NO HOODOO ON BROADWAY'S PLAYS OPENING ON 13th

Opening of New Guild Theater Sets High Mark for Week Crowded With Theatrical Events in Gotham

Trio of stars in new Broadway shows: Irene Fenwick in "Taps"; Tessa Kosta in "Princess Ida," and Helen Gahagan in "The Sapphire Ring"

THE NEA PLAY JURY'S TEN BEST PLAYS

Candida
Desire Under the Elms
Old English
The Fall Guy
The Firebrand
The Guardsman
The Dove
The Wild Duck
They Knew What They Wanted
What Price Glory.
By the NEA Play Jury

NEW YORK, April 25.—Superstition holds stage folk with a heavy s, supposedly, but "13" seems not matter. At any rate, on Monday, il 13, more new plays opened than any night this season, and the reolor of the week trailed in with itions in plenty.

First in aggregate importance and accompanying flourish was Bernard Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra" Lionel Atwill and Helen Hayes. President Coolidge in Washington ched the button which sent the ain up for this opening performe in the magnificent new playe of the Theater Guild. Nothing stinted in the production. The igs by Frederick Jones were ious creations. Everything was ed for a great event. And actua for many minutes at a time ing happened within the emotions he spectator.

e remained as detached as if ching a skilled juggler. Sparkling and situations shone for recogon, but one felt that what he was missing was as great as what he received. Much of the difficulty, it is easy to believe, was attributable to "conditions"—obstacles in preparation, first night nerves and a new theater.

Caesar here appears as one might imagine a whimsical British colonel superintending the realm of a minor rajah. Lionel Atwill plays him most successfully, with humor, freshness and imperial presence. Helen Hayes, the flapper Cleopatra, is winsome and vital. Other names to be mentioned from the large cast are Henry Travers, Edmund Elton, Schuyler Ladd and Helen Westley.

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Next to the Guild opening in genuine interest must be ranked the two Gilbert & Sullivan revivals, "Mikado" and "Princess Ida." These operettas are sung the way the composer might have dreamed them and staged with generosity and beauty.

In the "Mikado" the principal parts are taken by Marguerite Namara, William Danforth and Tom Burke, with Lupino Lane making one of the funniest Lord High Executioners in history.

Tessa Kosta is the lovely "Princess Ida," with extra work in her show being performed by Robinson Newbold, Scott Welsh, and Bernice Mershon. The chorus is composed of unusually pretty girls.

There's no escaping the bromide that for real entertainment, it is near impossible to beat Gilbert and Sullivan.

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For the other numerous progeny of the Easter play season, only the sketchiest christening ceremonies are possible here. The imposing and the trivial alike will have to fall in line like good little classified advertisements:

TAPS—Lionel Barrymore and Irene Fenwick in a tragedy of the ante-bellum German army. Much better than their last, "The Piker." Court-Martial scene in second act is stirring and skillful.

THE FOUR FLUSHER—Small-town comedy dominated by Russell Mack in role of shoe salesman who must make a splash to impress wealthy relatives. It is uneven but laughable.

MISMATES—Family bickering, complication of crimes and union of the wife to the deserving man who has worshipped her from afar. Clara Joel as the wife is very capable.

THE BACK SLAPPER—The man who is affable everywhere except at home. He gets his just desserts through an adventure with a former bathing beauty champion, well played by Lee Patrick. Harry C. Browne as the back slapper makes himself convincingly irritating.

TELL ME MORE—Jazzy musical comedy composed by George Gershwin, with tunes which soon will be whistled widely. The comedians are Lou Holtz, Andrew Tombes and Emma Haig.

MERCENARY MARY—Another musical comedy with dancers in stellar position. Each individual has a particular movement and stunt all her own. Nellie Breen's dancing is notable. Madeline Fairbanks, Allen Kearns and John Boles are quite acceptable.

WILD BIRDS—In which Dan Totheroh, a young Californian, aims at poetic heights of tragedy and succeeds in hitting wild birds that are flying rather low.

GLORIA SWANSON TO OPEN LOWELL

Pacific Premier on Picture to be Feature of Opening Night of Week of May 4, According to Announcement.

Gloria Swanson and Warwick Ward in a scene from "Madame Sans Gene," Which Opens the New Lowell Early Next Month.

THE first motion picture ever to play on Broadway at five dollars net—that's the reputation "Madame Sans Gene," hailed as Gloria Swanson's cinemasterpiece, made for itself at its opening performance in New York. Moreover, the theater packed to the rafters for the occasion, with hundreds of unsuccessful applicants for seats and a crowd of several thousands giving the police trouble outside the theater in their efforts to get into the place and also to catch a glimpse of Miss Swanson and her French nobleman-husband, the Marquis de la Falaise de la Coudraye.

