

THE SHO GUN IS A BIG SUCCESS

Christmas Attraction That Is Worthy Name—Henshaw a Hit—At the Seattle Innocent Maids Draw Big Audience.

At the Third Avenue "A Jolly American Tramp" Is Slated for a Big Week—Star and Orpheum Theatre Bills.



JOHN E. HENSHAW
In "The Sho-Gun"

In the list of principals of "The Sho Gun" there is an unusual number of Seattle favorites. John E. Henshaw and May Ten Broeck will be remembered here from previous appearances with "The Nabobs" in 1893, with "The Passing Show," ten years ago, and with "A Chinese Honeymoon" two seasons ago. Thomas C. Leary was the comical steward with "The Princess Child" in February, 1902. William C. Weeden, who sang "Tee-To" last night, was here with the Bostonians in 1903. Douglas Ruthven sang the title role in "Robin Hood" at the Grand on the last visit of the Bostonians. Genevieve Day sang the ward, Violet, in "The Chaperons" at the Grand in September, 1903, and others in the list have before drawn applause from local audiences.

At the Grand last night one of the real musical shows of the year, "The Sho Gun," began its local engagement of six performances before a packed house. The play proves worth while from many standpoints. George Ade has poured his very best wit into at least two of the characters, Spangle and Hanki-Pank; and Gus Luders, whose tuneful music we have already heard in "Prince of Pilsen," "King Dodo" and "The Burgomaster," has in this piece accomplished a distinct advance, according to musical standards, over any previous score from his pen that has been heard here.

After all the credit is given these noted composers, Ade and Luders, that is due to them, Henry W. Savage is entitled to the thanks of the entire West for sending out a real cast to interpret the play. Some other managers have figured that a musical play can get the money on its name alone for the first time around, but Mr. Savage has filled every singing role with a voice and every comedy role with a comedian. And both the quantity and quality of chorus girl are at a standard not attained here since the coming and going of Anna Held and the Rogers Brothers. The girls are all intentional brunettes. An actress' crowning glory is her wig.

The Name.

"The Sho Gun" is a name that has to be explained to lots of theatre-goers. A man in Los Angeles, it is related, asked if the play were a companion piece to "Ben Hur." The treasurer told him that it was and took his money. But "The Sho Gun" is a sort of companion title to "The Mikado," "The Wizard of Oz" or "King Dodo." It is the title of the ruler of a mythical little kingdom in the Japan Sea, and the plot swings round and round the invasion of an Iowa promoter named Spangle into the country, bringing with him American ideas, American schemes and American gail.

George Ade of course has him on the throne within a short time, allowing him during his period of probation to organize a few unions, a few trusts, some watered stock corporations and various railroad and subway enterprises. Spangle is given a lot of lines that are the best since Ade turned his fables in slang upon a trusting public. By comparison with "The Sho Gun," the book of "The Sultan of Solu" was written by John Bunyan.

The Music.

The Luders music of this play is very largely atmospheric, the author introducing many of the chanting effects and peculiar minors which characterize the harmonies of the Far East. The finales, always the most staggering work before any composer, are worthy of special attention, and they so combined fun and music as to hold the audience for encores. Intermingled with what some of

the Arcade Building professors would term the worthier music of the opera are jingling tunes galore, songs that will be popular long after the play has folded its asbestos scenery and stolen away.

It would be a shame to see "The Sho Gun" without John E. Henshaw in the role of Spangle. There may be other native comedians who could play the part as successfully as he does, but none can be recalled to mind at this time. Henshaw's dry humor and easy easiness looks very simple from the front, but it is like the naturalness of Nat Goodwin—it has come only with years and years of experience and much innate talent to go on. The character of Spangle is of course exaggerated by the playwright for comedy purposes, but with that in mind, Henshaw draws such a picture of a modern, complacent, resourceful promoter as would defy a mental picture drawn in advance by the audience. He is happily not bustling and fretful, but he gets results. Imagine this character played, as it easily could be, like Marks, the Lawyer!

The Support.

Thomas C. Leary has no especially "fat" role, and the more credit is due him for the laughs he gets as Hanki-Pank. His proverbs are delivered unctuously and his dry cackle, which George Ade could certainly not have written, just caps the part nicely. William C. Weeden tenors through the many farewells of Tee-To in a delightful way. He was recalled many times. Douglas Ruthven valiantly gave the war song of the latter act, and the voices of Detmer H. Poppen as the Sho Gun and E. P. Parsons as the general are well worth hearing.

