MUSIC and FUN in the THEATRES NOW

ELIZABETH BRICE IN "A WINSOME WIDOW"

BLANCHE DUFFIELD IN "THE PIRATES of PENZANCE."

FLORENCE WICKHAM and BASIL RUYSDAEL in "ROBIN HOOD."

JULIETTE DIKA IN "THE ROSE MAID."

The revival of operetta with the assistance of singers from the opera houses has turned out to be a profitable venture. So it is not at all improbable that the success of the present performance at the New Amsterdam Theatre will bring forth many repetitions of familiar works with such distinguished powers to interpret them that they will hereafter be entitled to the designation of "grand opera" singers, so dear to the heart of the public. It has been by no means the first of the stars of the Metropolitan Opera House who have taken part in "Robin Hood," but those that did appear were equal to reviving the opera with such force that it is a notable success in the theatre's musical year.

When the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas were at the height of their popularity they were sung by all sorts of companies. Children, church choir organizations, which found few difficulties in the simplicity which was so important to good acting of them, and amateurs, all these found opportunities in these popular operas. Evidently the way to awaken fresh interest in the older works of this school is by supplying famous singers or, at all events, singers not in the regular comic opera lists to appear in them. It would not be without interest to see the results of this system applied to the operas of Offenbach, which require an altogether different style of interpretation as well as singing. The singing, moreover, is of a much more exacting sort than even the occasionally difficult scores of Sullivan demand.

Then the singing of Offenbach also has its difficulties. They are of course too technical in character to be thoroughly known by any other than a singer, but their character is less simple than that of the Sullivan scores, which demand quickness and distinctness in enunciation possibly more than anything else. It is in the spirit of the song of Offenbach too that the interpreters have their task. It will not do to carol "Dites lui" in the same way that one might sing "Come Into the Garden, Maud." They are altogether too different in spirit for the same treatment. Beautiful is the music of nearly every Offenbach score, which is not rendered any less suited to revival now because the works with which audiences of this day are acquainted are so limited in number. "La Belle Hélène," "La Grande Duchesse" "Orphée aux Enfers," these are now the only three operettas well known to the public which delights in what is not always the most evident.

Only "Les Contes d'Hoffmann" has ever been taken up by the opera houses of Europe, although some of the one act works are occasionally put into the programme of the Opéra Comique at the old fashioned "bourgeois" performances, as they are called, which begin at a little after the noon hour and continue until late in the Sunday afternoon. The other numbers besides "Les Noces de Jeannette" are likely to be "Paul et Virginia" or "Le Cheval Bronze," or both, and Paer's "Le Maitre de Chapelle." "La Vie Parisienne" has lately been sung in Paris with the costumes of the period in which it was written to add new interest to the revival. Here it will be necessary to bring the singers from the Metropolitan Opera House or those of Chicago or Philadelphia to supply the punch which they were able to impart to "Robin Hood."

They might well be exploited in some of the Offenbach works. The music of them is altogether charming. There is of course an invariable difficulty with the text. Yet that might be overcome. The usual fun of "Robin Hood" in its present production plays an altogether secondary part to its music and it is in the admirable singing of the principals and the chorus that the success of this revival may be said to lie. So the singing of the Offenbach music ought to compensate for the mustiness of some of the fun. It would be at all events interesting to observe the attitude which audiences of the day would take toward these masterpieces of the '60s.

Then there are other French works well worth repeating at this time when the presence of the opera singers insures a certain degree of popular success. There is, of course, "La Fille de Mme. Angot," which was given in the most delightful style at the New Theatre but was nevertheless one of the least successful of all the productions. The scenery and costumes were uncommonly tasteful and surely Lecocq's opera was never more charmingly sung than it was by Edmond Clément, Frances Alda and their associates in that notable revival. That it failed to interest the public in the New Theatre is not significant. It is quite true that nothing there did interest the public at any time, so this mood bears no relation to the work under other conditions. It would assuredly conquer a new generation with the opera singers to bring out the full beauty of its exquisite score.

