

# The New Play

## 'Beggars' Holiday' Proves Tuneful and Colorful, but Dull in Its Book.

Perry Watkins and John R. Sheppard Jr. offered Manhattan's playgoers a brand new version of John Gay's eighteenth century "The Beggar's Opera" last evening. In its twentieth century edition it has become "Beggars' Holiday," and as unfolded in a lavish production on the ample stage of the Broadway Theater, it proved tuneful, eye-filling and colorful, but repetitious and uninspired in most of its book to the point of dullness.

As a result it all added up to a spectacular show that somehow failed to come off. It's a pity, too, for Duke Ellington has composed for it a delightful score that includes some of the best song numbers that Broadway has heard in a long time, and Alfred Drake, who heads the cast, is just the man to sing them. If John Latouche could have equaled this pair in his handling of the old story, there might have been dancing in the streets today.

In the up-to-date retelling Latouche has made Macheath the leader of a gang of thieves and Negroes in the slums of New York, and has portrayed the women who are enamored of him as a bordel keeper and the daughter of a crooked politician. It is in the former's gaudy establishment near the water front that Macheath is with his fellow thugs as the proceedings get underway and the sensuous note that Latouche sets there reappears far too often for the show's good before the hero has reached the last of his hairbreadth escapes from the law and has landed behind bars.

Near the close of the first act, the author moves Macheath and his outlaws to a hobo jungle on the island's fringes and it is here that the show reaches its best moments. When the big cast is singing in that scene such spirited numbers as "Tooth and Claw" and "The Wrong Side of the Tracks," "Beggars' Holiday" hits a high level one wishes it could maintain all along. The latter song, incidentally, really stops the show. It contains also some of the best of Latouche's lyrics. In writing "Tooth and Claw," he has fared better than in handling his general theme.

It is in the jungle scene too that Drake sings "Tomorrow Mountain," a catchy tune you'll be hearing often the rest of the winter. It sent the first night audience for the intermission believing that "Beggars' Holiday" had at long last hit its stride. Unfortunately these hopes proved false, for the second half of the show contained nothing of the same caliber, with the lone exception of a most delightful ballet. This number, danced to a haunting musical theme, for a snappy setting beneath Brooklyn Bridge, features Marjorie Belle and is a welcome contrast to the massed strutting that characterizes most of the chorus dancing. The major share of the show's comedy falls to Zero Mostel as the politician, and if you find his raucous shouting and wild grimacing funny, you'll at least manage to gather a few laughs from "Beggars' Holiday." At best, however, the show is woefully short of humor.

Bernice Parks, who took over from Libby Holman at almost the last moment, gives a lusty performance as the owner of the brothel, and also has the thankless task of having to sing "Lullaby for Junior," a song in the very worst of taste. Jet MacDonald is pleasing as the politician's daughter and handles her duet with Drake well. It is Drake who carries the brunt of the load and had at long last hit its stride. Unfortunately these hopes proved false, for the second half of the show contained nothing of the same caliber, with the lone exception of a most delightful ballet. This number, danced to a haunting musical theme, for a snappy setting beneath Brooklyn Bridge, features Marjorie Belle and is a welcome contrast to the massed strutting that characterizes most of the chorus dancing. The major share of the show's comedy falls to Zero Mostel as the politician, and if you find his raucous shouting and wild grimacing funny, you'll at least manage to gather a few laughs from "Beggars' Holiday." At best, however, the show is woefully short of humor.

# The New Records

## New Issues of Two Brahms Symphonies—Also the 'Liebeslieder Waltzes.'

By IRVING KOLODIN.

Desiring a new version of Brahms's Second Symphony for its catalogue, Victor has by-passed most of what would seem the logical choices for that task, and turned instead to Pierre Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony. Not merely a Frenchman, but actually a Parisian, his ample reputation has not included any special sympathy for the music of Hamburg's most famous musical product.

However, it certainly shall from now on, at least so far as the Second Symphony is concerned, for Monteux has produced a performance of such breadth and spirit, without being in the least ponderous about the matter, that it takes precedence over any currently available recordings, including both the Beecham and the Weingartner ones. It is unquestionably a better reproduction than either, and those who cherish Beecham's objective, non-dramatized Brahms will find this an even more successful essay in the same vein. The clear recording is a special gain for the considerable writing there is in this score for the French horns. (Victor album 1055.)

Eugene Ormandy's new version of the Third Symphony of Brahms also has sound qualities as a recording, but it is the reliability of the writing suffers thereby. Pierre Luboschut and Genia Nemenoff are the associated pianists, and their playing has no more lightness than the heavyweight variety contributed by Shaw's singers. The text, too, could be better articulated. (Victor album No. 1076.)

