

BROADWAY OPENINGS

THE RESPECTFUL PROSTITUTE AND THE HAPPY JOURNEY

CORT THEATER
(Opened Tuesday, March 16)

Two one-act plays by Jean-Paul Sartre and Thornton Wilder, respectively. Staged by Mary Hunter. Setting by Robert Gundlach. Business manager, Morton Gottlieb. Stage manager, Peter Zeisler. Press representative, Reginald Denenholz. Presented by New Stages, Inc.

THE RESPECTFUL PROSTITUTE

Lizzie McKaye.....Meg Mundy
The Negro.....John Marriott
Fred.....Karl Weber
John.....Willard Swire
James.....William Brower
Senator Clarke.....Wendell Holmes
A Man.....Martin Tarby

THE HAPPY JOURNEY

The Stage Manager.....William Brower
Ma Kirby.....Peggy Allenby
Arthur.....Clifford Sales
Caroline.....Mari Lynn
Fa (Elmer) Kirby.....Don MacLaughlin
Beulah.....Jean Gillespie

Early last month this reporter journeyed down to Bleeker Street to see New Stages unveil its translation of Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Respectful Prostitute*. The report was good. The Sartre satiric fable, even if obviously written without first-hand investigation of its subject matter and in spite of the thinness of its plot, nevertheless packed a sock dramatic impact, was flawlessly staged by Mary Hunter and acted to the hilt by an exceptionally accomplished cast. It was excellent experimental theater, bound to take hold—and it did.

At the time, however, this reporter said that *Prostitute* was no dish for commercial Broadway unless some of the saltier Sartre lines and situations were considerably toned down. So now New Stages moves it up to the Cort and a reportorial about-face is in order. It may be that via the intimacy of a small theater the text seemed more rugged. But it is a fact that while no line appears to have been changed, no one in a 48th Street audience seems to turn a hair. Also what frequently came as a shock down on a Bleeker Street opening night was turned to belly laughs up-town.

Meg Mundy Shines

Meg Mundy continues to give an outstanding performance as the bewildered tart who finds herself the focal point of a Deep South lynching bee. Wendell Holmes is still tops as the amiably hypocritical stinker of a Southern senator, and John Marriott and Karl Weber are effective as ever as the Negro in the case and the sexy rich boy from the house on the hill.

As a curtain raiser for the Sartre two-scener, the New Stagers have selected Thornton Wilder's exercise in sweetness and light dialog, *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden*. The choice may have been made for reasons of economy, since *Journey* calls for no set and only for four chairs repping the Kirby family's car in which the odyssey is made. Also its fragile message of good will may have been deemed a companionable offset to the wry bitterness of *Prostitute*. It has been charmingly staged by Mary Hunter and is competently acted by half a dozen of the group.

However, it must be honestly reported that the combination of *Journey* and *Prostitute* doesn't look strong enough to add up to commercial success. Bills of this kind have never proved a strong stem draw and even the advance publicity labeling *Prostitute* as something of a shocker is unlikely to save the financial day. The fare is just too thin for a \$4.20 top. **Bob Francis.**

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

(Opened Tuesday, March 16)

MARTIN BECK THEATER

A comedy by George Bernard Shaw. Staged by Peter Ashmore. Sets and costumes by Stewart Chaney. Production supervised by Theresa Helburn and Lawrence Langner. Company manager, John Tuerk. Stage manager, Buford Armitage. Press representatives, Joseph Heidt and Peggy Phillips. Presented by the Theater Guild in association with Alfred Fischer.

Dolly.....Patricia Kirkland
Valentine.....Tom Helmore
Maid.....Scott Douglas
Phillip.....Nigel Stock
Mrs. Clandon.....Frieda Inescort
Gloria.....Faith Brook
Crampton.....Ralph Forbes
McComas.....Walter Rudd
Waiter.....Leo G. Carroll
Bohun.....William Devin

The Theater Guild has produced another handsome revival of a Gay Nineties period piece. Stewart Chaney rates several bows for his lush Victorian backgrounds and the perfection of his costume detail. Nothing has been stinted on the production side, but it does seem that with *You Never Can Tell* the Guild has scraped bottom in the Shavian barrel. It will, no doubt, draw a certain number of the pew-buying curious, but in spite of all fancy trimming, *Tell* sums up to a garrulous stock comedy, dated as a horsecar—and just about as fast.