Much of the Viennese school is still unexploited. Some critics have always thought that the genius of Johann Strauss bloomed much more brilliantly in the score of "The Merry War" than it did in "Die Fledermaus," although the music composed to illustrate the text of Meilhac and Halévy is commonly regarded as the masterpiece of the Austrian genius. "The Merry War" had its days of great popularity here. Originally sung at the Casino, it had Lily Post, Louise Paullin and Mathilde Cottrelly in the leading rôles. Giovanni Perugini, then a young tenor who had just left the field of opera, was the tenor who later became known as John Perugini. Subsequent revivals of the work had capable singers to perform them and "Der Lustige Krieg" was also given frequently in the German original. So it ought to come to a hearing if the process of reviving the operettas with such attention to the singers is to be continued. The humor of these adapted pieces in their original New York translations was poor enough, but it ought to be capable of some improvement if it were submitted to the processes of contemporaneous librettists.

Singers are much easier to deal with nowadays than they used to be and their descent into comic opera is no longer regarded as an undignified step for which they must be consoled by the balm of very large salaries which they are assuredly not always worth. Ernestine Schumann-Heink lost nothing in prestige by her year in the uninspired comic operetta written for her. Fritzi Scheff was never destined for any heights on the operatic stage, so her accession to "Babette" was not an occasion to be regarded as a misuse of talent. Bella Alten will lose none of the popularity she possesses at the Metropolitan Opera House when she goes back there to sing *Grell* just because she was for six weeks the *Maid Marian* of the revival at the New Amsterdam Theatre.

Young singers who have the alternative of singing in these revivals for a good salary during the spring time weeks or going to Europe with no engagement whatever, or perhaps one at such small compensation that it does not pay living expenses, will be quite ready to take their places in the comic opera revivals and draw such comfortable compensations for some weeks of the summer. It is unfortunate that a part is not sometimes found in one of these revivals for Albert Reiss. He is an admirable comedian, and if Otto Goritz learns English a little bit better than he knows it at present these two so-called "grand opera" singers would make a pair of operetta comedians of which any manager would be proud.

Then there are members of the companies in Boston and Chicago who would be a delight in operetta in English. Lillian Grenville and Marie Cavan of the Chicago company would be valuable to any operetta company. Marguerite Sylva, after singing here in "Gipsy Love," is now in the French opera houses appearas *Tosca* and other rôles of her répertoire. She has evidently lost no artistic caste by singing the music of the most popular operetta composer during a season in this country. So there will hereafter be no complaint that artistic prestige disappears with association with comic opera. It took Mme. Schumann-Heink to disprove the truth of that charge. In London Maggie Teyte and Edyth Walker even sing in the music halls, and here Leopold Wuellner did the same thing in this country. It is the habit of giving two performances daily in this country which has kept the level of the vaudeville theatres distinctly lower than those of London.

It is significant that the French field offers no operetta worthy of revival composed since the days of Lecocq and Offenbach. The Viennese stage is the only output of operetta which is worthy of international production. Why the French writers, who were at one time providing opera bouffe of a quality that carried it over the world, are entirely unproductive to-day is an unanswered question. Even the composers of cafe chantant music have in a measure deferred to the craze for American rhythms which rages in the Paris music halls. The failure of French composers in the lighter forms to write as successfully to-day as they did in the past is attributed by some Frenchmen to the indifference or the lack of enterprise of the French music publishers.

Just as the publishers of the works of Puccini, Wolf-Ferrari, Richard Strauss and other popular contemporaneous composers advance their interests by every business and strategetical device, so do the publishers of the German operettas look after the interests of the writers whose music they publish. Lehar, Strauss, Fall, all of them, are as carefully exploited by the men who control the publication of their operas as if they were composers of a more serious nature. So it is easily to be understood that they are better known than the Frenchmen who are not pushed forward by their publishers. Maybe genius may not always need such careful cultivation, but there are many in France who believe that the country's fame in opera bouffe might be revived were her composers so carefully nurtured as those in Germany. The whole industry of operetta composition in Vienna has been put on a commercial basis, which does not allow any chance to escape. It has proved too powerful a business competitor for the Frenchmen, who have yielded the field without a struggle.

