

# OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

## AMATEUR PLAY ARTISTIC AND FINANCIAL SUCCESS

"The House That Jack Built" Witnessed by Two Large Audiences at Lyceum Theater—Children Perform as Nursery Characters and Images of Folk Lore in Fantastic Opera.

Every seat in the Lyceum theater was occupied twice yesterday at the performances of "The House That Jack Built," which was given by Duluth children, young women and young men, for the benefit of the Y. W. C. A.

"The House That Jack Built" is a quaint concert, an allegory in tune and rhyme, tunefully expressed, harmoniously and artistically portrayed.

Mrs. Jessie L. Gaynor of St. Joseph, Mo., has written several operas for children. It is doubtful if any excel "The House That Jack Built" in characterization, breadth of ambition, opportunity for the poetical expression of grace of limb and form and the sympathetic blending of prismatic hues in scenic fittings.

The opera is founded upon the stories of the nursery. It was superbly played. It was different from most amateur productions because there was no attempt at acting. The plays of children were played. Acting would have nullified the intent of the creator. Mimicry would have destroyed the naivete of the conception. The participants responded to their rigid training and there was nothing left to be desired in the ballets, the ensembles, the specialties and the individual performances of the principals.

Not only was the opera pleasing to the eye, but it was satisfying to the ear. Every note, every series of tones, every voice singly or in unison, was expressionistic of its physical relation in the unfolding of the tale. The poetry of motion, exemplified by the graceful dancers, was reflected in the accompanying music. The nursery stories, the folk-lore of childhood, the fantastic personages of the child's realm of imagery, not only were played with the quaint and natural abandon of children, but were borne out by each corresponding orchestral treatment.

Depending upon its appeal to the mind through the stirring of the heart and the felicitation of the eye, the subject of childhood is invoked. With deft shuttle and facile web a fantastic web is entwined about the odd creatures that peep from the emblazoned covers of the Nursery Tales of our childhood. It is a hardened heart that will not respond to the tender memories of the long-ago. It is a brittle mind that will not bend to the ingenuous conception of the whimsical beings that lived for it when it was young and tender, trusting and believing.

So the bonds of sympathy and appreciation were quickly established between the audience and the little players. Here and there were gray haired men, their figures tense with the emotion of memory. Here and there were grandmothers whose eyes glistened and whose lips were graced with a pathetic quiver. The filial element was dominant in its attraction for the individual. Probably most of those in the audience were fathers and mothers or relatives of the little players and their interest was centered in certain diminutive figures on the stage rather than in the ensemble.

The plot of the opera is audacious in its fantasy. It appeals to child and adult—to the former because of its seeming simplicity; to the latter because of its apparent complexity. With the rising of the curtain on the first of the two acts, a host of little flower fairies tiptoe from their shrubbery concealments and dance until they disclose the house of Mother Goose. They scamper away when she appears. She plans a party for her son, Jack, but some naughty little blackbirds, at the suggestion of the Knave of Hearts, steal the key to the house, where they imprison the Humpty Dumpty eggs, because they were not invited.

In creating the guests, Mrs. Gaynor introduced the familiar characters of the nursery book—Bo-Peep, Little Boy Blue, Jack and Jill, Jack Horner and many other conceits which were appropriately and beautifully costumed and portrayed exceptionally well. The wide scope of characterization gives opportunity for a riot of color in costumery, which was advantageously accepted.

The second act shows the lawn fete given by Mother Goose. The stage is darkened when the curtain rises carrying out the idea that the little guests are resting after their games. The moon slowly rises over the trees and the stage becomes lighter. Mrs. Gaynor takes advantage of the manipulation of the lights and the moon fancy to introduce a graceful dance of the Stars and Moonbeams. King Cole and the Queen of Hearts learn of the theft of the key. The queen without the Humpty Dumpty cannot make her famous tarts. The blackbirds are caught, tried and sentenced, and the wicked Knave of Hearts is banished with them. The key is recovered and the festivities are resumed until the musical climax.

