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"The Gondoliers."

The Johannesburg Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society are to be congratulated upon the manner in which they presented Gilbert and Sullivan's charming opera. Never before in Johannesburg has an amateur company succeeded so completely in disarming criticism and for this the dressing and production is entitled to much of the credit and the generosity of the African Theatres Ltd. in lending the society the entire wardrobe and scenery of their own recent production at His Majesty's, shows a real spirit of camaraderie. It is true that the acting was not quite as good as that of a professional company but the singing did more than make amends for any draw-backs that there might have been in this direction. And even then, generally speaking, the acting was much above the level of many so called professional companies that have charged higher prices. As the Duke of Plaza Toro, Mr. H. R. Sharpe was very good while Mr. E. T. Bird's playing of Don Alhambra the Grand Inquisitor was only different from that of a professional in that he possessed a very good voice a quite unusual thing for the professional pourtrayer of this part. The ladies playing was excellent throughout in every case being superior to that of the gentlemen. As Casilda, Miss Blodwyn-Rees played very daintily and sang equally as sweetly, Miss E Stout, as the Duchess of Plaza Toro, was quite dramatic and sang her lines with considerable expression, while Miss Kate Barnes played Tessa with *verve* and effect. The other would-be queen Giannetta, was charmingly presented by Miss A. Orn. The Gondoliers were Messrs. H. Tyhurst and E. Wade as Marco and Guiseppe respectively and were quite adequate in their parts. The following is a complete list of the cast every member of which did something towards the success achieved, while Mr. L. Glenton, the conductor was also greatly responsible for the most satisfactory *ensemble*: The Duke of Plaza Toro, Mr. H. R. Sharpe; Luiz, Mr. B. Barnett; Don Alhambra, Mr.

E. T. Bird; Marco, Mr. H. Tyhurst; Guiseppe, Mr. E. Wade; Antonio, Mr. G. Absolom; Francesco, Mr. W. T. Winterbourne; Giorgio, Mr. H. Orsmond; Annibale, Mr. T. G. Louw; Duchess of Plaza Toro, Miss E. Stout; Casilda, Miss Blodwyn-Rees; Gianetta, Miss A. Orn; Tessa Miss Kate Barnes; Fiametta, Miss M. Carlton; Vittoria, Mrs. G. Absolom; Guila, Mrs. E. Smith; Inez, Miss A. Manthey; and the Drummer Boy Miss. N. Stout. L.L.G.

The Moffat Season.

A festive and more than usually expectant atmosphere might have been noted amongst the crowded auditorium at His Majesty's on Monday night, where a large audience had assembled to welcome the Moffat Company on their opening night. For the occasion "Bunty Pulls the Strings" had been selected, a comedy of which Mr. Graham Moffat himself is the author. This is a Scotch play, the plot of which is laid in the early Victorian era, picturing to us in a true and correct light the ways and trend of thought of that period. The performance had something homely about it and must have conjured up before the minds of many of the older members of the audience reminiscences of their youth, whilst the younger generation would remember by the acting pictures of that era put into real life. The character depicted by "Bunty" reminds one of "Paddy" which recently delighted thousands of playgoers; but independent of this, the "Scotch" season which was promised us by Mr. Moffat in a neat little speech at the conclusion of the performance last Monday night, will be hailed with great pleasure by Johannesburg audiences and will be refreshing after the long "Irish" season through which we have just passed. The merriment and laughter during the whole performance were quite spontaneous and became more and more enthusiastic as the plot wore on.

The acting throughout was exceptionally good and every artist seemed to live the part he or she represented. Miss Winifred Moffat, in the title role, treated the part in a delightful and charming manner, being "natural" throughout, thereby giving a faithful picture of the maiden of that period who contrasts so favourably with the young present-day generation. Mrs. Graham Moffat gave a remarkably

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clever portrayal of the old spinster Susie Simpson which she delineated true to life. Mr. Graham Moffat himself proved instantly that he is an actor of high standard and vast experience, in addition to which his make-up was excellent. The humorous portion of the play lay in the able hands of Mr. Watson-Hume Moffat and Mr. Gregory Whiteford who did full justice to their respective parts and others who contributed largely to the unqualified success of the production are Miss Minnie Valentine, Miss Millicent Evans, Mr. R. B. Drysdale, Miss Jean Hicks and Mr. Harry Merrilees. Another point worthy of mention is that every act culminates in an effective and reflective situation, such as only an experienced playwright can create. Needless to say, the staging and costuming are strictly chronological in every detail and the music was also perfect in that respect. The play is produced by the author, assisted by Mr. William Mollison, to both of whom hearty congratulations must be extended. The success of the "Moffat season," so favourably inaugurated, is therefore fully assured. P.J.

The Shakespeare Season.

Next Monday sees the commencement of the Shakespeare season at the Standard Theatre when the "Merry Wives of Windsor" will be staged until the 23rd instant. The cast—in order of appearance—is as follows: Shallow, Cyril Spurling; Sir Hugh Evans, Mario Zoccola; Slender, M. H. Mendelsohn; Page, Arthur Dean; Sir John Falstaff, Henry Miles; Bardolph, George Kreiser; Nym, Ronald Dawson; Pistol, Sam Skinner; Anne Page, Enid Silva; Mistress Page, Sarah Goch; Mistress Ford, Mrs. E. Solomon; Simple, Ned Leon; Mistress Quickly, Mrs. Weightman; Rugby, Doris Hittinger and Ford, P. J. Hittinger. The object of the productions is a serious attempt at fostering the works of the Immortal Bard. If the season is successful a further attempt will be made to establish a repertory Theatre the presentation of Shakespeare and old English plays may become a permanent institution in the life of the community.

The Second Week.

Following this comedy, the immortal romance of Romeo and Juliet, with Henry Miles as Romeo and Madge Fabian as Juliet, will be staged. We trust that both productions will be well patronised as appreciation of Shakespeare is a step in the direction of culture while, among a large section, the study

of this great playwright is looked upon as synonymous with English tendencies. Two local formations are taking an interest in the matter and a Jewish Guild Night has been fixed for Thursday, July 21st, and a Sons of England and Overseas Club night for Wednesday, July 27th,

A Lady Manrico.

Mr. Lyell Tayler, musical director of Brighton West Pier concerts, had the unusual experience recently of conducting a performance of Verdi's "Il Trovatore" with a lady in the tenor part of Manrico. Mr. Herbert Thorpe, who had been engaged for the purpose, was unable to keep his appointment owing to indisposition, and the management could not obtain a substitute, Madame Dorothy Kennard, a local artist, volunteered to sing the part as well as she could at an hour's notice in order to enable the performance to proceed. The large audience gave the lady every encouragement in her praiseworthy efforts, and were rather amused at the little lapses when the conductor himself had to sing parts of several numbers.

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