May Ten Broeck, more sylph-like than ever, has the May Irwin role of the dowager, and it is a good contribution to the general gaiety. Genevieve Day, Agnes Cain Brown and Isabelle D'Armond costume handsomely, and it is a compliment to your ears to listen to their singing.

Vocally both the male and female choruses are in every way adequate, and the girls, very pretty individually, must keep the wardrobe mistress in a perspiratory frame of mind, for their costume changes are many. The settings are of Oriental splendor and the properties have a genuine look. To Frank Darling, the musical director, and his band of eighteen men must be given credit for the evenness of the musical rendition, while under the domination of William J. Wilson, the stage work slipped along with glassy smoothness. No feature of a big musical production has been overlooked by Mr. Savage or any of his supporting staff in making "The Sho Gun" a thoroughly enjoyable entertainment to those in front, and it is in every way worthy of being the Christmas show of the twenty-sixth city of these United States.

"THE INNOCENT MAIDS."

Christmas Eve found the Seattle Theatre full of people. The bill for the week is the burlesque company styled "The Innocent Maids." Whether the title is an apt one or not is immaterial. That has nothing to do with the performances given yesterday, which were bright and lively. There is a strong olio and a good deal of horseplay of a kind that is really laughable to everyone.

Jolly Zeb, of the well-known team of Zeb and Zarrow, is the principal fun-maker. In his olio turn some of the jokes, particularly "I Gave Her That," are relics of the old Primrose and West days, but his songs were splendidly received, and Ed Johnston's own composition went deservedly well. The trick bicycle and motorcycle act of Palfrey & Barton is absolutely the best ever seen here, while Lewis Pritzhov calls up fond memories of Fritz Emmett with his yodling. The Dreamland Trio are clever dancers, and Marie Stuart Dodd an excellent violinist. The circus burlesque is a big hit.

The whole olio is above the average. The burlesques go with a rush, and the chorus is most acceptable, as are the staging and costuming. The piece should do a good Christmas week business. It will give matinees Wednesday and Saturday.

"A JOLLY AMERICAN TRAMP."

At the only up-town theatre yesterday crowds renewed their acquaintance with the familiar and popular "Jolly American Tramp." The play is not a pure farce, as the name might indicate, but a comedy drama with musical features, and a plot that will stand by its own weight. There is a hero and heroine who get into ever-increasing difficulties, a villain who has an amazing capacity for devilry, and the usual character comedy people who say the right things at the psychological moments for wild applause.

There were many curtain calls yesterday. Clark Ross makes the most of the tramp role, and the supporting cast is in every way equal to requirements. Virginia Melville, the character woman, and Birtine Farnworth, as Florodora, drew full appreciation, the latter on account, in part, of her dancing. The four acts are well set, and a number of specialties enlivened the action. The play will run all week, with matinees Wednesday and Saturday. The next bill is to be the popular Taylor company in "Her Marriage Vow."

AT THE STAR.

At the Star Theatre today the shows will be continuous from 2 to 11 o'clock p. m. As it is the beginning of a new week, the bill will be composed entirely of new things and novel acts. "Phroso, the Mystery," will be the reigning sensation of the town, and the public will be puzzled to tell whether the figure is human or mechanical. Mr. and Mrs. Robyns are held over for a second week because of their popularity. They will present a fine farcical comedy, "The Morning After." The other great features on the program are Fynne & Dandy, the Great Cox Family, Pete Dunsworth, Kenton and Lorraine, and great picture. The show is distinctly a holiday bill, and the attractions are fitted for such occasion.

AT THE ORPHEUM.

Today the Orpheum show is continuous and as it is the beginning of the week a new bill is introduced. The leading features are Vontelle & Nina, King and Queen of the Roman Rings; the Jewell Trio, character artists; Ransell, who will be seen in marvelous feats of strength; Hayden, a man who makes the concerting ring with sweet music, and Bert White, whose work as a monologist is unusually bright and entertaining. Warren Stetson sings a new sweet song well suited to his clear baritone, and a new picture in the orpheumscope.

"THE YANKEE CONSUL."

Next Thursday evening and three succeeding nights and Saturday matinee "The Yankee Consul" will be presented at the Grand. The seat sale is to start tomorrow morning.

Mormons Will Invade Mexico.

MEXICO CITY, Monday, Dec. 25.—Immediately after the holidays one of the largest colonies that ever invaded Mexico at one time will arrive in the state of Chichauhua where several thousand acres of land have already been secured. These people are Mormons from Utah and will number about 1,000, men, women and children. They can practice their belief in Mexico without interference from the government.