

THE SECOND VARDI-YOALIT RECITAL

Clever Impersonations of Jewish Leaders

THE reaction of an audience to the work of any given artist cannot be stated generally. An audience is composed of so many human units, and each unit reacts differently. For myself the main attraction of the Vardi-Yoalit recital at the Plaza Theatre, Johannesburg, on Sunday evening last, was the group of Hebrew interpretations from the Bible given by Eva Yoalit. It seemed, as I watched and listened, that some dark and unfathomable spirit of the past had been re-awakened on the stage, the brooding spirit of Israel stirred to impassioned declamation. There came to the soul the feeling of beauty and the feeling of mystery, two things which lie at the very root of all art. I was deeply moved, and found that members of the audience with whom I spoke subsequently were similarly impressed.

The first piece of this Biblical group was a rendition of the 4th Chapter of Lamentations. Miss Yoalit came upon the stage as the mournful spirit of her people, in a gown of dark gold and purple whose very lines drooped in sadness; and her mere appearance conveyed a note of grief. She uttered the magnificent Hebrew poetry of Lamentations in a strange mixture of chant and declamation, half traditional, half interpretative; and as line after cadenced line rose and fell, her form moved in the heavy rhythm of mourning, and the audience was impressed and stayed without sound.

Then Miss Yoalit rendered "Comfort Ye, My People" from Isaiah. Subtly her voice and appearance changed. Her form moved in motions of comfort. The tone of her voice was pitched in soothing.

This piece was followed by a rendering of the 5th Chapter of the immortal Song of Songs. For this number the artist seemed almost a different person, youthfully gowned, youthfully moving, and she told, now softly, now rising to ecstasy, of her own love and of all love. The words of the Bible became as living things on her lips. A poem of 3,000 years woke to life again.

DAVID VARDI offered an entirely different type of performance. His art is that of the mime. He shows the character

of one or another individual by his actions, his tone of voice, his expression, rather than by any of his words in themselves. He has a face and voice remarkably changeable. At one moment he was a typical "alte yidl," at another a Jewish mother talking to her children; then a conceited flapper; again, spectacled pomposity just returned from the Zionist Congress. The item "Shelishi Urevi" was a perfect example of pantomime. Here Mr. Vardi presented three people, the Chazan in shul, the rich man who is called up to read the Third Portion of the Sedra, and the poor man who is called to read the Fourth Portion. The changes in tone, action and attitude between the three, were among the best examples of mime seen locally for some years.

The most relished items of Mr. Vardi's performance were his impersonations of prominent Jewish leaders. The audience shrieked with laughter as he caricatured their little vanities and fripperies. He characterised Nahum Sokolow superbly, even down to the reminiscent portions of the Zionist leader's speeches. Leib Jaffe he did very well, with the exception that he introduced too much gesture; Jaffe is a speaker sparing of gesture. The impersonation of Jabotinsky was excellent, and the audience applauded warmly as Mr. Vardi produced on the stage all the arrogant bombast of the Revisionist leader. Dr. Weizmann, I am afraid, Mr. Vardi did not manage well. Weizmann (judging from his visit to this country two years ago) has far more dignity in speech, and strikes one as being more austere than this characterisation would have us believe. The impersonation of Bialik I am not competent to judge, since I have never seen Bialik; but it sounded very convincing and I am prepared to take Mr. Vardi's word that it was correct.

E. B.

ARTISTS GOING ON TOUR.

Mr. David Vardi and Miss Eva Yoalit will shortly commence a tour of the various provinces in South Africa, and the different Jewish communities will thus have the pleasure of hearing these two well-known artists. They will start their tour in Capetown shortly.

organising secretary of the S.A. Youth Council; Mr. J. Rubik, editor of the *Basad*; and Mr. A. Teeger, convenor of the Town and Reef sub-committee.

BRITH TRUMPELDOR.

On Sunday night, September 1st, at 8.15 p.m., at the Hebrew High School Hall, Wolmarans Street, a memorial meeting in commemoration of the 5th anniversary of the 1929 riots in Palestine will be held, under the auspices of the Johannesburg Ken Berith Trumpeldor. Full Betar ceremonial will be observed. Admission free. The public is cordially invited to attend.

The third issue of the "Legion," the official organ of the Betar in South Africa, has now been released. Copies may be obtained from the business manager, P.O. Box 4474, Johannesburg, or from any member of the Nzivuth Betar, S.A., or from members of the Mifkadath Haken, Johannesburg.

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TALKIE.

Musical Art at the Jewish Guild

"Soup to Nuts," a musical melange, presented at the Jewish Guild during the week, was well up to the standard of fare usually provided by the Musical Art Section. The producers, Miss Charmion Kantor and Mr. Louis Ostrowiak, deserve credit for an entertaining programme. They were ably assisted by Miss Gerty Schneider who trained the ballet. The latter added considerably to the liveliness and colour of the show. Miss Schneider was also responsible for some solo tap dances which were well received.

The cast comprised 10 principals, Misses Charmion Kantor, Clarice Friedman, Dorothy Minter, Gerty Schneider, Rita Wartski, and Messrs. Louis Ostrowiak, Dave Hope, Bing Goldin, Dave Nathan and Sydney Witkin, and a ballet of eight: Misses Doreen Landsman, Hilda Lewin, Freda Brazil, Rose Braude, Bertha Kahn, Fanny Ross, Haidee Kanin, and Audrey Strawbaum. The ensemble work was good, particularly the Hors d'Oeuvres. "Keep Smiling through the Show," and "Little Dutch Mill." Special attention had been paid to the dressing which was most artistic and varied in the different numbers, the costumes being designed by Miss Lena Raiken.

The scenery represented an old-time inn; "Ye Soupe to Nuts," which was transformed in the second half of the programme to an old Dutch windmill, within which the accompaniste, Miss Charmion Kantor, was featured at the piano. Two songs written and composed by her, "Give Me Sympathy" and the finale "Brushing the Blues Away," were vociferously applauded.

Mr. L. Ostrowiak made a welcome appearance in several numbers, and provided a good deal of the comedy. The stage management was good, and the items which were presented in quick succession were appreciated by a packed house.

"Soup to Nuts," a menu of song, dancing, laughter and fun, is to be repeated at the Jewish Guild on Sunday, September 2, at 8.15 p.m.

Hechalutz Organisation

Under the auspices of the Johannesburg Hechalutz Organisation, a grand dance was held on Saturday, the 25th inst., at the H.O.D. Hall, to celebrate the first anniversary of the establishment of the Hechalutz Training Farm in South Africa. The Chalutzim from the farm were present, and the decorated hall was filled to capacity.

During the course of the evening an exhibition dance, by Mr. F. Mantz, and a novelty dance were introduced. The Hechalutz Orchestra played several Hebrew and Yiddish melodies.

On Wednesday, September 12th, the semi-annual general meeting will take place at the Hechalutz Hall, at 8.15 p.m. All members are earnestly requested to attend, as matters of vital importance are to be discussed.

The following will address the meeting: Mr. A. Abrahamson, president of the Transvaal Zionist Youth; Mr. I. Dunsky,