Blame for the pace points two ways; first, at the old master's proclivity for never using less than three words where one will do; second, at Peter Ashmore's archly stylized staging. Ashmore seems intent that not a single Shavian superficial pearl shall be lost, and with the apparent notion of hammering them home, calls for such overplaying on the part of most of his cast as to turn the piece into arrant farce—and plodding farce at that.

For record purposes, Mr. Shaw is again concerned with the battle of the sexes and Victorian modes and morals. The former has to do with the recovery of a father by three outspoken youngsters after a separation of 18 years and the winning of the haughty eldest by a poor but personable dentist; the latter includes such matters as the emancipation of women and bringing up children via the self-expression route. Titivating, perhaps, 50 years ago, but hardly startling now.

On the bright side of the acting ledger are the performances of Leo (See *You Never Can Tell*, page 49)

JOY TO THE WORLD

(Opened Thursday, March 18)

PLYMOUTH THEATER

A comedy by Allen Scott. Staged by Jules Dassin. Setting by Harry Horner. Costumes by Beverly Woodner. Lighting by Jean Rosenthal. Company manager, Michael Goldreyer. Stage manager, Ben Ross Berenberg. Press representatives, Samuel J. Friedman and Lewis Harmon. Presented by John Houseman and William R. Katzell.
Mary Magill (Chief Receptionist).....Mary Welch
Floyd (a Messenger).....Michael Dreyfuss
Mildred (a Secretary).....Lois Hall
Edith Wham.....Peggy Maley
J. Newton McKeon (Head of Publicity).....Myron McCormick
Mortimer Behrman (Head of Story Department).....Leslie Litomy
Richard Stanton (of the Legal Department).....Hugh Rennie
Edward F. Gannon (Studio Manager).....Bert Freed
Alexander Soren (Vice-President in Charge of Production).....Alfred Drake
Tilworthy (From the Johnston Office).....Harris Brown
Ann.....Marsha Hunt
Steve Walton (a Cutter).....Herb Ratner
Barbara Benton (a Star).....Lucille Patton
Henry Saintsbury (a Director).....Walter F. Appler
John V. Hooper (Chairman of the Board).....Clay Clement
Dmitri Qumansky.....Kurt Kasznar
Sampson.....Hal Gerson
Mr. Wilcox.....Theodore Newton
Harry.....Sam Bonnell
Sam Blumenfeld.....Morris Carnovsky
Messengers—Beverly Thaw, Blanche Zohar, Jeanne Jordan, Vicki Carlson.

If anyone wants to take *Joy to the World* seriously as far as a serious message is concerned, he is entirely within his rights. Certainly, scripter Allan Scott's plot revolves around the notion that Hollywood ought to clean its own house and turn out better and more honest pictures.

However, it seems to this reporter that had Scott been in earnest he would hardly have attempted a message in terms of a lickety-split lampoon of the movie industry. Nor would he have gaited it to the ancient formula of boy meets girl with integrity, boy loses girl because he doesn't come up to scratch, boy gets integrity and, in consequence, gets gal. It just seems that in *Joy*, Scott wanted to do a pleasant gagged-up farce-comedy with plenty of laugh lines. *Joy* is certainly no *Once in a Lifetime*, but it has been staged at a headlong clip by Jules Dassin, and thru pace alone most of its more obvious artifices are covered up. Perhaps it was intended as it comes across, an amusing evening of tidy theatrical escape. As such, it can lure an equally tidy amount of customers.

John Houseman and William R. Katzell have gone all out on the production. Harry Horner has con- (See *Joy to the World* on page 49)

Experimental Theater

A TEMPORARY ISLAND

(Opened Sunday, March 14, 1948)

MAXINE ELLIOTT THEATER

A comedy by Halsted Welles. Staged by the author. Sets by Lawrence Goldwasser. Original music by Lehman Engel. Songs by Lorenzo Fuller. Costumes by Mildred Sutherland. Production manager, John Efrat. Stage manager, Eddie Dimond. General manager, Zeldia Dorfman. Produced by Cheryl Crawford and Edward T. Hambleton. Presented by Experimental Theater, Inc., under the auspices of the American National Theater and Academy.

