

Theater News

Hamlet

By EUPHEMIA WYATT

HAMLET: Richard Burton first appeared on Broadway in 1951 in the small part of the clerk in "The Lady's Not for Burning" in which John Gielgud was both the star and the director. In my review I noted "While all the cast deserves mention, the personality of young Richard Burton left the most enduring impression. He should have a future."

The prophecy seemed illumed when Burton slouched through Cleopatra but his Hamlet shows the qualities which Sir John recognized when he planned and directed the present production. Of all the sixteen different Hamlets it has been my privilege to see, Sir John Gielgud's is my favorite but Burton's Hamlet commands great respect and consideration. Neither phibetic nor pompous like Gielgud, Burton is forthright, vigorous and virile but not so overbearing as Olivier nor so practical as Evans.

There is never any doubt that he will average his father — the question is: How? and When? Proud but openhearted, intensely loyal, sensitive but not so passionate as Barrymore; dignified but not so princely as Forbes-Robertson, his great asset is his voice — with its vibrant power and the excellence of his elocution. He is never dull, "So or not to be" is spoken softly but a full range of emotion is given in his other famous lines in which the wit is never scented.

In his meeting with Ophelia he is full of tenderness until suspicious of her treachery and he flings her away from him at the end — a bit of stage business I have always resented. When Polonius enters with the King, however and tries to take Ophelia in his arms, she runs away evidently ashamed of the part she has played. The duel, as usual, is fought with rapiers and daggers, the poison of the Queen dying in Hamlet's arms. He himself, dying, stands as Horatio did supported by Horatio but just before death comes, he pushes the King's body off the throne and takes his rightful place.

The production is more or less an experimental one presented as it might be in rehearsal without sets or costumes — except for the Players on the only prop, an armchair on the throne. That visual beauty defers from dramatic force seems to me a spurious argument: I would rather say that the play comes through in spite of seeing the Prince in a black

jersey and the King and courtiers in business suits. What is hardest to take are the rough "bleacher" steps leading up to the wooden platform — which adds a second level to the stage. That such economy would make more Shakespeare possible seems the best excuse.

The Ghost speaks with Gielgud's recorded voice. His shadow appears on the back wall — which is more effective than the explosive light let out by Barrymore — and also makes it possible for Hamlet to face the audience. Alfred Drake is an affable villain as the King; Eileen Herlie as the Queen has only a small chaff in lieu of a bed in her closet scene when Polonius' body falls so far forward that his head is most noticeably near to Hamlet's feet. As Polonius, Kline Cronyn scores a triumph. Not a doddering ancient but a conscientious elder statesman who is also a bore. In a company which has George Rose as Grave-digger, it is not surprising that it tingles with excitement with the further exhort that every word can be heard.

BLUES FOR MR. CHARLIE: To understand that "Mr. Charlie" means white man to a negro, which is the meaning of the comedy written by James Baldwin, directed by Burgess Meredith and presented by the Actors Studio Theatre. For "Set My People Free," Mr. Baldwin has substituted "Learn to Walk Again Like Men." When the Reverend Meridian Henry who has always preached non-violence at the end places the revolver, he had taken from his son in his Bible.

The action, played on a bare stage with the help of Feder's magical lighting concerns the murder of Richard Henry, the Reverend Meridian's boy by low cast white grocer. But Richard himself is no lamb, for the slaughter, he has returned to his small Southern community from New York, confused, belligerent and a "junky," and enters the grocer's store determined to insult the brutal fanatic and his young wife. When Parnell, a decent newspaperman, forces a trial, what is called by Baldwin, "tribal loyalty" is too strong even for Parnell as key witness and an acquittal is the result.

Superbly acted, the "one weakness" of the play is that all the Southerners except Parnell are stylized in their hypocrisy and hatred. Percy Rodriguez as the Minister, the finest character; Al Freeman Jr. as Richard; Rosita Le Noire as the Grandmother and Janita, Richard's girl friend stand out in the cast so do Pat Hingle as Parnell and Rip Torn as his murderer. "Jesus Loves Me" is on the small banner on the pulpit of the negro chapel and is stage center during a large part of the play; an indictment of us all.

