonata, a quartette, and an aria. We will pass over the interim period in which falls another composition based on Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," an overture on "Rule Britannia," and a comic opera, the libretto of which was taken from "Thousand and One Nights," his first grand opera, "Cola Rienzi," after Bulwer-Lytton's novel, being composed in 1838. Then followed in quick succession "The Flying Dutchman" (1839), and various other operas, until in 1845 he brought out "Tannhauser," and shortly after that "Lohengrin." Following this he composed the music to his great tetralogy, "The Ring of the Nibelungen," which consists of four parts, namely, "The Rhinegold," "Valkyrie," "Young Siegfried," and "Siegfried's Death," which was followed by "Tristan and Isolde." Subsequently he wrote the "Mastersingers of Nuremberg," which Wagner himself called a comic opera, bringing the aforementioned cycle to a successful end by his wonderful musical drama, "Parsifal," which crowned all his previous efforts. It is a matter of history that he had the greatest difficulty in getting his works performed in those days, until the world recognised his great genius, which caused the ranks of his followers to swell to immeasurable size. One of his chief points was the idea that a large share of the production should fall to the orchestra, contrary to the prevailing idea that this body should confine its labours to mere accompaniments, hence the enormous orchestral parts, in which the brass instruments play a more prominent part than in any of the compositions of his contemporaries. The existing theatres soon proved too small for the volume of music which emanated from those instruments, in consequence of which he built his own theatre in Bayreuth, under the patronage of his royal friend and protector, King Ludwig II. of Bavaria.

### THE ARTISTES.

Under the difficulties with which Wagner's operas are fraught, it naturally follows that only the greatest singers are fit and able to take the principal parts, which remark must also be extended to the chorus, which plays a great part in all his works, and it is in this respect that the Quinlan Opera Company excels. Jeanne Brola, than whom it is difficult to find an abler exponent of Elizabeth in "Tannhauser," combines in her person those qualities which go to make a singer of Wagner's characters, such as are only found on the leading stages in Europe. We have on previous occasions enlarged on the vocal and dramatic qualities of this great artiste, and we can here only reiterate and confirm our previous remarks. Vera Courtney made an ideal Venus, and we only regret that the smallness of her part did not give her a larger scope. Mr. John Harrison, who appeared in the title role, was in good form, and it would be difficult to decide in which portion of his role he excelled most, as Minstrel, competitor in the great singing contest in the Hall of the Wartburg, or as a

desolate, excommunicated pilgrim. (It may be here mentioned that another title for this opera is "The Minstrels' Combat at the Wartburg.") His competitors in the contest were Wolfram von Eschenbach (Mr. Robert Parker), "Walter von der Vogelweide" (Mr. Spencer Thomas), Biterolf (Mr. Arthur Wynne), Heinrich der Schreiber (Mr. William Dever), and Reinmar von Zweter (Mr. Edgar Schofield), whilst the part of the Landgrave of Thuringia was in the able hands of Mr. Allan Hinckley. All these artistes are by now too well known to patrons of the opera company to require us to enlarge on their splendid work, both musical and histrionic, on this particular occasion, suffice it to say that all combined to make the performance of "Tannhauser" a great success. Hilda Morris made a charming shepherd, and the chorus upheld the reputation which it has long ere this gained by its eminent efficiency. As for the orchestra, under the magnificent direction of Mr. Ernest Knoch, no praise seems too high which the conscientious critic can bestow upon this excellent body of musicians. The famous overture, one of the greatest masterpieces of the brilliant composer, was listened to with rapt attention, the production being rewarded with endless applause. They kept up their tradition of highest efficiency right through the opera, the orchestral portion of which bristles with technical and instrumental difficulties. The Quinlan season is fast drawing to an end, and the regret at this thought will be only counter-balanced by the delightful reminiscences of their all too short stay among us.

### THE EMPIRE.

The customary fortnightly change of programme at this our premier music-hall, took place on Monday, and was witnessed by a well-filled house. Miss Beth Tate treated the audience with some new songs, "That would never do for me," and "Mary on the Scenic Railway," both of which were very well received. She, however, had to sing some of her old favourites before her delighted hearers would allow her to conclude her "turn." The Miles Stavordale Quintette gave a beautiful and clever performance, and their new numbers caught on admirably with the audience. Will H. Kuming is very popular with his piano, his songs, stories and imitations causing a great deal of merriment. The Sisters Bradford dance as artistically as ever; the Frank L. Gregory troupe go through their hoop-rolling "turn" without a flaw; Phil Parsons is full of life and "go" in his songs, and Miss Lizzie Glenroy, the Highland Lassie, delights her audience with her Scotch "turn." Jean and Josie continue to draw forth great praise for their wonderful contortionist act; Madame Ayoe is as popular as ever with her delightfully rendered songs, and last, but not least, the bioscope completes a very good all-round programme.

