

1934 "Co-optimists"

Bright Show at Jewish Guild.

SUNDAY evening last saw a packed hall at the Jewish Guild, Johannesburg, when the curtain rose on the Jewish Guild Co-optimists, 1934 version, under the production of Maurice Tatz and the ballet direction of Lilian Barnett. The opening number, "Take Notice," was bright, vivacious and colourful. Solo parts switched from one to another in almost professional style, and the limelight man added to the effect in a very able manner. Stage properties and costumes were good. Sweet femininity in the cast was clothed very much *a la mode*, in attractive gowns, and if there were any defects in the makeup, I am sure the audience did not notice them.

Your critic lit his pipe and settled comfortably in his chair in anticipation of an evening's good entertainment. But he was doomed to disappointment, if not completely—for there were a few distinctly good numbers—at least in part. Some of the numbers put on by the various members of the company were very mediocre, and a few were lamentably dull. Two or three of the "black-outs" were not in good taste and the programme would have been considerably improved by their omission. It is so easy to have good entertainment without questionable jokes, that there is really no excuse for their inclusion.

The best feature of the "Co-optimists" show was undoubtedly the ballet. Miss Lilian Barnett had obviously trained her dancers thoroughly, and they reflected credit both on themselves and their mistress. Lilian Barnett rendered her solo dances admirably. She has grace and poise, and all her movements blend into one harmonious and rhythmic whole. In the song numbers, too, she accredited herself well. She has just the right degree of insouciance necessary for light musical parts.

For the rest, there was little of distinction in the programme. Mostly this was the fault of the various numbers, though, in two or three cases, the participants acquitted themselves poorly. Perhaps the fairest criticism would be that better discrimination should have been displayed on the part of the producer. He, after all, is the consolidating member of the company, performing a similar function to the conductor of an orchestra. A conductor may not look upon his programme as so many separate items; he has to consolidate all into a whole, maintaining throughout a careful sense of balance and sufficient show of contrast to avoid any suggestion of monotony. Maurice Tatz could have chosen his numbers and conducted his "orchestra" to better advantage: a few changes here and there—slight in themselves—would have made all the difference, and would have raised the performance from something only partly interesting to something very near first-class rating, as amateur shows go.

It is to be hoped that the Co-optimists, who are a jolly and amiable company, will not resent this criticism of their labour. It is not that one does not appreciate their efforts: they are appreciated only too well. But praise is not the rain which promotes growth and development. Only through realisation of faults can progress be achieved, and the purpose of this criticism is to direct the attention of the Co-optimists to the faulty parts of their programme and thus help them to improvement. E.B.

Fine Concert at the Orpheum

Mr. Hyman Sachs, the well-known pianist, is to be congratulated upon the excellent array of artists he secured for the concert held on Sunday evening last at the Orpheum Theatre in aid of the Rand Women's Benevolent Society.

Mr. Sachs' own playing of "La Campanella" was an outstanding performance, in which he demonstrated his fine ability as one of our best interpreters of piano music. It is a great pity that he did not bow to the constant demands of the audience for an encore. The Jewish folk-songs rendered by the choir, under the direction of Mr. Ilchilchik, were much appreciated. Mrs. Fanny Hilson made her first platform appearance and demonstrated the possession of a charming and gifted voice. When she will have recovered from her nervousness, Mrs. Hilson is likely to become one of our most popular singers.

A knowledge of technique, most extraordinary for his age of eleven years, was demonstrated by Feo Sachs in his violin playing. The young lad had a great reception. The rich baritone voice of Mr. Henri Mondy was heard in Hebrew and Russian songs. A Jazz medley was played by Mr. Gaby Peimer and Miss Nowell Grayson.

The concert was made notable by the appearance of Cantor Berele Chagy, who gave a remarkably powerful and beautiful rendering of a setting in the form of an oratorio with Hebrew words, taken from the Book of Isaiah. In reply to consistent encores, the famous cantor interpreted a number of old folk-songs in a really beautiful manner. The singing of Cantor Berele Chagy was a rare treat indeed.

As a result of the concert, the funds of the Rand Jewish Women's Benevolent Society will be considerably augmented.

Brith Trumpeldor in Randfontein

ON Thursday night, the 8th inst., the Randfontein and Krugersdorp Kennanim commemorated the 14th anniversary of the death of the late Captain Joseph Trumpeldor. The meeting, which took place at the Randfontein Town Hall where there was a large gathering, commenced with the full Betar ceremonial, the Randfontein and Krugersdorp Kennanim marching into the hall, headed by the Mefaked of the Randfontein Ken, M. Katz, together with the Brith Trumpeldor flag.

Two Gdudim of the Johannesburg Ken under three officers of the Mifkadah formed a Guard of Honour, which was inspected by the Nziv, A. Sandler, together with the Secretary of the Nzivuth, M. Kaplan. After the Mini Dan was sung, the Haskarah, intoned by the Rev. Shapiro, the Last Post, sounded by the bugler, and the Betar Anthem sung, the speakers mounted the platform.

Mr. M. Katz, Mefaked Haken Randfontein, presided, and explained the occasion of this meeting and referred to the heroic life and death of Joseph Trumpeldor. Chavera K. Fluxman, Secretary of the Mifkadah of the Johannesburg Ken, then read from the Diary of Trumpeldor narrating the events at Tel Hai up to Trumpeldor's death.

Mr. J. Blumenthal spoke of the World Zionist situation and of the Petition Movement that was afoot to request Great Britain to carry out her obligations under the Mandate. He urged every Jew and Jewess who wished to see the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine to sign this petition.

Mr. I. J. Kagan spoke on the Life of Trumpeldor, and the hero's many virtues.

Talmud Torah Concert at the Orpheum

On Sunday next a grand concert, in aid of the Braamfontein Talmud Torah, will be held at the Orpheum Theatre. Quite a galaxy of talented artists will provide an entertaining programme. An interesting feature will be the appearance

on the platform, as an elocutionist, of Miss Mavis Moller, who had the privilege of dancing with Prince George at the Civic Ball. There are no bookings for this concert and tickets can be obtained at the door.

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