Following the airy dance by the fairies at the beginning of the first act was the solo, "To Market, To Market," by Miss Alice Sjoselius (Mother Goose). Miss Sjoselius was in splendid voice. She had probably the most arduous part and she handled it splendidly. Ralph Bogan was a busy little Jack. He was at ease and recited his lines intelligently. Joe Lonegren was an admirable villain as the Knave of Hearts. His introductory song was "Do You Know Me; I am the Knave of Hearts." He had a good stage presence and was a favorite with the audience.

Introduced were the wise looking crows, Ray Trask, Morris Thomas and Carl Honigan; the Humpty Dumptles, Fred Saxine, Glenn Knudson and Herman Brown; the solemn little blackbirds, Mary Callan, Angeline Kojlarek, Ruth Williams, Ruth Peterson, Gladys Peterson, Ruth Gauss, Emma Colbroth, Theresa Miller, Gladys Anderson, Fanny Lippman, Nora Colbroth, Phoebe Palmer, Marie Gleason, Henrietta Kugler, Bernice Williams, Gertrude Della and Esther MacDonald; grass blades, Archie Bailey, Donaldson Anand, John Rakowsky, William Helam, Sheldon Simonson, James Noll, Harold Fay, Harold Webster, James Russell, Dewey Brown, Arthur Bailey, Kenneth Knight, John Helmick, John Robinson, Charles LeRicheux, William Stephenson; sweet peas, Isabelle Russell, Jennie Lieberman, Sarah Plotkin, Rosella Silberg, Mandetta Casmir, Isabel Jacobl, Margaret Randall, Harriet Nixon, Ruth Persgard, Mary Winton, Ilez King, May Sansam, Vivian Hambly, Dorothy

Regli, Helen MacRay, Gracia Poole and Helen Bruen; black-eyed susans and daisies, Lillian Shapiro, Adele Johnson, Edna Johnson, Genevieve Knight, Elizabeth Stevenson, Eleanor Currie, Marguerite McCullough, Irene Levin, Lillas Reyner, Caroline Wiede, Gudrun Thrana, Blanche Ettinger, Marion Dight and Ruby Peterson.

The various flowers pirouetted about the stage in bewildering and charming confusion. The little ones danced with exceptional grace and sang clearly and tunefully.

The guests at the party of Mother Goose were Cordelia Collins (Red Riding Hood); Arnold Anderson (Simple Simon), Walter Kamphaus (Mr. Peter Pumpkin Eater), Mary McLennan, (Mrs. Peter Pumpkin Eater), Frances Stevenson, Lois Forbes (Maids in the Garden), Margaret Munson (Farmer's Wife), Harold Stevenson (Bobby Shafto), Freda Bennett (Mary Contrary), Olga Clouse (Daffy-Down-Dilly), Helen MacDonald (Miss Muffet), Franklin Neff (Priest), Alice Hillis (Maids Forlorn), Wildey Mitchell (Tattered Man), Jessie French (Bo-Peep), Brewer Mattocks (Boy Blue), Earl Brown (Crooked Man), Alfred Mellin (Tom Tucker), Dean Wachtel (Mr. Jack Spratt), Margaret Porter (Mrs. Jack Spratt), Harold Miles (Jack), May Wiede (Jill), Percy Casson (Jack Horner), Ida Miller (Mother Hubbard), and Miss Jessie Beatty (Old Woman in the Shoe) who was accompanied by the children in the shoe, Marjorie Glerson, Katherine French, Alleen Conside, Natalla Pejonno, Helen Margaret Grae, Herman J. Griffith, Lily Weiner, Catherine McCurdy, Fay McCurdy, Grant Powell, Wendell Cutliff, Daisy Lussan, Wellington Brown, Ray Hawkins and Margaret Powell.

Each little guest exploited his or her personality and the characters were well drawn, quaintly and "cutely" portrayed. The first act was closed with an ensemble, "Come, the Hours Are Fleeting."

