

“Laughing at Ourselves”

“GO AHEAD”—AT THE JEWISH GUILD.

ON Sunday evening last, the members of the Jewish Guild were highly entertained by a comedy of Jewish interest, written by Louis Nertz and Armand Friedman and entitled “Go Ahead.” This comedy will again be produced on Sunday evening and will undoubtedly draw together a further large crowd of members.

The play was first produced on Thursday evening last as part of the programme of the Repertory Fortnight at His Majesty's Theatre, Johannesburg. The writer was present on this first evening. Whilst admiring greatly the enormous amount of work which must have been devoted by the clever group of amateur players to learn their parts and to act them so splendidly, he felt sad at the choice of the production, in-so-far as the Repertory Fortnight was concerned.

Here was an opportunity for producing something really beautiful in Jewish drama, and all that a specifically Jewish organisation could produce was a play in which the main attraction was a series of clever caricatures of the Jew. It must have occurred to many of the Gentiles present at His Majesty's Theatre that we are a peculiar race, in that we seem to take joy in exaggerating the weaknesses of which we are so often accused.

The main characters in the play are two Jews who have known each other for 40 years—two old cronies—yet in the first act, we see how each is trying to “do the other down” in a most shameless manner. I suppose there are Jews who do that, but surely they are not a representative type. Why this “quality” should be given such prominence to in a mixed audience, I cannot understand. The whole humour of the play is secured through “terrific” mistakes in English—mistakes which make the audience roar with laughter. Really, though, it is all tragic, for the majority of Jews are able very quickly to grasp a knowledge of the language of the countries in which they live, and most Jews speak these languages beautifully.

The idea of a Jewish father endeavouring to assist his newly made doctor son by advertising a special “Bargain Day for Stomach Troubles” is perfectly incongruous. That type of humour unfortunately does not make the Gentile laugh *with* the Jew but rather *at* him—which, of course, is most undesirable.

I conclude by asking seriously why was it necessary for the Dramatic Section of the Jewish Guild to go out of its way to choose a play in which the Jew is put to ridicule, even in a kindly unvindictive way. There are such fine plays of Jewish interest, written by great dramatists of our own—translations of which in English can be secured with a little trouble—that I maintain the Jewish Guild missed a rare opportunity in the Repertory Fortnight in not producing a serious drama or play, presenting some definite Jewish problem, to a mixed audience of interested playgoers.

As regards the acting in “Go Ahead,” it was excellent. The main roles were portrayed by Mr. Harold Miller and Mr. David L. Kahn. The latter also produced the play very finely indeed. The main brunt of the work fell on Mr. Harold Miller and he gave a really human portrait of a distracted and over anxious Jewish father. The acting of Mr. Kahn was full of delicate touches and a fine repression which stamps him as one of the cleverest amateur actors on the Rand.

As the young doctor, Mr. Theo. H. Sachs was excellent, whilst Miss Anne Somen, as a Jewish housekeeper, was extremely droll. Miss May Merinsky gave a charming performance of an attractive young flapper in earnest love. A fine character portrait of an Irish woman was portrayed by Miss Elsie Levitas. It was only a small part, but it demonstrated that Miss Levitas is a character-actress of a high order. Other smaller parts were well carried out, helping to effect a well rounded performance.

D.

MIZRACHI IN WESTERN-SUBURBS.

UNDER the auspices of the Mizrahi Western-Suburbs Women's Organisation, a memorial meeting will be held on Sunday the 24th inst., at 8 p.m. at the Mayfair Synagogue, to commemorate the twenty-eighth anniversary of the death of Dr. Theodor Herzl. Rev. S. Steinberg will intone the Haskorah and amongst the speakers will be Rabbi I. M. Gervis. The Jewish public is cordially invited.

Herzl Memorial Meeting

TO BE HELD IN NORDAU CLUB.

UNDER the joint auspices of the Nordau Club and the Johannesburg Women's Zionist League, a Herzl Memorial Meeting will be held on Sunday, the 24th inst., at the H.O.D. Hall, at 8 p.m., on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of the leader's death.

The speakers of the evening will be Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau, Dr. Deborah Katzen, and Mr. L. A. Pincus. Mr. I. J. Kagan will preside.

It is hoped that the Jewish public will attend this function and pay tribute to the memory of the great Jewish national leader.

Fine Concert at Orpheum

In Aid of United Hebrew Schools.

IT is rather a pity that the auditorium of the Orpheum Theatre, Johannesburg, was not filled to overflowing on Sunday evening last on the occasion of the classical concert organised by Mr. Max Weinbrenn, the well known local musician, in aid of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg.

Unfortunately the Jewish Guild had a big function on the same evening and there was also an important concert at the Town Hall. The programme provided by Mr. Weinbrenn was of a nature which gave pleasure to the music-loving folk who attended.

The orchestra of well known local musicians was well conducted throughout a number of interesting compositions. Madam Weinbrenn sang the famous aria from the opera *Hugenot* by Meyerbeer, in an accomplished style, which pleased the audience, who demanded an encore. Signor A. Burani also sang, demonstrating his splendid bass voice in a monologue from the opera *Andrea Serameno* by Giordano. Mrs. H. L. Karnovsky sang “Nymphs and Fauns” by Bernberg in a delightful and gifted manner and she had to respond to an enthusiastic demand for an encore. Miss Dolly Weinbrenn's rendition of a Chopin Valse was much appreciated. Signor E. Ferri sang “The Two Grenadiers” by Schubert. This song is not improved however, in an Italian colouring.

The concert was undoubtedly one of the finest we have heard in Johannesburg for some time.

D.

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