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Edgar Wallace at the Guild

THE spirit of Edgar Wallace reigned at the Jewish Guild, Johannesburg, on Sunday evening last, when the Guild Players produced his last play, "The Case of the Frightened Lady." And your critic, Sir, watched the production with great satisfaction, for it was he who repeatedly made the suggestion in these columns that the Guild Players should try Edgar Wallace instead of the many poor thrillers they have seen fit, in the past, to inflict upon a long suffering public.

"The Case of the Frightened Lady" offers excellent dramatic possibilities, and was capably handled, as regards both interpretation and acting. Wallace was always a fine playwright, even though he did not write literature, and he had the satisfaction of being acclaimed by Bernard Shaw as one of the two best dramatists—from the view point of pure stage—of his day. (The other was Bernard Shaw).

Beryl Ritch made a welcome reappearance in the part of Aisla Crane—a role which calls for sound acting ability and in which she gave a character portrayal equal to the best of her previous performances. Sergeant Totty, one of the chief figures of the play, was well portrayed by Louis Ostrowiak; Chief Inspector Tanner as ably by Theo. Chadwick; and Harry Kahn gave a polished performance as the mad Lord Lebanon. Harry Pallatt appeared all too briefly in the role of the convict Briggs. Mr. Pallatt has the talent for bigger parts, and one would like to see him in them. Lady Lebanon, a difficult role, was played by Sylvia Herman. Sergeant Ferraby by Stanley Denton. Ual Myers, who played the butler, Kellver, deserves special mention for a well-finished performance. The other members of the cast were:—Brooks, Juel Rodach, and Rawbane, Bernard Blieden.

The play was produced by Cyril D. Hofman, who deserves what the Americans call "a big hand."

E.B.

The "Reps." in "The Mocking Bird"

EMANUEL NATHAN produced Lionel Hale's play, "The Mocking Bird," for the Johannesburg Repertory Players recently, in the New Library Theatre. The production was a triumph in many ways. The play was certainly among the more balanced vehicles chosen by the players—if not among the best.

A lunatic (played by Gerald Gringoire in a fashion that left no doubt as to his acting capabilities) is the pivot of the comedy. He enters into the family circle of an ostensibly respectable Manor House, and explains that he is an escaped convict. He succeeds in persuading the family by means of his superb "Washingtonian" personality, to allow him to remain in hiding there, and forthwith proceeds to wreck all the smug righteousness in which the family had lived until he came. Further, his coming and passing serve to make the family a much happier one, for until he has revealed the blackguardism of Sir Victor Champion, the head of the family, the entire household lives in eternal fear of his wrath, founded on a grandiloquent self-righteousness.

Sir Victor (Leo Heilbronner) lacked conviction. Nellie Weinstock, as Aunt Dora, his sister, was good, and Jack

Gibbons' "Uncle Paul" well-conceived. Geoff. Allen was sound in his part of the vicar. Mary Garth, with influence on the course of the man's progress indicated that a positive strength was necessary, played by Joyce Eastwood with an outstanding weakness in the production.

But Gerald Gringoire's "Geoff. Washington" was undoubtedly good. He has splendid shoulders to hunch threateningly, and an almost Latentian sneer and presence.

P.B.

Fine S.A.B.C. Concert

THE last concert of the Johannesburg Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra to be held in the Jewish Guild Hall was an excellent performance. The conductor, Mr. J. Schulman, chose an interesting programme consisting of Mozart's Overture, "The Magic Flute," the Concerto in D for violin by Tchaikowsky and the "Scheherazade" by Rimsky Korsakov.

The delightful overture was heard to advantage. The beauty and lucidness of this composition show this work to be the ultimate rest of Mozart's life and labour as a musician. Irwin Broedrich, the solo violinist in the concerto, proved his artistry in the perfect understanding and faultless technique displayed in this work, which at one time was pronounced to be unplayable due to the high demands it makes upon the most capable virtuoso. At times one felt that Mr. Broedrich's tone should have been deeper, but his interpretation was never slipshod and the entire performance was masterly.

The "Scheherazade," an imaginative Symphonic Suite founded on the "Arabian Nights," is a whirl of colour and sound. The woodwind acquitted themselves extremely well, the many difficult passages and the strings did creditable work.

The next concert will be held at Broadcast House and promises to be an interesting one.

H.F.

Enjoyable Musical Society Concert

THE Johannesburg Musical Society presented a most unusual and interesting programme at the Selborne Hall recently. Mozart and Bach shared honours and the enthusiasm of the audience proved clearly that this is the type of concert that Johannesburg music lovers need and want. All the items were encored by request.

Professor Kirby, who arranged this novel concert, selected two concertos for three pianofortes and orchestra by Mozart and Bach respectively, two items for four voices and orchestra by the same masters and a prelude written by Mozart to a Bach fugue. The performances were distinguished by the sincerity and ability of the various artists.

Messrs. Danza, Mossop and Lloyd handled the solo parts in the two concertos in a polished manner and the orchestra gave a good account of themselves under the guidance of Professor Kirby. Bach's Chorale "Jesus Joy of Man's Desiring," and Mozart's Motet, "Ave Verum Corpus," showed the combination of voices to be a happy choice. A boy soprano (Bobbie Kok), an alto (William Tozer), a tenor (James Niven) and a bass (Edward Wood) delighted the audience with the lesson of comparative study which these items offered.

It is to be hoped that Professor Kirby will be persuaded to make this the first of a series of similar evenings.

H.F.

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