ON ICE AT THE WORLD'S FAIR: The opening night at the Fair was cold and wet but those spirited visitors who were fortunate enough to see Dick Burton's Ice Extravaganza found themselves in whirl of color, pretty girls and beautiful expert skating. The various ballets are fantastic and amusing, among them two young chimps who love to wet some members of the audience. Faster than the eye in some of his spins is Ron Robertson in a show that will certainly find a large audience in the New York City Pavilion.

Chevalier Set At Eastman

The Inimitable Maurice Chevalier will appear in person at Rochester's Eastman Theatre on Friday, May 22, at 8:15 p.m.

In his first Rochester appearance, Chevalier will perform such songs as "Thank Heaven for Little Girls," "Lopise," "Place Pigalle" and "I'm Glad I'm Not Young Anymore."

Color Films At Museum

Three films in color and sound are featured on the family program at Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, on Sunday, May 10, at 2:30 p.m. and again at 3:30 p.m.

Variety fare includes camping, fishing, sightseeing on a Wyoming Adventure, the antics of "Buzzy the Squirrel" and the tale of a pedlar, some monkeys and their monkey business in "Caps for Sale" from the book of the same title by Esphyr Slobodkina.

To Be Wed

Announcement is made of the engagement of Miss Joanna Eve Cannull, daughter of Mrs. Margaret Cannull, of 122 Exchange St. and the late Samuel Cannull, to Thomas Joseph, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Donahue of 215 Putney St.

Whatta Blast! To Open At Mooney

Dan Kavanaugh as the blustery politician J. J. Jackson, expounds his political theory before the adoring gaze of his proud family. J. J.'s daughter Jay is played by Lorraine Lionell and his wife Jennifer played by Mary Ellen Kuntz. The two act musical comedy is scheduled for performances on May 8, 9, 15, 16, 17 at 8:15 p.m. in the school auditorium. Tickets are available through any Cardinal-Mooney student.

Seminary To Present 'Twelve Angry Men'

St. Andrew's Seminary Dramatics Society is presenting "Twelve Angry Men" in cooperation with The Dramatic Publishing Co. on May 9 at 7:45 p.m. The original TV presentation written by Reginald Rose was the winner of an Emmy. The play has been adapted by Sherman L. Segel.

The play concerns a jury deliberation on a murder case. Tension grows as the jurors struggle with themselves and with each other as they try to agree on a verdict.

'Bye Bye Birdie' Slated For Aquinas Stage

"Bye Bye Birdie," the Broadway stage hit, will be presented by the Aquinas St. Genesius Club on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, May 15, 16, 17 at 8:15 p.m. The Aquinas group is the first amateur company to present the show here.

Miss Suzanne Wigg of Rochester Music Theatre has directed the music for the three-hour comedy. Sharing directorial reins are William T. White, former Aquinas actor and Father J. L. Cullen, C.S.B. of the Aquinas faculty. Miss Fawn Schreffel directs the choreography.

Leading actors in the satire on rock and roll singers and their fan clubs come from student bodies of four Catholic high schools. Represented are Aquinas, Nazareth Academy, Our Lady of Mercy and St. Agnes High Schools.

Mike Deninger, Bill Evans and Tony Rossi, Aquinas seniors, are the male leads. Supporting them are Alan Archibald, who plays the role of the rock and roll singer who brings his sophisticated city ways to the town of Sweetapple, Ohio.

Girls appearing in leading roles include Johni Foss, Janice Corletta, Margie Nauhheimer, Ellen-Donahue, Margi Guada and Susan Mastello. Twenty-four singers are featured in the new-famous "Telephone Hour" and they will be joined by vocal soloists in "Put on a Happy Face," "A Lot of Livin'," "Kids" and "One Boy."

Technicians for the show are Aquinas students George Vick, Steve Kohlmeier, Bob Young, Jack Plum, Gary Onits and Bob Kubiak. Lighting effects will be handled by Paul Chesnak; Pete Lystonek, Al Mercury and Dick DeMarse. William McCarthy of the Aquinas staff is ticket manager.