The Lighter Side. Though Mildred Bailey has been known for years as the "Rockin' Chair Lady," through identification with Hoagy Carmichael's tune of that name, she could earn it anew for the easy relaxed manner that makes "I'll Close My Eyes" and "Me and the Blues" on a new Majestic disc the soothing things they are. Both tunes are first class, and beautifully suited to the honeyed tones of Miss Bailey, who for all her years of singing, recording-making, is still the first lady of lilt. The fine little band led by Ellis Larkin is a mighty contributor to the quality results, including such men as Hank D'Amico on clarinet, Henderson Chambers, trombone, Mouse Randolph, trumpet, and Larkin himself as the tasteful pianist. Good recording, too. (Majestic 1093.)

Some of the most delightful as well as the most satisfying Brahms can be found in the "Liebeslieder" waltzes for voices and piano duet with which Brahms solemnized the decision to make tones of Miss Bailey, who for all her years of singing, recording-making, is still the first lady of lilt. The fine little band led by Ellis Larkin is a mighty contributor to the quality results, including such men as Hank D'Amico on clarinet, Henderson Chambers, trombone, Mouse Randolph, trumpet, and Larkin himself as the tasteful pianist. Good recording, too. (Majestic 1093.)

# Bernice Parks



Appearing in "Beggars' Holiday," at the Broadway.

# STOKOWSKI LEADS THE PHILHARMONIC

By IRVING KOLODIN.

The musical past became the present for a while again at last night's Philharmonic Symphony concert in Carnegie Hall, as Leopold Stokowski appeared to direct the first program of his four-week engagement. The walk, the figure, the arcs and angles of the hands were all familiar, but the old boldness and audacity in the music-making were more than a little tempered.

There was much of the typical lacquer applied to the Bach, Brahms, Sibelius, Creston and Wagner he performed; moreover, the authentic pre-war three-coats of tonal paint. Music, however, is not one of the things in which, if you save the surface, you save all. Almost everything Stokowski did had the superficial gloss and sheen he knows so well how to mix and apply, but it only hardily conceal the lack of firm structure or the shallowness of his Brahms first symphony, for example. It penetrated a little deeper in the playing of what he calls the "Finale" from Wagner's "Parsifal," but not enough to obscure the patchwork of this arrangement, wisely undated in the program notes.

For Stokowski, the playing of the Brahms symphony was notably direct and unwayward, save for the inevitable distortion of the final pages, with the tempo whipped to a froth and the musical sense lurching after the orchestra. Otherwise, for all its conscious correctness, the performance sadly lacked what, to be blunt about it, can only be described as sincere emotion and profundity of feeling. It was noteworthy that in this work, as well as in the others, Stokowski utilized a score, to which he made an occasional reference; but, in a sense that never was true in the days when he scorned such assistance, these were performance conducted from memory—the memory of what it had meant to him in other days.

Creston's "Pioneers." Paul Creston's "Frontiers," not new in town, was played for the first time by the Philharmonic. It is what may be called a three-drum-power work—bass, snare and tympani—with xylophone as well. It has some conventional "open-space" atmosphere and a resounding climax which both Mussorgsky and Respighi would consider the familiar form of flattery, but no more authentic musical value.

Stimulated by the peculiar kind of motor power that Stokowski generates, the orchestra played superbly, especially in Sibelius's "Swan of Tuonela." Michel Nazzi's English horn, the solo cello of Leonard Rose and the viola passages by William Lincer were notably excellent, though only details, in a playing of high credit to the personnel. It was noticeable, from the opening "Wir Glaubten all" of Bach, that the string tone was fuller, more "open," than it commonly is, and very good to hear. The full house received Stokowski calmly, but responded appropriately to the climaxes of the Brahms and the Wagner.

# Violin Recital In Town Hall

Julius Dureshkaivich, violinist, who was heard at Town Hall last night, presented a lengthy program made up of the kind of music violinists love to play for themselves and for each other. Under normal circumstances such a choice would not necessarily be unwise, but in terms of this violinist's capabilities, it must be considered the last in a series of injudicious decisions. The first was the one to essay a public recital at all.

As major works, Dureshkaivich offered the Corelli-Petri "Folies d'Espagne" variations, and the Tchaikovsky concerto. Also listed were works by Bach, Dohnanyi, and Paganini. Since edgy tone, inaccurate intonation, and generally inadequate technique were immediately evident, other comment would be pointless. Each of the Kahn brothers, who were in the piano in a lost cause, a small audience was present. A. W. P.

# Blackface Number For Cantor Dies

"My, How Time Does Fly," a blackface number by Jimmy McHugh and Harold Adamson, has been bought by R.K.O. as one of the production numbers for the comedy with music, "If You Knew Susie." This number, which will incorporate some of Eddie Cantor's popular stage numbers, will feature him and Joan Davis in blackface, supported by dancers in a dance episode to be staged by Dance Director Charles O'Grady.

