

"Peer Gynt" a Curiously Interesting Play

Amusements Tonight

MOORE THEATRE—Louis James in "Peer Gynt."
GRAND OPERA HOUSE—"Babes in Toyland."
ORPHEUM—Vaudeville.
LOIS THEATRE—"Peter Pan."
SEATTLE THEATRE—Hi Henry's Minstrels.
THIRD AVENUE THEATRE—"The Jolly Widow."
PANTAGES—Vaudeville.
STAR—Vaudeville.
SHANNON'S THEATRE—Cameraphone.

LOUIS JAMES, with the Mansfield production of "Peer Gynt," and supported by a very capable company, began a week's engagement at the Moore last night. However much or little people may like this play, of his is curiously interesting and well worth seeing.

Divested of all discussion as to its meaning, and disregarding the focus of the mental vision which inspired it, it is the story of a man's mind and heart. It is the revelation of a man's inner life; his hopes, his ambitions, his temptations, his successes, his weaknesses—the graphic record of a man's nature from reckless youth to resigned old age.

From a literary viewpoint the play has many aptly-put, nut-shell philosophies; many lines glistening with satire, and one scene of exquisite beauty and poetry.

As a production, it is stunning; the Mansfield staging of the play having been preserved in its entirety.

The following synopsis of the play gives some idea of its scope and setting:

Act I. Scene 1.—"Peer Gynt" at his home in the mountains with his mother. This scene displays "Peer Gynt" as the untrained mind, the unconscious dreamer, a poet and the reckless nobbledochy. It also indicates his aspirations to be a ruler among men.

Scene 2.—"Peer Gynt" attends the wedding festivities at Hestad, and meets Solveig. He is poor and shabby, but smiling and dreaming of great things. He is scoffed and derided by all. He becomes more and more reckless; risks to knock and destroy himself, slighted by "Solveig," with whom he has fallen in love, he steals the bride out of sheer bravado and escapes to the mountains with her.

Act II. Scene 1.—"Peer Gynt" of the adventure he curiously dissembles "Ingrid," the bride. He is hunted by the farmers and peasants and, completely exhausted and worn out by the fatigue and disappoinment, seeks a stupor in his distorted fancy he is visited by the "Dovre King's" daughter.

Scene 2.—He visits the court of the King of Trolls and bargains for his daughter.

Scene 3.—The liquor's effect passing off, he awakes and finds "Solveig" and her little sister, "Helga," watching him, but they flee and he is again left alone.

Act III. Scene 1.—"Peer Gynt," undaunted, builds himself a hut, and, out-lauded, prepares to lead the life of a hermit; but "Solveig," who has loved him at first sight, comes to him in the forest to dwell with him there. "Gynt's" dream of happiness is dispelled by the appearance of the "Dovre King's" daughter who threatens to ever stand between him and "Solveig," and, hopelessly discouraged, "Peer Gynt," bidding her wait for him.

Scene 2.—Seeking for comfort, "Peer" returns to his mother's hut, but only to find her dying. Leaving her dead, he fares across seas.

Part Two.

Act IV. Scene 1.—(A Vision) Thirty years have elapsed and "Solveig" is disclosed waiting and ever waiting for "Peer."

Scene 2.—"Peer" has become very wealthy and a man of the world. He visits the coast of Morocco with a band of friends. He announces to them his intention to become emperor of the world, but they steal his yacht and leave him alone, and he is destroyed.

Act V. Scene 1.—Embarking on a Norwegian vessel, bound for his old home, his ship encounters a violent storm and strikes a rock and sinks. "Peer," old and worn, and for the first time meets the dread messenger.

Scene 2.—An auction is in progress near the old cottage, and thither "Peer Gynt" comes after the shipwreck, feeble and almost demented. All his dreams and aspirations are now threadbare. He encounters his old friends the "Dovre King" and the "Button Moulder," and in vain searches everywhere for rest and salvation. From the old hut, "Solveig" comes to him, and in her love he finally finds refuge, peace and happiness.

As to acting, the burden of course falls upon the principal character who is present in every scene. It is a role which requires a wide versatility, ranging from heedless, wild and ambitious youth through a repression and complacency of wealthy middle age, to the despair of feeble senility. These requirements Mr. James met in a remarkably real way, making "Peer Gynt" not a static but a man. He caught the spirit of youth admirably in the first scene and later at the wedding festivities; his scene with his mother in the cottage was played with a repression and a naturalness which left nothing to be desired except perhaps more of the poetry which the imaginative beauty of the lines suggested, and his delineations of the merchant, the man of the world, the shipwrecked old man, and later with the "strange messenger," and later returning to the home of his youth and to his faithful love, were admirable. Mr. James fits the role of "Peer Gynt" better than any of his character interpretations of recent years. It is an artistic achievement.

Mr. James' support is entirely adequate. Laura Frankendorf, playing the role of "Solveig," is a very difficult role was interpreted so skillfully that the mother's love for



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her boy, pathetic in its pride in him and shrewish and impatient with his shortcomings, struck a very human note. The death scene in the cottage gave another instance of Miss Frankendorf's ability as an actress. Norman Sweet as the "Troll King" in a wildly imaginative dream scene was excellent, and the smaller parts of "Ingrid," "The Green Clad Woman" and "Anitra" were competently done. Aphie James is cast as "Solveig," the faithful sweetheart, a minor role, like a prince in the accompaniment of a song. The general excellence of all the minor characters was very noticeable.

The Grieg music was an important addition to the play. "Morning," "Ase's March," "In the Halls of the Mountain King" and "Anitra's Dance," which have been played in concert by our symphony orchestra being additionally impressive in the settings for which they were written. Why they were left unfinished is a matter of speculation.