Cordelia.....Nancy Franklin
Kelsoe.....Karen Lindgren
Bunny.....Rita Gam
Miss Evans.....Jane Hoffman
Miss Rector.....Hilda Vaughn
Mr. Fisk.....Philip Bourneuf
Miss Wampsey.....Philippa Bevans
Mr. Tottingham.....Blair Davies
Mr. Chanter.....Harrison Dowd
Mr. Avery.....Gregory Robins
Junius.....Bill Dillard
Ned.....Bill Myers
Mr. Prince.....Leon Askin
Suzette.....Vera Zorina
Felicity.....Ruth Vaughn
Mr. Boutourlinsky.....Walter Palace
Mrs. Boutourlinsky.....Ann Sullivan
Mr. Smith.....Taylor Graves
Uncle Benny.....Ernest Truex
Sophomore.....Shirley Ames
Senior.....Anne-Marie Gayer
Freshman.....Elaine Bradford
Farmer.....Carl Judd
Farmer's Wife.....Natalie Bensch
Farmer's Daughter.....Winnie Mae Martin
Chief of Police.....Gene Galvin
Policeman.....Geoffrey Lumb
Mill Hand.....Dion Allen

The Experimental Theater comes a severe cropper with its fourth subscription offering, *A Temporary Island*. Just what is experimental about this Halsted Welles opus, one wouldn't know, since plot-wise it moses down the most familiar of paths, sign-posted with more than vague recollections of *Polly of the Circus* plus overtones of *He Who Gets Slapped*. Possibly it was an experiment to allow the author to direct his own piece; if so, it was one which backfired, for the Welles deliberate pace makes 11 o'clock seem like midnight.

Welles is concerned with the old, old tilt between stuffy, hide-bound complacency versus freedom and romance. His locale is a New England ladies' seminary (circa 1881) and his plot has to do with the attempted ousting from town by the school's faculty of a visiting circus. This time it's the seminary's prexy who falls for the lady animal trainer and the lure of the road. Naturally, he finally comes to the conclusion that pedantry and tights don't mix.

Capital "M" Moods

It's all as simple as that, and there might be a nice, hokey little play in the notion. But the Welles version, while showing flashes of humor, makes a point of satirical moodiness, moods with a capital "M". Seldom has an unreal love affair unwound more tepidly to terminate in a flatu- (See *A Temporary Island*, page 49)

ROUTES

Dramatic and Musical

Antony & Cleopatra (Ford) Baltimore.
Annie Get Your Gun (Nixon) Pittsburgh.
Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (Royal Alexandra) Toronto.
Burlesque (Selwyn) Chicago.
Carousel (Metropolitan) Providence.
Dunham, Katherine (American) St. Louis.
First Mrs. Fraser, with Jane Cowl (Lyric) Bridgeport, Conn., 27.
Hold It (Shubert) New Haven, Conn., 25-27.
Harvey (Convention Hall) Tulsa, Okla., 24-25; (Home) Oklahoma City 26-27.
Harvey (Locust St.) Philadelphia.
I Remember Mama (KRNT Radio) Des Moines 24; (Music Hall) Kansas City 25-27.
John Loves Mary (Harris) Chicago.
Jones, Spike (National) Washington.
Lady Windermere's Fan (American) St. Louis.
My Romance (Boston O. H.) Boston.
Macbeth (His Majesty's) Montreal.
Oklahoma (Curran) San Francisco.
O Mistress Mine, with Lunt & Fontanne (Biltmore) Los Angeles.
Private Lives, with Tallulah Bankhead (Hanna) Cleveland.
Red Mill (Shubert) Boston.
Show Boat (Shubert) Chicago.
Song of Norway (Auditorium) Memphis 23-24.
There Goes the Bride (Town Hall) Toledo, O., 27.

Insure Your Vote.

Each year for the past four years voting on the part of the people of the theater for the Donaldson Awards has increased. Now as preparations for the Fifth Annual Donaldson Awards get under way, the Awards committee wishes to do everything possible to see that everyone in the theater has an opportunity to vote.

Early in May ballots and instructions are delivered by hand to the theaters to all the players appearing on Broadway at the time.

In order to get ballots to players who will not be appearing on Broadway early in May, *The Billboard*, sponsor of the Donaldson Awards, would like to have the names and addresses of such players, so that a ballot may be properly mailed to them.

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