Drama leagues, theatre clubs and other organizations devoted to the uplift of the tottering drama in this country should be encouraged to know that one phase of their ambitions has been realized. There is at last a municipal theatre in existence. It came into being, moreover, in the progressive West, which of all the sections of the country has shown the greatest advance in dramatic tastes. Hence it was in Haven, Reno county, Kan., that the art loving citizens first united to support a municipal playhouse. It happened that the desire to see the prevailing "movies" was the inspiration for their act. But the town, nevertheless, now owns and conducts its own moving picture theatre.

Haven had languished for entertainment, for the isolation of Reno county prevented frequent visits from the travelling theatrical companies. Then there were only occasional glimpses at the moving pictures, since there was no theatre regularly accessible for their use. The sight of these popular entertainments had implanted a strong taste for them in the population. So in the absence of a local Mecenas who would build a hall for the purpose a certain number of business men in the town united and provided a moving picture hall and the necessary pictures and operator.

Every night the public is admitted for a small charge to see the films, which are changed twice a week. When there is any accrued profit a free performance is given or new films are rented. There is no profit for anybody connected with the enterprise except what is paid for the use of the films and the wages of the operator. Now that the weather has assumed the character that suggests out of door temperature, the same citizens who built the hall for the pictures have arranged a park for the purpose of exhibiting the pictures there.

Thus has the State for the first time in this country interfered in the artistic affairs of the community. The mighty oak that may spring from this acorn towers too high to let its topmost branches be seen from the earth. It may be through the humble "movies" that this wonderful influence is introduced into the amusements of the country. It is, nevertheless, the beginning of that millennium for which the believers in the subventioned theatres long have aspired. Once more has the widespread influence of the moving picture been established.

That the moving pictures are the people's theatre is a familiar acknowledgment of the popularity thay have gained. They have aroused a degree of interest among the committees on sociological reform which the playhouse never succeeded in awakening. The same widespread interest would be of inestimable value to the drama. If there were a real people's theatre in which it was the drama and not its photographic reproduction which was revealed to the public, it would make the theatre the real force that it might so readily be in American life.

The fact that it is the moving picture and not our theatre which is so close to the hearts of the people is, of course, its cheapness. Were it possible to offer dramatic performances at the same rates, there would be no question as to the preference of the public. Such an outcome of the situation is altogether impossible. So the moving pictures will remain for all time the people's theatre.

Yet the theatre will benefit by the interest which the moving pictures have created in the minds of the people. The attention which is now directed toward these means of public diversion will eventually be directed to the theatre. In the way of reform the American theatre needs nothing. It is not impure. It is on the other hand scrupulously prudish. There is indeed a suspicious elaborateness about its freedom from suggestiveness. So it is not by way of needing any attention to its morals. But its taste is sometimes wofully bad, its banalities disheartening, and its speculative commercialism evidently such a deep rooted trait as to be ineradicable.

The intelligent interest which the moving pictures in reference to the public have aroused, discriminating the scrutiny which has been directed toward them, and the sympathetic appreciation of their artistic element which the investigators have shown should make any admirer of the regular theatre regretful that it has not succeded in interesting such types of American citizens to the same extent that this more popular form of entertainment has done.

Certainly there is no parallel instance of a municipal theatre for the drama to the story of the moving picture hall which was made possible and is conducted altogether by citizens. New York and Chicago have had their New Theatres and Drama Players, but they were the artistic enterprises of a few wealthy citizens, not the effort of a young community to give entertainment to a people starving for some representation of theatrical enjoyment.

