

ART AND MUSIC IN JOHANNESBURG

A TALENTED ACTOR FROM EUROPE

Mr. Faivel Ziegelbaum in Johannesburg

A TALENTED young Jewish actor from Warsaw, who recently arrived in South Africa, intends making his home in Johannesburg. He is Mr. Faivel Ziegelbaum (F. Ziegel), who has already appeared before Johannesburg Jewish audiences on a number of occasions.



Mr. F. Ziegelbaum.

Mr. Ziegelbaum is a graduate of the experimental theatre, of which he is a great admirer and hopes in the course of time to do considerable work in this direction in South Africa.

Born some 28 years ago at Krasny-Lastaw, near Lublin, he went to Chelm, and later to Warsaw, where he lived for over 10 years prior to coming to this country. It was in Warsaw that he had the opportunity to carry out a long-cherished ambition and take up dramatic work seriously. He entered the well-known dramatic studio "Zukunft," whose destinies were guided by the brilliant young director M. Perenson, and it was under their aegis that he made his bow before the public in Ernst Toller's famous play "Hopl."

Some three years later Mr. Ziegelbaum entered the dramatic group of the Culture League, where he performed notable work. Deeply interested in the experimental theatre of this time, he was associated with a group of talented young players who eventually formed a dramatic studio of their own, under the direction of Dr. N. Weichert. It was this studio

which produced Upton Sinclair's "Boston" in Yiddish. The play was warmly acclaimed by Warsaw audiences. In this drama Mr. Ziegelbaum played the leading role, that of Vanzetti, and his work was highly commended by the Warsaw theatre critics. Subsequently, in 1933, Mr. Ziegelbaum was himself responsible for the foundation of a new experimental theatre group, "The Youth Theatre." In this group he staged many notable plays, ranging from drama to fantasy, and played a variety of leading roles.

Mr. Ziegelbaum came to this country in the hope of stimulating deep interest in Yiddish drama locally. He thinks there is great scope for Yiddish dramatic work here and he hopes to found a Yiddish dramatic studio which will stage productions of quality in Johannesburg. He appeared on the Johannesburg stage recently in "Life is Calling," with Mr. Jacob Waislitz, playing the junior lead. It is of interest to remark that some time ago, in Warsaw, the theatre group with which Mr. Ziegelbaum was associated staged this play, and in that production he took the chief role, of Professor Tchadov. A couple of weeks ago he gave a number of fine dramatic recitations at the grand concert organised by the United Zionist Socialist Party in Johannesburg.



As a Jewish Driver—a characteristic by Mr. F. Ziegelbaum.

PAINTINGS BY D. KOENIG.

SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITION LAST WEEK-END.

IT was a happy idea on the part of those responsible to hold an art exhibition in the informal atmosphere of a private residence. The exhibition was one of paintings and drawings by the Hungarian Jewish artist, Mr. Deszo Koenig, and was held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. R. Feldman, "Ny-Hame," Houghton, last week-end.

The exhibition was opened by Mr. Edgar Bernstein, who gave a brief appreciation of Mr. Koenig's work.

Mr. Koenig, he said, belonged to the type of artist who believed profoundly in beauty. James Joyce had once described art as the attempt "to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our souls, an image of the beauty we have come to understand." It was in terms of such a conception of art that Mr. Koenig worked. His paintings were the expressions of moods, emotions and thoughts of a man deeply sensitive to beauty. In this age, Mr. Bernstein concluded, when the chaos of outward events infected even art, leading to such movements as surrealism, Mr. Koenig sought to convey what was the essential purpose of all true art, an appreciation of the rhythm and harmony underlying life.

There were on view some 50 works, of which the great majority were in oils. Notable among them were three lovely still lifes Mr. Koenig has just completed, outstanding of which is his magnificent study, "Gladiolas," painted in rich, exuberant colours, clear of definition, and refreshing to behold. Of a different type are his oils of old streets, impressive fantasies of a world gone by, in whose dark corners strange memories lurk. These street scenes—"The Barrel," "An Eastern Street," "Old Town Street"—show fine understanding of colour and contrast. They are painted firmly and boldly, but not harshly. There is something of mellowness even in their harder lights.

There were also some interesting studies of South African scenes, and a number of lovely tree studies, ranging from an "Autumn" in which deep blues, purples and browns were used in most effective contrast to flaming gold, to a small study, "Three Trees," which was particularly appealing.

Mention should also be made of Mr. Koenig's charcoal studies, drawn in classical vein, which reveal a mastery of technique seldom seen locally.

Johannesburg Musical Society

The next concert of the Johannesburg Musical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, the 21st inst., at the Selborne Hall, when a special Mozart-Bach programme will be presented, arranged by Percival R. Kirby. The programme will be performed by well-known members of the society and an interesting evening is assured.

WALLACE BEERY AT THE METRO.

From to-day the attraction at the Metro theatre is a new comedy with Wallace Beery in the leading role. In "Old Hutch" this grand comedian and actor plays the part of an out-and-out loafer who is broke but happy. Then he finds £20,000 in stolen money and from that point his troubles start. The first half of the programme is appropriately chosen from an interest and entertainment point of view.

The Art Theatre in Shaw

PART of one of Bernard Shaw's greatest plays—"In the Beginning" from "Back to Methuselah"—was presented by the Art Theatre at the New Library Theatre last week-end. In this performance this talented group of amateurs reached what the present reviewer considers their finest achievement. From acting and direction right down to costume, this production was marked by a finesse rarely found on the non-professional stage. All the more is the pity, therefore, that the attendance—at least on the evening when the writer was present—was poor. When a play of genius presented so capably cannot draw a good attendance in a city of this size, it says little for the cultural pretensions of Johannesburg, which once more shows that it has not yet outgrown the rough mining camp days when culture was at a heavy discount.

The chief technical difficulty of the play—that of presenting Adam and Eve in convincing nakedness—was admirably overcome by clothing them in skin-tights which created the necessary illusion. Adam was extremely well portrayed by Edouard du Toit, who gave a solid and convincing performance. Eve was played by Phyllis Birch, who gave what was certainly the finest performance of the evening. Emotionally, intellectually and technically, she proved herself an accomplished actress. The role of the serpent was suitably portrayed by Minnie Jedwick.

In the second act, Mr. W. H. C. Kohler continued Mr. du Toit's performance of Adam, though not quite as ably as the latter actor, while Mr. du Toit gave a convincing portrayal of Cain.

The Art Theatre was not so happy in their other piece of the evening, Shaw's "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets," a trifling piece more suited to reading than performance. But within its narrow limits Ursula Barnett Potter as Queen Elizabeth, Edouard du Toit as Shakespeare, Freda Gray as the Dark Lady, and Raymond Marriot Watson as Beef-eater, gave commendable performances.

Both plays were produced by Freda Gray.

E.B.

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS.

An exhibition of paintings by R. O. Dunlop, Maud Sumner, Irma Stern and Alan Gourley will be opened at the Gainsborough Galleries, 14, Hepworth Buildings, Pritchard Street, by Miss E. K. I. le Maitre, on Tuesday, 20th April, at 5.30 p.m.

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