# The New Movies

## 'The Time, the Place and the Girl', a Musical—And 'The Beast With Five Fingers.'

By EILEEN CREELMAN.

"The Time, the Place and the Girl" is a big vaudeville show unhappily interrupted now and then by a plot. The Strand's picture should have forgotten all about that plot. It wasn't much to start with, anyway; and it started a long, long time ago. This is the old, all too familiar tale about the classical musician's daughter and the young man who liked swing. Of course, in a finale that does not scorn slapstick, every one is mixed up in a Broadway show. Even the musician is in there, but no classical music.

The songs are pretty good, some of them sure to be heard again, "A Rainy Night in Rio," "I Happened to Walk Down First Street" and "Oh But I Do." There are Martha Vickers, Janis Paige, Dennis Morgan and Jack Carson to sing them, a color camera to photograph the numbers, LeRoy Prinz to direct the revue sequences.

All that is well. It is the book that terrible inevitable musical book, which pulls down the picture. The plot goes on and on, bearing down hard on any possible farcical angle. Every one works frantically, determined to get laughs. Sometimes they get them, but not often enough. The film would have been funnier if it had not tried so hard. Songs, pretty girls and the cozy giggling of S. Z. Sakall are the best of the picture. The cast should have let it go at that.

Miss Vickers plays the conductor's daughter, the one with the voice trained for opera. Sakall is the conductor, Morgan and Carson the night club entertainers next door. Miss Paige pops in and out of the film, with Alan Hale beams as the rich oil-and-millions angel from Texas. "The Time, the Place and the Girl" is thin comedy, pleasant musically. Carmen Cavallaro and his orchestra.

# LET'S MAKE PICTURES

By NORRIS HARRNESS

# U. S. Camera-1947 Records Picture Events.

U. S. Camera—1947 is a jumble, but so was the year it records and the book is a fine photographic history of the fast-changing 1946. It is 392 pages containing 340 news pictures and 108 of what the publishers call "gallery photographs," though we believe that not all amateurs will agree entirely with that description. We believe that photographic progress can be made without going into out-of-focus prints or ordinary snapshots that are below the level of the remainder of so fine a book, but that is a carping criticism.

This, the first peacetime U. S. Camera Annual in five years, is a history of the year in both pictures and well-chosen text that includes a calendar of the more important events here and abroad. In addition there is the editors' selection of the more pictorial pictures of the year—the only part with which any one is likely to quarrel. But the following quotation from publisher Tom Shannon's letter may be illuminating:

"Perhaps the constant and often drastic changes in U. S. Camera Annual are the secret of its success—even though the format changes have evoked howls of horror from collectors who cherish the size of their library shelves as greatly as the books that ultimately and uniformly fill them. But the content changes have all been in the direction of growth. We started with a book of fine pictures, which today seems rather closely allied to the

so-called salon pictures it meant to supersede. Soon the annuals were showing not only fine pictures, but more and more of the American scene in photographs that were constantly interpreting our country and our times in an ever-broadening graphic presentation. "With the war years, photography, as such, became a secondary consideration to a five-year pictorial history of the United States of America at war. The critical acclaim those volumes received leads us to believe that this was one of the great war records—and as soon as paper and printing permit we hope to reassemble the books and publish a pictorial history of world war II to rival the unexcelled 'Pictorial History of the Civil War.'"

"This year a new problem was posed. Was the pictorial history of the United States to be continued in the peace years, or were we to revert to fine photographs beautifully reproduced for their own sake? The picture history had taken on such stature that Edward Steichen and I felt it must be continued. Yet we both like good pictures for their own sake and we wanted to pay our debt of respects to good photography."

The editors of U. S. Camera—1947 undertook a terrific job, and while we may not agree fully everywhere they have come very close to accomplishing their aim. U. S. Camera—1947, published by U. S. Camera Publishing Company at \$5.75, rates high place on Christmas gift lists.

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# RAH! RAH! TOPLITZKY

"Toplitzky of Notre Dame" arrived at the Century Theater last night from somewhere out of this world. The net result is little or no gain for the Irish. At best it is mildly pleasant entertainment. Otherwise it is just another musical comedy with a heavy overlay of Joe College, the sort that's often used as grade B filler in a double feature movie bill.

For humor "Toplitzky" belabors such old staples as Notre Dame's subway alumni in New York, the differences between Jews and the Irish (shades of "Abie's Irish Rose") and the presence of names such as Toplitzky in the Fighting Irish line-up.