William T. Price contrives to crowd into the compact *American Playwright* much that is important, if not indispensable to every student of the art of writing for the stage. The contents of this interesting little monthly are valuable, for of all the magazines pretending to impart a knowledge of the principles of dramatic writing it is alone authoritative. It was Mr. Price who first undertook to impart to students the methods of the playwright. He is therefore responsible for the chairs that exist in the various American universities, which had never been created when he began to labor with such success in this field. He has had imitators as teachers, some of them with nothing more to offer than what had been acquired at second hand from his notes, but he is alone in the field to-day as a scientific, cultured instructor in the art of the dramatist.

It is one of the first instances of a knowledge of what might be called the principles of dramatic construction, were that phrase not so hopelessly hackneyed, to speak of the principles of Aristotle, to discourse learnedly of pity and terror and thus appear to be gifted with all the dramaturgical knowledge of the ancients. In a recent number of the *American Playwright* Mr. Price calls attention to the amount of snobbish pretentiousness concerning the writing of Aristotle, about the drama which treated almost exclusively of the tragedy of the Greeks and therefore has little appropriateness to the theatre of the day. That of all he has written on the subject less than thirty pages have any interest for the modern dramatist and that much of his treatise is now obsolete are other proofs of the exaggerated importance which the average professor of dramatic art attaches to the Aristotelian laws. Yet a mere reference to pity and terror is supposed to establish immediately a mastery of all the laws the dramatist is expected to know.

Of course to the informed there are none of the facts concerning "The Poetics" which are unknown. The best service of the paragraphs written by Mr. Price will be their exposure of a sham which has added apocryphal importance to many learned expounders of the laws of the theatre. There are many live and timely discussions of dramatic topics in this little magazine which cannot fail to be deeply interesting to all students of the drama. Thus the *American Playwright* is different from any other publication of the kind in that it is authoritative.

"PINAFORE" AND "THE MIKADO."

Brief Revivals of the Two Operas at the Casino This Week.

The revival of "The Pirates of Penzance" at the Casino Theatre will continue for four more performances, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights and the Wednesday matinee. The remainder of the week will be devoted to revivals of "Pinafore" and "The Mikado." The cast for "Pinafore" will include Arthur Cunningham, George J. MacFarlane, Arthur Aldridge, De Wolf Hopper, Eugene Cowles, Blanche Duffield and Viola Gillette. In "The Mikado" will be George J. MacFarlane, Arthur Aldridge, De Wolf Hopper, Eugene Cowles, Arthur Cunningham, Blanche Duffield, Alice Brady, Louise Barthel and Kate Condon.

The fifth annual frolic of the Friars Club will be given to-night at the Moulin Rouge. The performance will open with a minstrel first part, with James J. Corbett as interlocutor for the first edition, Tom Lewis as bones and Richard Carle as tambo. Sam H. Harris will act as interlocutor for the second edition, with William Collier as bones and William Collier, Jr., as tambo. In the third edition Jerry J. Cohan will act as interlocutor, George M. Cohan as bones and Raymond Hitchcock as tambo. In the olio there will be a monologue by Friar Lew Dockstader. This will be followed by George (Honey Boy) Evans in "The Dixey Derby." The Friars Club "Piano Bugs" will play several popular melodies. Ward and Vokes will appear in "Percy and Harold," Weber and Fields in their famous poolroom scene, and George M. Cohan and William Collier in a funny skit. The performance will close with a musical burlesque in one act entitled "All Members of This Club." Louis Mann will play the part of *Hans Dinkleheimer*, with Raymond Hitchcock as his wife. Julian Eltinge will be seen in a specialty, George M. Cohan and Carter De Haven will also give a new specialty, as well as John C. Rice and John Hyams. The entire company will appear in the finale.

"Bought and Paid For" at William A. Brady's Playhouse presents the wholly unusual spectacle of a play that has run continually for ten months in New York and yet "sells out" every night when the weather is cool or even coolish. The 350th New York performance of Mr. Broadhurst's comedy-drama will be given on Monday of next week.

"Bunty Pulls the Strings" at the Comedy Theatre continues its unbroken success. The little Scottish comedy appears to supply inexhaustible fun for inexhaustible audiences and definite arrangements have now been made to continue the production without interruption through the summer and well into the autumn.

