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No Legs in New Broadway Show

Some Comedy Stars get as far on Their Shape as on Their Ability



Margaret McCall

Lorraine Harris

Adelaide Hall

Louise Cook

Annette Kellingsworth

Valada Snow

Gertrude Saunders

Theatergoers Blink when "Rhapsody in Black," Newest Musical Comedy, Gets Going Without Shapely Limbs Kicking, Wiggling, Strutting and Prancing.

By WILBUR THIN

When Lew Leslie swung open the doors of the Sam H. Harris Theatre and let Broadway get a peek at his latest sepia vehicle, "Rhapsody in Black," blase theatergoers blinked their eyes, pinched themselves to make sure they were awake and sat through this unusual and splendid performance a bit bewildered.

What? No legs? they asked themselves. A Broadway musical show without any shapely limbs, kicking, wiggling, prancing supporting equally shapely torsos of nut-brown chorines and high-yaller ladies of the ensemble? Broadway couldn't quite understand.

Ever since the merry days of the gaudy Floradora Girls, back in the gay nineties, when theatergoers were driven to the Great White Way in horse-drawn carriages, legs and musical comedies have been practically synonymous. America has grown completely leg conscious.

Americans Moral Hypocrites

America has always held up its hands in holy horror whenever the

Moulin Rouge and other Parisian resorts where the feminine form is displayed without restraint are mentioned. But the French laugh up their sleeves at American hypocrisy because they know that America is just as interested in nudity as the French ever dared to be.

This is proved by the fact that the first places to which American tourists want to go upon crossing the pond are to the places with naughty reputations. And the crowds that swarm into the baldheaded men's row in all the burlesque houses in America are another evidence of the leg consciousness of the American public.

Many Owe Success to Form

Several American actresses who have won fame and recognition in the theater have gotten almost as far on their shape as on their ability. Josephine Baker, the girl who startled the world when she appeared in only a bunch of bananas and a smile is a striking example.

Adelaide Hall, in spite of the fact that she possesses a fairly excellent voice, owes her success more to the undressed hit she made in her "Diga Diga Doo" song of the "Blackbirds of 1928" than to anything else.

Aida Ward, whose voice is of far superior quality and range, and who appeared in the same show, but unlike Adelaide, never exposed her limbs to view, has not climbed as high up the ladder of fame as the little bronze goddess.

Shed Hose for Bare Legs

Several years ago when the chorus girls first began to shed their stock-

ings to appear in bare legs with rouged and powdered knees moralists raised a furor. The practice was branded as indecent. Long-nosed busy-bodies wanted to have the theater managers and producers yanked into court. The general public liked it, however, and now to see a chorus wearing the long hip-length stockings is a rare thing indeed and uncovered limbs are taken as a matter of

things that were once thought immoral, many are wondering what the next few years will bring.

Is the current craze of long skirts now in vogue merely a superficial gesture destined to be short-lived only to be followed by more brazenness in women's fashions?

Will the short skirts of a year or two ago return in even more daring modes than heretofore?

Indications point that way because America has had a taste of leg consciousness and the sky is now the limit.

Bring on your fig leaves.



JOSEPHINE BAKER,

who startled the world when she appeared clad in only a bunch of bananas

course.

Glorified Figure

Irvin C. Miller, the noted impresario, was the first to glorify the brown-skin girl in what the artists call the "all-in-all." Not only did the daring producer expose the calves, a sight that once caused men to blink their eyes and rub their hands with satisfaction, but he went higher up the tapering thighs, past the curving hips on up to where protruding busts covered with but a dainty chain of rhinestones held the eye for a second and then let it follow the contours of smooth brown shoulders that lost themselves at the ends of slender fingertips. Ten years ago a "Brown-skin Models" would have been impossible.

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