

DRAMA LEAGUE PRESENTS PREVIEW OF PLAYS IN ORIGINAL COMPETITION

A fair audience attended the Little Theatre Wednesday night for the preview of the three one-act plays which the Ottawa Drama League sends to Kingston to compete in the regional contest which starts there tonight.

The entertainment was good and well acted in the main but particularly gloomy. One looked in vain for any lightness, any comedy, it was tragically heavy almost from start to finish, provender calculated to bring a lugubrious indigestion to the tired businessman. No doubt those selecting these plays picked what they believed to be good mediums but a soupcon of cheerfulness somewhere in the ensemble would have been eagerly welcomed.

Some particularly fine emotional acting was forthcoming, some that was not so good, some excellent staging, production and lighting, generally good tempo, occasionally spoilt by author rather than interpreter and diction and audibility which were admirable throughout.

The first offering 'Release,' a little play centring about the Nova Scotian mine disaster and written by Luke Stewart of Ottawa was a very creditable first attempt—if it was a first attempt (the mechanization in places indicated real sense of theatre). The first portion was somewhat flabby and feeble, too much talk, too little action. The remaining two-thirds was well constructed, moved smoothly and possessed plenty of real dynamics. The players did well but could have done better. One did not get the atmosphere of the disaster sufficiently, the players (that is the miners) didn't look like miners, they were dirty but not untidy and they were harrowed hardly at all. There was little sense of tenseness in the scene, certainly not enough to grip the audience continuously. All improved in the final stages. Herbert Fripp gave the best performance. Sydney Webb and Arthur Clare were also creditable in their roles. A little less glaring light on the scene would have added to its good construction and the atmosphere of a temporary hospital.

Artificial Drama

"The First and the Last" the second offering, might have been written by Edgar Wallace rather than John Galsworthy. It is very artificial melodrama, exceedingly mechanical in construction and conforming to every known—and hackneyed—law of

melodrama. The characters are mere ly pegs on which to hang a plot and have all the earmarks of the best, or worst creations of sensationalism. Despite this artificiality it is a real thriller and grips the attention of those who like this kind of sensation. It was very well produced by Dorothy White and well acted. Barbara Eason gave a very lovely, very dramatic and emotionally satisfying interpretation of the part of Wanda. It was one of the finest things done locally for a long time, instinct with restrained fire, beauty and lovely diction. The part could not have been much better played. Dale Macdonald also tendered some superior emotionism, was quick, realistic, natural and potent throughout. Francis Templeton was better in his later stages than in the first. He finished very well but was a little too much the stiff, pragmatic man of law.

The mechanics of this play were of a high order throughout. The second scene done almost completely with curtains was a fine piece of work, conveying exactly the sense of loneliness and shabbiness desired. The dead lover scene was beautiful, but a little less color in the faces would have added reality.

Lovely Fantasy

The final showing "The Story of Pervaneh and Rafi" brought not only continuous tragedy, but torture excruciating and even forbidding the dreadfully slain lovers the consolation of a meeting in paradise. But it was a very lovely piece of fantasy of the Arabian Nights variety, was beautifully costumed and staged and in most cases well acted. Again the first part, particularly the first scene dragged, lacked fire. This was partly the author's fault and partly the players. The latter might have saved the situation with increased tempo.

Two particularly praiseworthy interpretations were those of Beatrice Brace as Pervaneh and Roger Watkins-Pitchford as Rafi. Miss Brace emanated charm and distinction. Not quite as good at first she warmed up to her role and in the last two scenes was emotionally tense, pitiful, tragic and lovely—an excellent characterization. Mr. Watkins-Pitchford never did better work. His diction was admirable, movement natural and easy, variation in pace and tone finely maintained and high tragedy expressed with appealing beauty and sincerity. Humphrey Porritt also did

EUROPE'S NARROW ESCAPE FROM WAR IS DISCLOSED

Non-Intervention Committee Prevented Spanish Conflict From Becoming General Outbreak, Viscount Cranborne Tells the Commons Amid Cheers.

LONDON, Feb. 13—Viscount Cranborne, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, told Opposition critics in the House of Commons today the Spanish non-intervention committee had saved Europe from being plunged into war. He was roundly cheered.

Repeating to the request of Clement Attlee, Labor leader, for a statement on the action the committee proposed taking, Viscount Cranborne pointed out that certain difficulties had developed. He said a sub-committee consisting of representatives of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Russia had been appointed to consider an effective system of supervision for agreements reached. This committee meets tomorrow.

"It is not clear while these long drawn-out discussions are taking place Italians are pouring men into southern Spain?" Attlee asked. He was interrupted by cries of "what about France?"

Attlee also asked if Italy was not breaking the agreement not to alter the Mediterranean status quo.

Viscount Cranborne said it was generally regretted a number of people were going into Spain on both sides but he suggested there was no reason to accept the implication which Attlee drew.

"Does Viscount Cranborne really consider that men going in such great numbers from Italy can be considered volunteers or does he consider they would go without leave and active instigation of the Italian Government?" Attlee asked.

"I think," the Foreign Under-Secretary replied, "it is true they are volunteers, with leave of their Governments. Otherwise these Governments would prevent volunteers from going."

Soviet Ships Included

LONDON, Feb. 13—Germany and Italy consented today to inclusion of Russian warships in the naval patrol which is planned to keep foreign arms and volunteers out of Spain. That removed one of the causes of

ROYAL PARTY STUDY FOLIOS OF SHAKESPEARE

Duke of Windsor Attends Opera

VIENNA, Feb. 13—The Duke of Windsor, his sister, the Princess Royal, and her husband, the Earl of Harewood, did a little Shakespearean research today in the Austrian national library.

They examined the first and fourth folios, dated 1623 and 1685, which the Duke said were the envy of the British Museum. Later they inspected another Shakespearean collection in the downtown Hapsburg palace.

VIENNA, Feb. 13—The Duke of Windsor took a spurt upward in popular esteem today as a result of his visit last night to the opera with his sister, the Princess Royal of Great Britain.

As Prince of Wales and King of Great Britain, the Duke when here had shown a preference for night clubs. As the opera is cherished as an institution, his visit last night was hailed at once as a compliment to Austria.

At the now dukeless night clubs, a favorite air continues to be "The Most Charming King in the World." The Duke has a phonograph record of it at Enzesfeld, and after first hearing it he invited the orchestra that played it to give a performance at Enzesfeld.

the delay in putting a general non-intervention agreement into effect. Portugal, however, still was standing on her refusal to have neutral observers on her territory to check the flow of foreign aid to the Spanish combatants.

A sub-group of the international non-intervention committee, which is trying to set a date for stopping the foreign help, arranged another meeting for later in the day.

Victory at Madrid

MADRID, Feb. 13—Socialist troops drove Fascist besiegers from "last line" positions in Madrid's west park, the military defense counsel announced today.

The entire sector south of University City is "now dominated by the Government," the announcement said. A small building in front of the

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clinical hospital, centre of Socialist and insurgent attacks for weeks, was also taken in the day's fighting, the defence Junta said. Government commanders asserted insurgent-dominated Malaga.

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