It is the unexpected surprises in "Officer 666" that furnish the appeal of the farce which has held the stage of the Gaiety Theatre for the last twenty-one weeks. It is a forceful play with an interesting plot and plausible story and it is acted by a clever company.

"Robin Hood" maintains its popularity at the New Amsterdam Theatre. Next Wednesday afternoon there will be celebrated the 5,000th performance in this country of the light opera which made Reginald de Koven and Harry B. Smith rich and famous. Composer de Koven will direct the orchestra and there will be souvenirs for everybody.

"The Rose Maid," the romantic operetta, is the attraction at the Globe Theatre, where the roof is removed and the performance is given with real as well as theatrical stars in view.

Several changes in the cast of "The Winsome Widow" at the Ziegfeld Moulin Rouge have made the musical play more acceptable than ever. The skating scene with its real ice pond suggests coolness and is an attractive novelty.

This is to be the final week of "Whirl of Society," "A Night With the Pierrots" and "The Rose of Ispahan" at the Winter Garden. The theatre will remain closed for only a few days and then will come the new summer entertainment, which will be a novel revue entitled "The Passing Show of 1912" and "The Ballet of 1830," which is to be presented with all the original leading English dancers.

The Paul J. Rainey African Hunt Pictures continue at the Lyceum Theatre. The 100th performance will be celebrated this week. There are 6,000 feet of films shown, and an entertainment that lasts two and a half hours.

The motion pictures at the Broadway Theatre, showing the pursuit of the big game animals of Alaska and Siberia, have gained steadily in patronage.

The original Eight Texas Tommy Dancers will head the programme at Hammerstein's Roof Garden this week. W. C. Fields, the comedy juggler, will show new tricks, and Raymond and Caverly and George B. Reno and company will contribute popular acts. Also on the programme are the Top 'o the World Dancers, Will Roehm's boxing and wrestling girls, Hayden, Borden and Hayden, a rathskeller trio, Eva Shirley, who sings, the Six Brown Brothers in a comedy musical act, Corelli and Gillette, comedians, and several others. The ice skating girls are a big attraction at the Old Farm during the intermission.

At Proctor's Fifth Avenue Theatre Bud Fisher will depict the joys and sorrows of Mutt and Jeff at the national conventions and otherwise amuse Broadway vaudeville audiences this week. Two new musical comedy features have been secured in the team of Bessie Clifford and Victor Morley and Ray Samuels. The former pair appeared in "The Three Twins" and "The Never Homes," while Miss Samuels was recently in the cast of "A Winsome Widow." The Walter N. Lawrence Players will present a melodramatic comedy, "Alias Mr. Roseberry." Others on the programme are Abbott and White, Ruth Roche, Francis in "A Touch of High Life," De Renzo and La Due, trapeze experts, and an animal act, Emperor and Empress.

At the B. F. Keith Union Square Theatre this week the featured act will be that of Mlle. Albertina Rasch, the Viennese dancer who, assisted by a company of twenty, will present a spectacular production called "Le Ballet Classique." Sidney Jarvis, who recently appeared in "The Little Millionaire," will present an original comedy skit assisted by a young woman who is said to be an unusual beauty. Redini and Arthur will burlesque Mlle. Rasch and do juggling feats and the Ryan-Richfield company will be seen in the Cressy comedy "Mag Haggerty, Osteopath." Also to appear are Gladys Clark and Henry Bergman in "A Baseball Flirtation," Weston, Fields and Carroll, the Jungman Family, La Rocca, a musical genius, and La Vier, an acrobat.

The vaudeville bills at three of the Proctor theatres are changed twice a week. Robert T. Haines heads the first programme at the Twenty-third street theatre, appearing in a playlet called "The Peace Maker." Ida Hamilton and company in a comedy, "The Woman of To-morrow," will be the feature at the Fifty-eighth street theatre and at the 125th street house the dramatic sketch "The Devil, The Servant and The Man" will be the most important offering.

