

# The Daily Tar Heel

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Sunday, February 7, 1932

### A Third Party?

The announcement of a war on unemployment by the administration yesterday brought numerous organizations and financial experts to the presidential call, among them Harry L. Stevens, commander of the American Legion. The Legionnaires, to the number of over one million members, are pledged to support an unemployment relief drive to be known as the "War on Depression," which will involve a general house to house solicitation of business men and manufacturers in an effort to induce them to put at least one more man to work in their establishments. This venture is the result of more than ten weeks of preparation, involving the participation of each of the ten thousand posts maintained by the Legion throughout the country.

This move, as well as other recent publicized activities of the Legion, leads political observers to note the ascendancy of this vast organization to a plane of political significance. The stand of the Legion on the prohibition question, in which it favored "the submission by Congress for the repeal or modification of the present prohibition law to the several states with the request that each state submit this question to the voters thereof," is held particularly significant, in that it involves the first organized stand of a constituent against the existing dry laws. Whatever is the aim of the Legion, it is apparent that its influence on politics has assumed definite proportions. With a membership representing the cream of the politically minded younger men of the nation, such a rise is not improbable. The group is unified, it has common interests, and it possesses an organization capable of carrying to completion any venture for the common welfare of the group. The Legion has had a taste of politics, and its palate has not been displeased. The evolution of a third political party from this group is not an absurdity.—D.C.S.



*A Doll's House*, by Henrik Ibsen. Presented by the Carolina Playmakers, at the Playmaker's Theatre, February 4, 5, and 6, 1932. Directed by Harry E. Davis. With Mary Margaret Russell, Milton Williams, Marion Tatum, Whitner Bissell, Gilbert Stamper, Lillian Hottenstein, Rebekah Moose, George Howard, Donald Howard, Betty Emory, and Oscar Stillman. Setting by Mary Dirnberger, lighting by John Neuner, music by Harry Lee Knox with Elizabeth Quinlan. (Performance of February 5 reviewed.)

### Reviewed by James Dawson

The play: Not the most happy choice of vehicles for the Playmakers, *A Doll's House* is, as most sophomores know, a thesis play with a dead thesis. The problem of woman's liberation is not one to profoundly move the audience that sits in the Playmakers theatre. For a student of dramatic history, it is not hard, of course, to reconstruct the temper of the time, and to understand just what sort of splash this play made in the sociological sea. But the Playmakers were faced with a problem of a different calibre. Theirs was the task of making interesting a play whose merit is only half on the side of art and drama. Of necessity, then, the art, the drama of the piece had to be stretched to cover the bare places left by the removal of the social problem. It is perhaps not too much to say that the play, *per se*, was boring. Yawns, from a society whose women no longer find matrimony a form of sanctioned prostitution, constitute the only reaction that could be expected.

The players: As well cast as any Playmaker production of the last five years, the play was carried through with that spirit of interest which has always been characteristic of the organization. The persons in the cast were interested in the piece, which gave it something it could not otherwise have had. The name of Ibsen has been one of power in the Playmakers' group, and they have once before done it justice. This performance was no fall from grace, in spite of the choice of plays. There were one or two surprises, but all the actors were what might have been expected. The casting was done with what resembled good judgment, with few exceptions.

Mary Margaret Russell, as Nora, brought to bear on her job her past experience on the Playmaker stage, and this department might venture to guess, the aid and advice of her husband, who is as old a Playmaker as she. Whatever the means, the end and result was as nice a bit of work as could be asked. Her interpretation was even, and her performance smoothly satisfying, until her change of mind and course, in Nora's last act, when she rose somewhat above the level of the two preceding acts. She accomplished her best in the face of a trying handicap, for in her last interview with Torvald, Milton Williams fell decidedly below his worst of the play theretofore. Mrs. Russell, whether intentionally or not, pleasingly minimized the importance of the symbolic representation of Woman which was Nora's, and was simply flawless as an individual. And this she achieved in the face of a misfit play. Her character, however, was not a misfit. She moulded herself to meet its demands, and the result was her strong handling of the mind of Nora.

Milton Williams, as Torvald, was miscast, in the opinion of

Ruth Chatterton uses her dining room only when there is company. When she is not entertaining, dinner is served on a card table in an upstairs sitting room.

There is no crisis in Europe.—George Bernard Shaw.

to his discomfort in the role, he was unable to get inside the mind of the husband, and his performance climbed from peak to peak, sometimes reaching verisimilitude, but more often coasting below it.

Marion Tatum, as Mrs. Linden, was at her best in some time. Only once did she fail to make her character clear, when she was not certain as to whether or not Mrs. Linden was sincere in her avowal of love for Krogstad. In every other minute of her performance she was good. She submerged her own mind beneath the mind of her character.

