

"NO, NO, NANETTE" AT CHELMSFORD REVIVAL OF AN OLD FAVOURITE

BOOKINGS for this week's presentation by Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society of the musical comedy, "No, No, Nanette," were so good that financial success was almost assured before the first night on Monday.

That, in itself, is a tribute to the high standard which the Society has attained in the past. More important is the fact that this reputation is not impaired by the latest venture.

"No, No, Nanette" is a revival of an old favourite. It was performed by the Society in 1935. While this year's production will not go down as the Society's best effort, it is nevertheless worthy of quite a high place on the list of successes.

It is a bright, light-hearted and entertaining show which all who see will enjoy. It would not be true to say that everything went as it should do on the first night. There were several minor blemishes, but as the week has gone by they have become fewer and fewer and less noticeable.

The Society introduces several new-comers among the principals. They acquitted themselves very creditably.

Particularly does this apply to the youthful "Nanette," 15-years-old Diane Lawson.

Although her voice is somewhat immature for a building the size of the Regent Theatre, she scores a great triumph as a captivating, vivacious and winsome actress. For a person so young she promises to be one of the Society's stars.

The singing of the principals generally is tuneful, but not strong, and because of this the orchestra sometimes comes out on top. Fortunately in a show of this kind strong voices are not all-important, and in any case vocal shortcomings are more than balanced by other features. Almost without exception the acting is good. The dialogue is racy and at the same time distinct, none of the fun—and there is plenty—is lost, the singing and dancing of the chorus are exhilarating and there is admirable support from the orchestra.

Madge Macklin, the producer, has reason to be proud at the response to all her efforts, and Bert Barneveld, musical director and chorus master, has also done a grand job.

Even if Diane Lawson's singing voice is not quite able to cope with the demands of her part, her acting is as natural as one could wish to see. She fully suggests the rebellious emotions of the girl to whom the answer is so persistently and irritatingly in the negative. Rose Blooman, who has many delightful lines about men and how to manage them, plays her part with poise and point, and in the contrasting role of the quietly charming wife who does not want to spend her husband's money Lillian Hamilton strikes just the right note. As the young man whom love has denuded of all sense of humour, Maurice Carter performs well.

Rosemary Gornall, June Gisby and Dorothy Cox, make an attractively troublesome trio who cause amusing complications for those two bulwarks of the laughs department, Fred Munnion and Donald Leech. Both men are in fine form, and whenever together there is fun for the audience. They figure in many amusing scenes and play a great part in the success of the show. Dorothy Matthews, in the role of the cook, is the personification of domestic independence.

Monday night was also Civic Night, the Mayor (Alderman A. W. Andrews) and members of the Corporation being present. At the close of the performance the Mayor, introduced by the President, appeared on the stage and complimented all those who had taken part, expressed thanks for such a pleasant evening and appealed for the fullest possible support for the Society in its efforts to entertain the public.

THE CAST

Pauline, cook at the Smiths'; Dorothy Matthews; Sue Smith; Jimmy's wife, Lillian Hamilton; Billy Early, a lawyer, Fred Munnion; Lucille, Billy's wife, Rose Blooman; Nanette, a protegee of Sue, Diane Lawson; Tom Trainor; Lucille's nephew, Maurice Carter; Jimmy Smith, Donald Leech; Betty (from Bath), Rosemary Gornall; Winnie (from Harrogate), June Gisby; Flora (from Nice), Dorothy Cox.

Flappers: Kathleen Amery, June Davies, Joyce Eccleston, Hilda Filby, Joyce Manfield, Jean Ringer, Margaret Summers, Betty Wager.

Married Ladies: Ann Black, Margaret Cocker, Phyllis Rowe, Patricia Smith, Norah Taylor, Amy Warren, Peggy Welham.

Bachelors: Jack Clarke, Sidney Collicott, Ralph Day, Kenneth Fox, Tom Harper, Donald Samuel, Herbert Stock, Tom Taylor, Jim Welham, Richard Wood.

Speciality dancers: Hilda Filby, Sidney Collicott, Richard Wood.

The prompter is Major F. W. M. Powley; call boys, Mrs. Leech and Mr. F. Page; property master, Dorothy Catt; ladies' perruquier, Mrs. Ralph Catt; gentlemen's perruquier, Messrs. P. H. Russell and C. Bocking. Officials of the Society include: President, Mr. J. C. Blooman; hon. treasurer, Mr. V. T. F. Sags; hon. secretary, Mr. V. J. Cooper; hon. assistant secretary, Major F. W. M. Powley.