Manager McDonald has booked "Madame Sans Gene" for its Pacific coast premier to open the new Lowell theater during the first week in May. Credit for Gloria Swanson, whose screen efforts are always acted in elaborate settings and gowns, "Madame Sans Gene" is an unusually glorious production. It was filmed in France, and the backgrounds include the palaces at Versailles, Fontainebleau and Compiegne, spots hitherto forbidden to motion picture directors. Gloria is seen sleeping in the actual golden bed of Marie Antoinette, flirting in the gardens where the unfortunate Queen conducted her famous intrigues, and coquetting with Napoleon (Emile Drain) in the royal private chamber which the real Napoleon occupied. The results are said to be startingly realistic in the extreme.

In "Madame Sans Gene" (Madame Devil-May-Care), Miss Swanson has the role of the witty, flirtatious little French laundress, who used to wash Napoleon's shirts for him, when he was an impecunious corporal, who married one of Napoleon's sergeants, and who was swept by the French Revolution into the title of Duchess and residence in Napoleon's court, where she alternately scandalized and sent into hilarious laughter the haughty lords and ladies, ending by saving the Empress's honor and winning for herself Napoleon's eternal gratitude.

Charles de Roche, the Pharaoh of Cecil B. DeMille's "The Ten Commandments," heads the cast playing in support of Miss Swanson. The picture was directed by Leonce Perret from Forrest Halsey's adaptation of the stage play by Victorien Sardou and Emile Moreau.

No Flapper Here

Something to get excited about—a motion picture without a "juvenile" or a flapper!

This is "Inez From Hollywood," the First National production which comes to the Rex soon.

The principal roles are played by Anna Q. Nilsson, as Inez, and Lewis S. Stone, as Stewart Cutler. This is in line with the very praiseworthy tendency shown by the most intelligent producers to cast in their leading roles actors and actresses, rather than merely pretty faces and youthful inexperience. Not that Anna Q. Nilsson isn't beautiful enough to satisfy the most critical in the role of Hollywood's reigning "camp."

Behind the Screen in Hollywood

HOLLYWOOD, April 25.—Lenore Ulric has a sister, and it looks like sister is gonna bust right into the movies. She's very young, and has just won a beauty contest, in Milwaukee, I think. She had some tests made in the studio this week, and I think you'll see her soon.

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It's a cinch to sit back and say a movie is rotten, but honest, folks, if you could follow one production through from the time the story is selected until the final title is placed in the completed film, you would understand better how the things "get that way." Making movies is a terrific job of specialized detail. You would go crazy trying to follow the intricate process. It looks very simple. It isn't. Really, it is as much of a specialized science as any recognized science of today, but it so happens that we have as yet very few post-graduates, and so the freshmen and sophomores do the best they can. Remember, the movies are very young. The greatest bromide in the industry is the phrase "The movies are still in their infancy." It's twin is "The surface has just been scratched." Well, I think we're really about the most overgrown kid in the world so far as financial success goes, but it is true that we will go a long way yet in growing up to the point where we have enough workers who can do good things consistently.

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You really should figure the movies this way. When you hear a boy or a grown man playing a violin, you do not necessarily complain because the player fails to give the same thrill that Elman or Kreisler might. Well, the making of movies is far more difficult to master than the violin. In making movies, the capable individual is handicapped by the team mate who goes wrong, the inspirational soul runs afoul of the practical mind.

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Making good movies consistently is more difficult than organizing and maintaining a wonderful orchestra. Men have been learning to play musical instruments for generations. The movies are really less than twenty years old. Another problem of the movies is the fact that this marvelous grist mill of entertainment proved so profitable in the early years, regardless of quality, that many workers achieved prominence without really having ability. Gradually these "false alarms," who rode in on the wave of early success, are being weeded out by the present keen competition, and so new workers are coming into their own.

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The fact that you fans have growled has been helpful. The fact that you stand in line for the fine movie entertainment and let the bad ones play to empty seats is splendid. That forces the studios into the keenest sort of serious effort. I do not want to seem to condone bad movies. Certainly I want you to go to the best and dodge the junk, but I also want you to keep a little charity in your heart for those who make the bad ones. Even making a bad movie is a tough job. Don't let any one tell you different. It's not as simple as it looks, when you sit comfortably in your theater.

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Monta Bell, that clever young newspaper man who, in the very short space of a year has established himself as one of the top-notch directors, is doing a thing called "Pretty Ladies" over on the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lot. They built a real theater for Monta right out there in the studio. The yarn has to do with Zasu Pitts as a musical comedy girl and Tom Moore as the drummer of the theater orchestra. Monta has put on an entire musical show with all the trimmings. The chorus is a wow. Ziegfeld never had a better one. I was talking with Monta on the set while the damsels were rehearsing a dance the other day, and Monta said he thought he would go to New York and sell the "ideas" of the dance numbers to some musical comedy producer. Of course he was kidding, but he could do it. They are just that good. Here's a young fellow who a year ago was working with Charlie Chaplin as assistant in the making of "A Woman of Paris." Today he is recognized as one of the best directors, with a contract signed, sealed and delivered, for $2500 a week. Is this a business of opportunities? I'll say she is.