Dr. Rank (Whitner Bissell) was a surprisingly convincing old man. He was feeble, slow, and bent to the proper degree. His character was not overdrawn. He was given a personal ovation.

Gilbert Stamper was a satisfactory Krogstad. He has become the regular heavy of the Playmakers, but has managed to avoid being standardized thereby. Lillian Hottenstein made Anna so convincing that it was several minutes before this department recognized her everyday self beneath the nurse's clothes Rebekah Moose was good as the maid until she had occasion to speak, when her accent belied her character. The two boys, George and Donald Howard, were splendid replicas. Perfectly natural, they were nicely cast and completely un-self-conscious.

The setting: The one set was designed by Mary Dirnberger. It went in for a wealth of detail in the matter of furnishing, with its lamps, glass bells, divans, and footstools. It failed in only one thing, the establishing of the cozy atmosphere that Torvald was continually commenting upon. It succeeded in getting the effect of depression and gloom. The lighting was splendidly done by John Neuner. The music was well placed, and the illusion of the playing from the stage was well achieved and held. Mrs. Russell's dance was nicely designed and effectively executed.

The whole piece was directed with nice attention to detail, with the exception of one or two bits of business that jarred the effect of the illusion. In Torvald, the director's hand was somewhat too obvious. In the other people of the cast, it was smoothly hidden, and their business was smooth. Torvald had been forced into a mould that did not fit, and the marks of it showed in his strained actions, which, though designed with all care, were not convincing.

The small audience was well pleased with the final result. The cast and the director succeeded in hiding from them the social element of the now archaic problem of Nora, except in spots where the sheer drama and art of the piece were not enough to cover the loss that years have perforce imposed upon certain of Ibsen's theses.

When they could not get Clara Bow to play in "The Impatient Maiden," Universal rapidly wrote it and cast Lew Ayres in it. Ayres gets red in the face when talking about substituting for Clara in a picture which was based on a book called *The Impatient Virgin*.

# The Musical University

By T. Smith McCorkle

The Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra played a program at Duke university Friday night and proved again, perhaps more forcibly than ever before in the experience of this writer, its right to rank among the foremost orchestras of America, which means of the world.

Those who happened to have a special interest in such matters were frankly curious about the orchestra's new conductor, Eugene Ormandy. This curiosity was immediately gratified in the person of a decisive and aggressive leader who possessed a perfect baton technic and who has a musical personality that is capable of instilling individuality into a reading of the most frequently heard numbers without resorting to unwarranted license or privilege in doing so. No greater tribute can be paid a conductor than this. Mr. Ormandy read a long and complex program without reference to score.

The first number on the program was the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3* by Bach, played by the stringed choir of the orchestra. Mr. Ormandy's reading of this was in the purest Bach style; clear-cut, incisive, sparkling, with that clarity of diction that characterizes Bach. Mr. Ormandy built his performance in a perfectly woven, symmetrical balance that to be properly impressive must be almost subconsciously existent. One often hears the question of whether Bach has anything really to offer the layman. To have heard this concerto would be the finest answer possible to give. For the purpose of contrast the air to the D Major Suite, more familiarly known as "The Air for G-string," was played between the two movements that make up the concerto proper. From where this writer sat one might have wished for a bit more sonority in this movement, but certainly there was much of artistry. The presence of a masterful stringed choir was immediately manifest, and if there had been any doubt concerning this young conductor, it must have been completely dispelled at once.

The *B Minor Symphony* (Unfinished) of Schubert was the second number on the program. In writing this symphonic brevity, Schubert adhered strictly to the prescribed form of the classic school, but his melodies are distinctly those of romanticism. Too often conductors try to conform these broad themes to the more limited confines of a mere thematic idea, or they go to the other extreme and make them sentimental. Mr. Ormandy was content to lead the orchestra rather than to conduct effusively music in this number, and to let the melodies sing themselves in the natural, spontaneous, and graceful way that Schubert wrote them. The result was to bring a new and almost fresh beauty to a number that perhaps some in the audience had wished in advance might have been displaced by another symphony.

In playing the symphony Mr. Ormandy followed a custom that has become a fetish with many conductors of making no break between the movements. Just why this should be done is not entirely clear. Even metropolitan critics are generally agreed that an audience needs a moment of relaxation between the movements of a symphony to put aside, as it were, what has gone before and to prepare for what is to come. In most symphonies, as in this one, there is no thematic continuity between the movements, and therefore no real reason for avoiding the

break which the composer indicates.