"Peer Gynt" continues all week at the Moore. In addition to the habitual theatre-goers it will attract the attention of many people who wish to see stage productions of this class and who do not often have this opportunity.

The cast in full follows:

Peer Gynt	.....	Louis James
Ase, his mother	.....	Laura Frankendorf
Anitra, the blacksmith	.....	Norman Sweet
Mads Moen, the bridegroom	.....	Arthur Weston
His Father	.....	James Robertson
His Mother	.....	Mary Bernard
Solveig	.....	Aphie James
Helga, her sister	.....	Belle Peafe
Their Father	.....	Kraft Walton
Their Mother	.....	Margaret Warren
The Hestad Farmer	.....	James G. Howe
Ingrid, the bride's daughter	.....	William C. Andrews
Mr. Cotton	.....	Norman Sweet
Mr. Ballou	.....	William C. Andrews
Mr. von Borkopf	.....	Kraft Walton
Mr. Trumpeterstrale	.....	Richard I. Scott
Anitra	.....	Frances Harcourt
Capita of the Ship	.....	James G. Howe
The Green Clad Woman	.....	Jane Schaefer
The King of the Trolls	.....	Norman Sweet
The Boys	.....	F. A. Browne
The Strange Passenger	.....	William C. Andrews
The Button Moulder	.....	William C. Andrews
	.....	M. McV. S.

"Peter Pan" at the Loie.

At last we have a production of "Peter Pan"—that mysterious, much-discussed fairy play to which New York thronged for two solid seasons—right here in Seattle. Those of us who have read about it and heard about it and argued about it—without seeing it—may now go to the Little Loie Theatre and either confirm our opinions or have them scattered on the winds along with the fairies and the "lost boys."

For this opportunity we have to thank Alexander Pantages for his willingness to incur a certain financial loss, of no small moment, in the thought of profit; we have to thank T. Daniel Frazer for his willingness to undertake in a few weeks' time a venture at which all of the other directors of stock companies in the country have balked; we have to thank Miss Aileen May for being willing to undertake a role written to fit the personality of the most elusive little actress in the world.

It is certainly no less a feat and also due the actors and mechanics—most of whom have actually nibbled their sandwiches and snatched their naps in the theatre for the last week—that their efforts should be appreciated. It is very improbable that we shall ever see a better production of "Peter Pan"—doubtful if we see another one as good, and therefore it will be well worth the while of those who wish to go to the Loie to make the venture to see this production.

of the character of the "pirate captain." He is just such a pirate as every small boy has dreamed of and he, more than any of the others, has caught the underlying spirit of the Barrie burlesque and satire—as, for instance, when he is continually interrupted in his fiery spirit by the orchestra and compelled to dance a hornpipe.

Miss Clara Kimball makes a sweet "Wendy," the little girl who wants to be a mother, but she was too tired last night to more than stand up. F. M. Kimball was good as the pirate who would spare her life "if she would promise to be his mother," and there were some other good bits—notably Harry Cummings as "Nana," a dog nurse. However, the whole cast should be better to-night after a little rest sleep in a bed.

The plot of "Peter Pan," can be told in a paragraph. "Peter" has come back to earth to hear some stories, such as mothers tell their children, to tell to his "lost boys." In escaping from a house the window slams behind him and cuts off his shadow. He comes back to get it and meets the three children of the "Darling" family. These he teaches to fly with him and takes back to his home. "Wendy," the oldest, becomes "mother" to the band.

Here, in their house underground, they meet a tribe of friendly Indians who guard them. The Indians are overpowered by a band of pirates who capture all of the children save "Peter." "Peter" follows them aboard ship and rescues his band. The "Darling" children fly back home and "Peter" is left all alone with his fairies, except that "Wendy" comes every spring to do the housecleaning.

On this bare plot is hung a whole train of little incidents—comic, poetic, pathetic—and of these the charm of the play is made. We cannot take it seriously unless we believe in fairies, and if we believe in fairies nothing is serious—so what's the use?

"Babes in Toyland" at the Grand.

Two large audiences at the Grand, yesterday, showed scant appreciation of the musical extravaganza, "Babes in Toyland." After seeing the present production it is hard to understand why the Herbert MacDonough collaboration made the hit accorded to it in other seasons. It is equally difficult for one to avoid the conclusion that the combination in mind was hastily recruited for the tour of the Coast, where managers seem to think any old thing will do in a pinch. Whatever success the piece has scored since New York first placed the seal of approval on it, is undoubtedly due to its capable casts and to any particular originality about either book or music.

The audience wanted to laugh yesterday, but beyond the occasional amusing antics of Gus Pixley and Eddie Redway, the veteran laugh makes and one true side partner of Eva Tanguay, the play did not make the large appeal to the sense of humor. Redway is the same nimble dancer as of yore and Pixley had plenty of latitude for facial contortion in the dual roles of "Inspector Marmaduke" and "Rodrigue," the sentimental ruffian. Redway's bid for applause in jumping astride the back of an anæsthetic chorus girl might well be eliminated.

Beth Tate, a young woman of rather pleasing personality, who essays the role of "Contrary Mary," boasts the one good voice of the cast.

The song hit of the musical numbers, as usual was "I Can't Do That Sum." The adjective "gorgeous" is hardly applicable to the scenic accessories which, to an unprejudiced eye, seem somewhat average.

The chorus strikes a fair-to-middling average. "Babes in Toyland" will be at the Grand for the entire week.

Hi Henry's Minstrels at the Seattle.