Serendipity Singers Listed

The Serendipity Singers will be the featured attraction Sunday, May 10, at 3 p.m. in Ritter-Clark gymnasium. The jazz concert will conclude a series of events in the annual Spring weekend at Rochester Institute of Technology.

The hootenanny group of seven boys and two girls won their professional start at "The Bitter End" folk-meets in New York City. They have appeared on television's "Hootenanny" and are known for their versatility, comedy flair and unusual musical sounds. They compose most of the music they perform.

New to recording circles, they have one record released on the Philips label.

"Serendipity" is defined as "the unexpected discovery of a new and happy event." Their music is classified by the experts as folk jazz, folk orientated with jazz arrangements and instrumentation.

Listen! EVERY Sunday at 12:35 P.M.

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Disc Notes

Going Baroque

By PAUL CONTESTABLE

One of the most unique vocal groups in the music world is featured on a new Philips Record, "The Swingle Singers Going Baroque." Impassioned tenors and superb alto are combined as they present their own fantastic arrangements of the works of Bach, Handel and Vivaldi.

Using a carefully chosen variety of vocal sounds to express the sense of the music, the Swingle Singers perform the works of the Masters with dignity, versatility and precision. They do nothing drastic with the music, but only add a pleasing jazz beat.

Their previous record, Bach's Greatest Hits, was nominated into the top ten best LP's of 1963 and drew praise from all fields of music—from symphony to jazz.

Featured on their latest album are such great classical masterpieces as "Baldinero" and "Largo" by Johann Sebastian Bach; "Air" and "Allegro" by Handel and "Fugue" by Vivaldi.

The Swingle Singers own creative style adds a provocative new sound to these great masterpieces that is unprecedented. It is an emotional wallop with a superb total melodic effect.

Dusty Springfield has become one of the most popular single acts in the music business in just a few short months. Her initial LP has just been released by Philips Records featuring her two great hits, "I Only Want to Be With You and Stay Awake" plus ten other first rate tunes.

Her radiant voice an excellent arrangement are most enjoyable and impressive. Already a hit with the teen-agers, her music is sure to find a receptive ear among our "older teenagers" as well.

Other songs on the album include "24 Hours from Tulsa," "Mama Said, Mocking Bird, Something Special, Every Day I Have to Cry and Wishin' and Hopin'."

Making his Decca LP debut is Robert Maxwell, "America's Foremost Harpist," on the album, Shangri-La. Maxwell is credited with introducing the harp to the world of popular music. The title song is Maxwell's own composition and seems to be headed toward becoming one of the top selling instrumental records of the year.

A full orchestral accompaniment provides a hauntingly beautiful background to the rich tones of the harp. The stereo effect is highly impressive and pleasing throughout the album.

Some all-time favorites included on the album are Beethoven's "Stranger Music," "The Breeze and I," "Old Devil Moon," "Magic in the Moonlight and It's Magic." A stirring record with ideal stereo quality.

Rip Taylor's first Colpix single, "How Does It Feel?" is due for a strong, promotional push via a tie-in between Colpix



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Players List 'Bye Bye Birdie'

The Pompeian Players, under the direction of the Rev. Charles Borgognoni, will present the highly successful musical comedy, Bye Bye Birdie, at the Keith Theatre in Syracuse from May 13 to 19.

Father Borgognoni, a graduate of St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, has zoomed to national attention with his profes-



FATHER BORGOGNONI

national-quality productions in recent years. Without benefit of formal theatrical training and unable to read a note of music, he has directed scores of untrained young people through 14 outstanding productions which have already netted more than \$100,000 for the church.

His top quality productions in recent years have led to national notice in newspapers, magazines and on TV. After a series of minstrel-variety type presentations, the group tackled its first complete musical comedy, "The I Sing," in 1955. Its 1957 production of South Pacific had to move to larger quarters in a downtown theatre, 122 Exchange St. and the late Samuel Cannull, to Thomas Joseph, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Donahue of 215 Putney St. Are Ringing and Music Man.