The book concerns the trials of an angel who comes down to earth, literally and figuratively, to play for Notre Dame against Army and encounters Toplitzky, a subway alumnus, whose one ambition is to have a son play for Notre Dame. Even as gridiron drama it's a little less than exciting.

Musically "Toplitzky" is undistinguished. The song most likely to succeed is undoubtedly "Love is a Random Thing," with "I Want to Go to City College" running next. "McInerney's Farm" reworked by Gus Vranaby will find its way into the juke box hit parade.

In spite of the many obvious weaknesses in the material at hand, the cast gives it the old college try. Betty Jane Watson turns in the outstanding performance with her singing, particularly "I Want to Go to City College."

**'THE TIME, THE PLACE AND THE GIRL'**  
A Warner Brothers picture. Original story by Leonard Lee. Screen play by Francis Swann. Music by Christine Johnson and Lynn Starling. Directed by David Butler. Produced by Alex Gottlieb. Musical sequences by LeRoy Prinz. Songs by Arthur Schwartz and Leo Robin. At the Strand. The cast: Victoria Cassel, Marjorie Vickers, Ladislav Cassel, S. Z. Sakall, Helen Ross, Dennis Morgan, Jeff Howard, Jack Carson, Sue Jackson, Janis Paige, John Brannen, Alan Hale, Elaine Winter, Angela Greene, Mrs. Cassel, Florence Bates.

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# 'TOPLITZKY OF NOTRE DAME'

Musical comedy with book and lyrics by George Marion Jr.; music by Sammy Davis Jr.; lyrics by Jack Barnett; dialogue and lyrics by Jack Barnett; dance and musical numbers staged by Robert Alton; setting by Edward Galt; costumes by Ken Barr; musical sequences by LeRoy Prinz; presented by William Cahn at the Century Theater Thursday evening, December 26, 1946. The cast: Army Angel, Phyllis Lynne; George Marion Jr., Candace Montgomery; Leonard Lee, Harry Flier; Angelo Strutt, Warda Donovan; Betty Jane Watson, Doris Paterson; Betty Jane Watson, Marion Colby; Ned Rorem, Robert B. Bates; McCormack, Gus Van; Roger, Walter Long; Toplitzky, J. Edward Bromberg; A Girl, Betty Jane Watson; Madeline, Robert B. Bates; Leahy, Frank Marlowe; Patti, Phyllis Lynne.

larily of "Love is a Random Thing," Frank Marlowe as Leahy the big Irish farm boy who wanted "to go to City College," also does a creditable job. Warda Donovan as the heavenly angel of Notre Dame victor, is a handsome angel, but is not in good voice. J. Edward Bromberg as the role of Toplitzky, the subway alumnus, and works hard, but is handicapped by the material.

**Coming Auctions**  
Parke-Bernet Galleries.  
French eighteenth-century furniture, Gothic and Renaissance objects of art and paintings from the Ernst Rosenfeld collection will be sold, Saturday afternoon, January 4, at the Parke-Bernet Galleries, following exhibition beginning tomorrow. Furniture includes Louis XV parquetry bureau de dame, Louis XV tulipwood marquetry bureau a cylindre and Louis XVI tulipwood parquetry center table.  
Tomorrow, Parke-Bernet will place on exhibition Georgian and other English silver, eighteenth-century English and American furniture, table silver and porcelain from the Ogden L. Mills collection, to be sold next Friday afternoon.  
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# SHOWS IN PROSPECT IN EASTERN STATES

Washington—January 3-10, Statler Hotel, Mrs. John Freeman Brown, manager.  
New York City—January 22-25, Grand Central Church, Mrs. Douglas G. Cole, manager.  
Dartmouth Beach, Pa.—February 9-12, Mrs. E. August Wadsworth, manager.  
Glen Ridge, N. J.—February 19-21, Congregational Church, Mrs. Douglas G. Cole, manager.  
Jackson Heights, N. Y.—February 21-23, Mrs. E. August Wadsworth, manager.  
Miami Beach, Fla.—February 23-March 1, Mrs. J. F. Brown, manager.  
Charlestown, S. C.—March 2-8, Rita Perkins, manager.  
New York—March 10-16, Madison Square Garden, Exposition Co. of America, Manager.  
New York—March 11-April 2-4, Harlow, Hill & York, managers.  
Boston—April 7-9, Mrs. Dorothy Haun, manager.  
New York—April 14-18, Armory, Nuttall & House, managers.  
New Haven, Conn.—April 23-26, Arena, Milton Cotter, manager.

Friday and Saturday afternoons at the Plaza Art Galleries.

A sale, next Friday and Saturday afternoons, featuring porcelain and bric-a-brac, has been announced by the Silo Galleries. In addition, there will be mahogany and walnut furniture, silver, table lamps and other furnishings.

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