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Speaking of "formulas," many say that D. W. Griffith has always really used only one basic formula for movie successes,—get the girl into peril, into the clutches of the villain, and then have the ride to the rescue. He has used it in all his most successful movies, "The Birth of a Nation," "Hearts of the World," "The Two Orphans," and "America." The farther D. W. ever got away from that basic idea the poorer the financial result of his effort. His latest "opery" is "Isn't Life Wonderful." It lacks his favorite formula.

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SCHOOL FOR FILM ASPIRANTS TO BE OPERATED ON LONG ISLAND

Sponsors Think This Method of Recruiting Screen Talent Will be Improvement Over Old Way

These girls are considered three of the best "movie finds" this year. Above is Esther Ralston. Below at the left Mary Brian, and at the right, Betty Bronson.

By JACK JUNGMEYER
(NEA Service Writer)

NEW YORK, April 25.—Famous Players-Lasky Corporation has taken the first practical step in the establishment of training schools for film actors and actresses—long considered desirable in the industry—by initiating the Paramount Picture School at its Long Island city studio.

The sponsors hope by this means to substitute a far better method of recruiting screen talent than the present haphazard and costly way of testing and developing raw material from the "extra" lists. And the embryonic actors will probably find intensive training under expert instructors, with the screen as a specific goal, as advantageous as the studio employers, so that the arrangement should not prove lopsided.

The initial student body is to be limited to 20—10 men between the ages of 18 and 30 and 10 women between the ages of 16 and 25. These are to be selected through a series of elimination tests which, it is announced, are to cover every section of the country.

"Candidates," reads the invitation, "must have exceptional attraction of face and figure, good photographic qualities, good health, latent acting ability, versatility, intelligence, good principles, ambition, and at least a common school education."

Paramount agents in various zones throughout the United States will receive applicatoins up to May 16, each applicant being requested to send three photographs, front face, side view and full length figure.

The candidates will be narrowed down to five possible students from each district, this total again being winnowed to 75 for pictorial inspection by Jesse Lasky, vice president of Famous Players-Lasky. These final selections will be certified as worthy a film test to be given at various branch offices.

There will be no charge to candidates for these screen tests, but they will be required to pay their expenses to and from home.

The most promising 50 of the 75 screen tested will be given special interviews by Mr. Lasky and his appointees, these interviews to be held from June 27 to June 29. Fifteen of them from the eastern section will report at New York, 20 at Chicago, and the remaining 15 at Hollywood, Calif. And on July 16 the score of successful novices will be required to report for enrollment at New York.

The curriculum covers completely the theory and practice of motion picture acting and screen technique. All subjects will be compulsory, physical training and lectures. Students will be taught graceful carriage, loss of self-consciousness, poise, etiquette and polite deportment, selection and correct wearing of modern clothes and period costumes, the art of make-up and the principles of pantomime, emotional control and character delineation.

Students who show marked proficiency will be permitted to appear as "extras" in Paramount productions and at the conclusion of the term, which is to last six months, a complete motion picture will be made by members of the class, says the company.

Graduates will be given opportunity to sign a contract with Paramount, if in the opinion of the executive council sufficient ability is shown. These contracts will be for one year at a reasonable salary, and will carry an option for four additional years. All who graduate satisfactorily will be given a letter of indorsement and selected strips of films which will serve as recommendation for work in other film companies.

But all prospective candidates should mark this: "The tuition will be $500 a term. In addition students must be prepared to pay their living expenses at the rate of $25 a week. And since the school term will approximate 23 weeks, $575 will be necessary for living expenses, making a total requirement of $1075 for each student."

Students will be considered on probation for the first four weeks.

It is Jesse Lasky's belief that, "while the only way anyone can learn to be a finished actor is by acting, the teaching of the selected young hopefuls by experts actually in motion picture production will enable them to acquire within a reasonably short time what would ordinarily require years of groping and experimenting."

"Signal Tower" Shows

"The Signal Tower," Universal-super-Jewel starring Virginia Valli, directed by Clarence L. Brown, comes to the Bell theater at Springfield Sunday. It shows this favorite star in an entirely new role, that of a housewife in an humble home. In the forest, along the railroad her husband works as a signal tower man. The picture is said to be a marvel of fidelity to death, as well as having dramatic power. Wallace Beery and Rockliffe Fellowes play opposite the star.

"Janice Meredith" Coming

"Janice Meredith," which comes to the Heilig soon, is a film in which battle and romance are skillfully blended to the maximum effect. Opening with the simple love story of Colonial life, it develops magnificently into an engrossing historical document of the struggle for independence.

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