

THREE PLAYS OPEN AT THEATRES TO PLEASE PHILADELPHIA AUDIENCES

GHOSTS OF MANY PLAYS

More Than the Title Haunted in "The Haunted Violin"

More than the title is haunted in "The Haunted Violin," Crane Wilbur's drama, in which the playwright assumed the main role last night. The ghosts of many other plays walked the stage of the Garrick at the local premiere of this play, so usual in most of its situations and theatrical expedients as to make an unusually unusual totality of effect. In structure it takes the fantasy-form or dream-drama recently so favored in such plays as "The Eyes of Youth," "The Phantom Lover" and "Boards of Destiny," and like them in manner it is episodic. In matter it utilizes the substance of such plays as "The Concert" and "The Great Boyer," in that its material is the artistic temperament enveloped by various controlling or enervating influences. It might also be called a composite of Dribblestian motives.

The chief character is a violinist, whose ambition is leading him to sacrifice the girl who truly loves him and who has aided in the early development of his career. Possession of a violin haunted by the genius, and the peccadilloes of a great virtuoso lead him into a career in which women, music, and mainly women, rule his temperamental disposition. His philandering with various types of womanhood is portrayed in several passages, sometimes very amusingly and at others very theatrically. The epilogue shows that it is all a phantasmagoria. This is the surprise or the punch of the piece. Though possibly it explains some of the theatricalization of the play, it is only fair to say that adoption of such an expedient, if it is to be thoroughly effective, requires the establishment of the premises. Otherwise it is unfair to the audience groping after the significances of the passing action in the plot-development.

It is hard to decide whether this play, of the stage stage, is so theatrical because it was written by an actor or because the pivotal figure is per se a poseur of artistic infatuations. At any rate, Mr. Wilbur takes the audience behind the scenes of the artistic temperament. He exposes the virtuoso worship of emotional femininity which packs concerts even unto the capacity of the

stage itself. In the adaptations of foreign plays dealing with artists, of which Mr. Dribblestein is so fond, that actor-playwright either dramatizes them or satirizes them. Sometimes Mr. Wilbur, intentionally or not, is very close to burlesquing his hand-picked artistic temperament. He allows himself considerable license in his dialogue, but not much originality in the situations which govern climaxes in the action. Twice he resorted to a love scene interrupted by an eavesdropper. On the whole, the play brought considerable amusement to the audience.

Mr. Wilbur's own impersonation was graphic. Of his long list of colleagues the most natural acting was contributed to character bits by Elwood Postwick, James Billings, Helene Lackaye and Bernard Reinhold, and as the play moved on, by Pauline Armitage, who improved greatly. It was very beautifully staged.

DUMAS IN EXTRAVAGANZA

"Monte Cristo, Jr." at Shubert, a Frolic, Not Melodrama

"Monte Cristo, Jr." was the summer show at the Winter Garden, and it came to this city last evening at the Shubert Theatre, where the fatigued financier found it wholly diverting. Like "Robinson Crusoe, Jr.," and "Sinbad," this entertainment is based upon the dream of one of its players, and thus much latitude is given to the cowriters in its construction.

There is some doubt as to whether Alexander Dumas or James O'Neill would recognize this jazzy version of

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the famous novel; but the audience seemed to enjoy every minute of it. Plenty of funmakers have been provided to enliven the proceedings and vary the musical numbers. The piece marks a change from those usually put out as extravaganzas, in recognition of the fact that present audiences seem to want a lot to laugh at instead of having merely to gaze at striking spectacles and to listen to lilting tunes, though "Monte Cristo, Jr." has both, in addition to its comedy. Scenery plays an important part in this production, for there are many changes of it and some are cleverly designed. As for the costumes, they are plentiful and gorgeous.

Vaudeville's loss has been this show's gain, for the roster of names looks like a booking list of a prominent variety agent. Peter F. Dunn, creator of "Mr. Doolley," should rejoice in the knowledge that this entertainment boasts three of that name, all of them good. William and Gordon Doolley, from Camden, scored a complete hit with their nerotic nonsense, while J. Francis Doolley, with his partner, Corinne Sales, re-

peated their vaudeville success. Kitty and Fanny Watson are pleasing to hear; John Squires enacts the title role as well as sings the "name" song; Lew Hearn was a capital "rube"; Marty Fuller Golden, James Gray and Katherine Galloway had important roles. Adelaide and Hughes created some wonderful dancing and led a large corps of dancers in several numbers.

SPEEDY COMEDY AT WALNUT

"It Happens to Everybody" Pleases Big Audience at Old Playhouse

Packed as full as a Christmas box with mystery, comedy, romance and business intrigue, and with all the attending suspense, laughter, thrills and melodramatic situations such a theatrical package might be expected to contain. "It Happens to Everybody" opened an engagement at the Walnut last night and sent a big audience home well pleased with the nearly three hours spent in the historic old playhouse.

Few comedies or even the liveliest

farces seen here in many moons have had the speed of this offering. From the rise of the curtain on the first act, the comedy, or melodrama, or farce, or whatever one chooses to call it, moves with express-train rapidity. Situation succeeds situation so fast that the audience has scarcely time to comprehend one before another is presented. And what puzzling situations they are for the time being, and how plausible, sometimes, they seem after the author and the actors make them clear. We have seen leading men in a great many plays and musical entertainments, but we cannot recall, offhand, when an actor has been called upon to say so much, do so much and be so much in evidence as is the lot of Rollo Lloyd in this piece. And he did it, he acquires himself very creditably. The title may be applied to any number of things and incidents in the comedy; for instance, the opportunity that comes to Donald Brown, played by Mr. Lloyd, to make his fortune and win the girl of his choice and to several of the "mis-

takes" made in the careers of several of the other characters. Harry S. Sheldon, the author, has contrived a more or less ingenious invention in fashioning this comedy. The entire action of the piece takes place within the period of sixteen hours. There are three acts and only two scenes, the latter appropriately staged.

In addition to Mr. Lloyd mention must be made of the work of Peggy Boland, as Elsie Kirkwood. She aided materially in the success of the play. Then there are Dorothy Allen, who makes much of a comedy role; J. Hooker Wright, in a good character study; Gertrude La Brandt, as a

sophisticated boarding-house keeper; Charles N. Green, a captain of industry; Ruth Garland, Irons Arkerman; Al Dayton, Gordon Hamilton, J. Melton Clodagh, Edwin Felix Burnham and others.

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