The Madison Square Roof Garden has an open air restaurant where those who wish to do so may dance between courses. An elaborate cabaret show is also offered.

AT THE PARKS AND BEACHES.

The Brighton Beach Music Hall Opens With a Good Bill.

The Brighton Beach Music Hall opened yesterday afternoon for the summer season of 1912, presenting an entertaining programme of vaudeville of the best type. Irene Franklin sang her way into the good graces of all her auditors, and Burt Green assisted her. Jim Morton, the "boy comedian" was at his best and told his stories and sang his songs in the same way he always does. Trovato, the remarkable violinist, was another feature, and Roy Barnes and Jessie Crawford were seen in a clever skit called "The Faker and the Lady." Isabelle Raymond and Frank Carter offered a specialty in singing and dancing called "Bright Lights." Hilda Hawthorne and "Johnnie" the Three Ernsts gave some astonishing exhibitions in acrobatic work. Catherine Hayes and Sabel Johnson were amusing in "A Dream of Baby Days," and the Four DeMont Trio offered an acrobatic novelty called "Hotel Turn-Over." The same programme will be given this week.

Three acts will divide headline honors at the New Brighton Theatre this week. They are Jack Wilson and company in a comedy skit, Jesse Lasky's new operetta "Miss California" and Billy Gould and Belle Ashlin, the entertainers. Also on the programme are Marshall Montgomery, the ventriloquist; Lyons and Yosco, the singer and the harpist; Franklin Ardell and company in "The Suffragette," Annie Kent, "the little jester," Adonis and his dog and the two Parrofs, acrobats.

One of the interesting new features at Luna this season is the cabaret circus which is distributed over the greater part of the park. All of the acts are done outdoors, so that it is possible to stroll around from show to show.

New circus acts at the combination band stand and hippodrome, a new array of features in the vaudeville theatre, Frank Goodale making flights twice daily in his big dirigible and Prof. Lozito and his Royal Italian Guards band are among the attractions which entertain visitors at Palisades Amusement Park.

With boats operating daily from New York Glen Island has assumed its accustomed summer appearance. The park offers rest and recreation and the inauguration of band concerts adds to the enjoyment of a trip to the island.

North Beach offers a free fireworks show every Thursday evening as well as a free circus at Oak Park. The vaudeville show at Terminal Music Hall this week will include the Mack Musical Comedy Company, the Opera Duo and Rich and Vennett, a song and dance team.

INDANS' DEBT PAYING DAY

Great Annual Potlach of the Tribes of the Northwest

Nanaimo correspondence Vancouver sun.

An event of unusual interest to some 300 adult Indians was brought to a close on the reservation here by the singing of a song hundreds of years old followed by a full dress dance in which eight hours' labor played the prominent part.

For some three weeks past the natives have been gathering here. Indians from Cape Mudge, Comox, Victoria, Cowichan, Kokesilah, Quamichan, Chemainus, Musqueam, Kuper Island and Duncan with the Nanaimos have had the privilege of straightening up matters and paying debts of twenty years standing as well as those of more recent date.

As the old people can neither read nor write they must perforce have witnesses to their business transactions.

While the Chinook word for "potlaching" means giving, it also carries the meaning of taking. While in some few cases "potlaches," or free gifts, are distributed, in the main the money handed out or the blankets given are simply loans for the future or the payments of debts of longer or more recent standing.

An Indian's debts are never outlawed. If on account of unfortunate circumstances a man dies without paying his honest debts his wife or sons and daughters or more distant relatives feel that a moral obligation rests upon them which at such gatherings they dutifully discharge. The amount is paid in full with interest. This rate of interest is usually given as a "potlach" in which all who can get in take a share.

As there is more or less mixing up in marriages among the different tribes the bonds given and presents received on such occasions have their peculiar place in such gatherings.

Enlarged photos of dead relatives on such times unveiled with ancient form and ceremony, while kind acts performed and brave deeds done are held in everlasting remembrance by those who are their lineal descendants.