### THE GRAND.

Every new turn engaged by the ever-enterprising management of the Grand Theatre, more than fully maintains the excellent reputation as a music-hall in miniature—not mentioning the pictures—attained by the above theatre. Monday night witnessed the South African debut of the Tenka troupe of Japanese magicians, and a most wonderful performance did they give of the mystifying art. The troupe consists of three men and one lady, and a crowded audience gave the party a most enthusiastic and deservedly appreciative welcome. First the instrument of mystification was a handkerchief, which is turned into all sorts of things. Then the lady gets into a cardboard box, which is then pierced in all directions, and a spear is stuck right through from top to bottom. But the lady emerges harmless from this apparently dangerous ordeal, and bows her acknowledgments to the audience's applause. A number of other magical tricks are very cleverly performed, including one highly reminiscent of a certain Biblical miracle, where in the chief magician of the party extracts water from all sorts of things. Needless to add, the Tenka troupe came in for a great deal of enthusiastic applause. Bert Williams and his doll Ted continue their clever and amusing ventriloquial performance, and Will van Allen, the musical tramp, has become very popular with the local public, fully justifying in every way his excellent European reputation. The pictures are, as usual, very good, and highly interesting, and in all the Grand's "show" is one that should not be missed seeing.

**THE BIJOU.**

A decided change has lately taken place in the personnel of this cosy picture theatre, and in consequence crowded houses are the order of the night. This week's programme is an exceptionally attractive one, both in pictures and in artistes. The star film, "Martin Chuzzlewit," over three thousand feet in length, is alone well worth the admission price charged. In addition to this there are several other first-class films. The artistes engaged are the Mortimers, Maude and Master Jackie, who give a refined and pleasing entertainment. Miss Maude, in her imitation of a grand opera company, caused roars of laughter and deserved applause. The Rodney Trio, Charles, Edie, and little Janet, appeared in entirely new "business," and were warmly welcomed. Their sketch, "The Suffragette, the Policeman, and the Newsboy," was a highly entertaining and laughable production. In this trifle little Janet made a decided success as the newsboy, her acting, singing and dancing were of a highly finished order, and showed careful study. As an encore they gave a skit on the coming crinoline craze, in which Miss Edith appeared in a splendid costume designed and made by Messrs. Norman Anstey and Co. "Charles," as may be imagined, had a dress—but go to the Bijou and see for yourselves.

**HANDEL'S MESSIAH.**

The performance of this famous oratorio on Good Friday night at the Wanderers' promises to be the greatest and most unique musical treat ever recorded in the annals of Johannesburg's history. The Quinlan Symphony Orchestra have already given us admirable examples of their most artistic and clever playing—examples the memory of which will live long in the minds of those who have been privileged to listen to them, whilst as for our local Philharmonic Society, they have already done praiseworthy work in the concerts given by them. As for the soloists—Agnes Nicholls, Edna Thornton, John Coates, and Robert Parker—it only requires the mention of their well-known names to make our readers confident that they will hear

well-rendered numbers and artistic singing. The rehearsals give good promise of the artistic success, whilst the financial success seems to be already assured by the brisk booking.

**PASSOVER SERVICES.**

**JOHANNESBURG HEBREW CONGREGATION.**

There was a very full attendance at the Park Synagogue on the first day of the festival. Rev. S. Manne read the services, assisted by Rev. Herschowitz and the choir.

Preaching on the first day, Rabbi Dr. Landau, in the course of his eloquent sermon, said that Passover was a children's festival. The *Torah* emphasised the command, *Vehigadeto Levincho*, and thou shalt instruct thy children in the meaning and importance of the festival. That beautiful and sweet service in the Jewish home which inaugurated the festival of *Pasach*—the *Seder*—commenced with the child's sweet and innocent voice asking the four questions, and concluded with that beautiful children's song which breathed the hopes and aspirations of the Jewish nation and people. When the Israelites had sinned in the wilderness and they were doomed to wander for thirty-eight years in the desert, Moses's heart never despaired, nor did his hopes weaken, because there were their children—the forthcoming generation—who would inherit the promised land of their fathers, foster their religion and treasure their *Torah*. At the time of the second temple, when their ancestors were about to enter into the wilderness of exile, which they knew would be a long and dreary desert, their chief anxiety was for their children. They asked themselves whether they should take the short, beaten track which would lead their children to Ammon and Moab, to apostasy and religious destruction, or should they wander into the unknown desert; should they feed their children with the fleshpots and tasty comestibles of Egypt, or give them only the bread of affliction, the *Matzo*. They decided on the latter, and our exile has been a long and bitter one. Our *Matzo* has been dipped in many a cup of tears, but yet also in some cups of joy.

Proceeding, the Rabbi exhorted his co-religionists not to try and lift the veil which hangs over the truths of the Jewish religion. In the times of the Ghetto some daring young spirits tried to lift this sacred veil, so as to allow the searchlight of their false philosophy to play upon the

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