Strangely enough, this most excellent orchestra experienced its only noticeable slips of the evening in the playing of this well-worn and time-honored work. The brass and woodwind choirs, having been silent during the concerto, were cold and therefore perhaps excusably off pitch; but the cellos generally played impeccably for the Bach number, and their intonation faults in the symphony were something of a mystery. The second movement was well under way before the ensemble became perfect.

After the intermission the orchestra came back to the stage with two more trumpet players, two more percussion players, and two tubas added to the personnel, to play the Polka and Fugue music from Weinberger's opera, *Schwanda the Bagpiper*. This was new music to the writer, but appeared on first hearing to be very interesting and perhaps charming music. The opera was given its initial performance in Europe in 1927, and both the opera and this incidental music have been heard several times in America this season. The Polka had all the fire and grace of that well-known folk dance. The Fugue began in the conventional style, with a rather lengthy subject assigned to the violins. The further it progressed, the more bombastic it became, until finally the trombones, the French horns, and even the tympani (to the limit of their melodic range) were tossing the subject about. One was reminded of the Paris Conservatory professor's remark that the Cesar Franck famous D Minor Symphony could not be a symphony because the theme was given to the English horn. But even though Weinberger departed from tradition, he remained both clever and interesting. One suspected that Mr. Ormandy was slyly interested in the possible humor of this instrumental situation.

The programmed Sorcerer's Apprentice of Dukas was removed and by popular request Liszt's *Les Preludes* was substituted. The fifth programmed number, Richard Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, was moved up to fourth place. This prankish number by the impish Dr. Strauss is always a program favorite. Mr. Strauss refused to give a programme for the rondo that he wrote here, but critics have pretty well established one. Even so, except for one or two generally recognized dry spots in this score, such a descriptive plan is not necessary for the enjoyment of the music. Quite enough of interest and beauty is to be found within the thematic motifs and the handling thereof. All this is humorous in this number, and there is much which ranges from rowdyism to mawkish sentimentality, was graphically depicted by Mr. Ormandy.

The Liszt *Preludes* is another much played and popular symphonic poem. It is one of the finest examples of the original intent of this new form. Like the Schubert symphony, its reading may easily degenerate into sentimentality. Mr. Ormandy studiously avoided this, and his playing of the work was fresh and vital in every respect.

After the business of following the musical characters of Messrs. Strauss and Liszt through the respective narratives of these two composers, the audience found a welcome surcease in the generously accorded encores that were in the purely romantic vein. The encores were Johann Strauss' *Blue Dan-*

## THOSE NEW BOOKS

### The Book Market

The Book Market has gotten hold of a limited edition of poetry gotten out by the printing house of that fine old master-printer, Thomas Mosher, who made the world turn to Portland, Maine, for best-quality books. These little volumes are hand-bound; hand-set; printed on hand-made van Gelder paper. Keates, Shelley, Dowson and Matthew Arnold are listed among the authors. It's sure-fire dope that any of these books will be listed as collectors' items within five years.

From the shores of Portland's lovely Casco Bay we take hasty return to Chapel Hill and note this cheery announcement: The release date for Archibald Henderson's latest and much-heralded book, *The Life of Bernard Shaw*, has been set for February 27.

Aldous Huxley is on the loose again—this time with *Brave New World*. His usual style, of course, but Friend Aldous scarcely ever patterns his stuff on the books of Genesis. . . .

Edgar Wallace has come out with a new mystery yarn, *The Man at The Carlton*. Other than to state that it makes for good reading, we refuse to disclose the villain. We think that the person who reads any mystery yarn by following the Chinese method of starting at the last page and reading to the first shows as rare bad taste as the eccentric soul who wears his socks outside of his trouser-legs. And that's that.

And now for the rental library:

People have been wondering where Tom Wolf's *Look Homeward Angel* has disappeared. Here's the inside dope on the situation. Lewis Carr has it. He says he's going to keep it and struggle through to the bitter end, if he has to mortgage his reputation to keep up the payments on it.

*Reunion in Vienna*, by Robert Sherwood, has made its debut in the rental shelves. In the Broadway production, Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne are still playing to packed houses.

### Shift Scenes to Alfred Williams & Company

Grosset & Dunlap has released twenty-four of the world's best books (as the ads say)—all to match in color and binding. Popular prices prevail.

Included in the set is Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography, Voltaire's *Candide*, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, and comedies by Oscar Wilde.

Gallopung Gus.

ube, Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Flight of the Bumble-bee*, Brahms' *Fifth Hungarian Dance*, and Berlioz' *Rakoczy March*. The safe fresh originality marked the reading of these familiar pieces.

Chapel Hill was well represented by students, faculty, and town people.

### LOST

One cashmere embroidered bag containing a leather purse, between the Carolina Inn and the Carolina Theatre or in the theatre. Finder please communicate with the Carolina Inn. (1)

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