While the diminutive guests were resting from their games at the beginning of the second act, eight attractive young women expressed the poetry of graceful rhythm. Each posture, each delicate movement was subdued in harmony with the the spirit of the soft lustre of the moon as it rose over the trees and caressed the sleeping children with its gentle rays. The graceful stars were Miss Ethleen Fee, Miss Madge Miller, Miss Irene Whiting and Miss Isabelle Patrick; the airy Moonbeams, Miss Gladys Tyler, Miss Roella Lovet, Miss Margaret Florida and Miss Gertrude Hoopes.

While a little tot was swung to and fro Miss Sjoselius (Mother Goose), sang the Swing song. She probably was at her best in this expressive song-picture. The entrance of Charles Applehagen (King Cole) was announced by his heralds, Earl Watterworth and Fred Ryan. He was accompanied by his guards, Brayton Berry, Ivan Northfield, Oliver Grettum, Alfred Smith, Mortimer Bondy, Clifford Thorburn, Cecil Gilleland, Ludwig Melander, Herbert Kristensen, Ray Hancock, Sidney Morterud and Charles Kelly. They were stately appearing guards and their difficult drill with its precise and intricate maneuvers was perfectly performed.

In his entrance song, "I am Jovial Old King Cole," Mr. Applehagen entered thoroughly into the spirit of his offering. His enforced mannerism enhanced the attractiveness of the character he portrayed. His voice was clear and reaching and he was in favor with the audiences from his first appearance. In his rendition of the humorous song, "When I Was a Bachelor," he was ably supported by the chorus. He got off several local hits which were well received.

The king's attendants were John Miller (Bowl Bearer), Donald Alexander (Pipe Bearer), Dudley Trott, Asher Hafner and Shores Walker (Fiddlers Three.) They wear one of the big successes of the opera. They sang well, danced well, played well. The king's page was Clarence Cox.

"One, Two, Buckle My Shoe," was prettily sung by four little folks, Helen Bruen, Helen Ross, Edwin Skinner and Robert Finkenstaedt. They

gracefully danced a minuet and the audience forced them to repeat it.

One of the best of the specialties was the solo, "Send Your Love a Violet Flower," by Miss Maud Matteson. "Dainty" describes Miss Matteson as a violet, even to her voice. She sang splendidly and was ably assisted by a chorus of violets, Gladys Duby, Dorothy Hobbs, Ruth Fisher, Rachel Hammel, Bertha Cox, Linda Olson, Mabel Merritt, Ethel Kranitz, Esther Holmstrand, Esther Tischer, Frances Winton, Margaret Hoyt, Olive McTagle, Frances Hessey, Dorothy Seymour, Nora Edwards, Gertrude Final and Esther Gomberg.

Miss Frances Burris sank the "Poppy Lady" plaintively and melodiously. She and her chorus were very attractive little poppies. The poppies were Lois Trott, Vera Maxon, Edith Fitzsimmons, Florence Mars, Helen Knisely, Chelsie Final, Edith Dight, Elizabeth Congdon, Mina Hay, Jean Wanless, May Jeffry, Mary Bradbury, Myrtle Hobbs, Elsa Bleherman and Charlotte Brocklehurst.

Miss Mae Wylie (Queen of Hearts), was attended by Elizabeth Lynam, her page, and four attractive ladies-in-waiting, Miss Nell Brown, Miss Barbara Patrick, Mrs. Ralph Hubbell and Mrs. Frank Leach. Miss Wylie was a very queenly queen. She spoke her lines with dramatic effect and ruled gracefully but firmly over her gally clad subjects.

One of the features of the opera was

the Magnolia dance of little Fannie Lippman. Rarely is such graceful poise acquired by one so young. Like a little animated feather she tripped about the stage, grace in every pose and movement.

The entire company sang "Hail, All Hail, Oh, Glorious King."

The orchestra and company were directed by Mrs. Reynolds, of St. Joseph, Mo., and Miss Mabel Herington was the accompanist. The opera netted the Y. W. C. A. a large sum of money. The exact amount will not be known until the various committees have audited accounts and the receipts. In every way "The House That Jack Built" was a success.