

## Curtain Club's "Pygmalion" Shows Theatrical Prowess

Shaw's "Pygmalion" has been a turn by countless theatrical companies on the Broadway boards, the Hollywood screen and as background for one of the most famous musicals of all time since the play was first produced in His Majesty's Theatre in London in April, 1914.

Its Cinderella theme has never ceased to delight the most sophisticated theatre audiences perhaps because the scintillating Shavian wit will never dim. For this reason, a formidable task confronts any amateur group which places "Pygmalion" on its season's theatre fare. Anyone who has seen or read the Shaw play is subconsciously making comparisons.

Viewed as strictly amateur theatre production, the Richmond Hill Curtain Club's season-opening "Pygmalion" is an excellent example of the 10-year-old club's theatrical prowess in sets, costuming and direction.

But in this reviewer's opinion with a few notable exceptions Shaw just doesn't shine through as he should.

Jan Harold's "Eliza Doolittle" in her dirty-faced "Hatch" dropping, Raggedy Ann preformation state as the bedraggled flower girl was a triumph but as a lady, her performance lacked lustre except for the haughty last scene when some of her earlier vigor came through.

As her protagonist, Trevor Alderwick as "Higgins" with his blue-eyed suavely and ever-jingling pockets was a very creditable performer, particularly in his "off-camera" months but he didn't really warm up to his formidable part until about the third act (on opening night, at least).

Most laudable performance was that of Neville Cross as "Alfred Doolittle" Eliza's father, who played the philosophical dustman right up to the hilt in a marvellously competent and sincere fashion hilarious in itself.

Seasoned Ron Holloway's "Colonel Pickering", the bumptious well-meaning foil to Higgins' acidity, was badly cast and at times, painful, perhaps because his putty hooknose was giving him trouble.

In all fairness to Mr. Holloway, he volunteered for the part when Director Gerry Crack was unable to find the right Pickering, but it wasn't his role.

Cicely Thompson, who's often in the director's chair for Curtain Club plays was an adept "Mrs. Higgins" with the right modicum of gentility and exasperation over her son's errant behavior.

Peter Purvis' cameo of the wild ex-language student who reveals that "Eliza" is not only not English but definitely of Hungarian royal blood was well done.

"Pygmalion's" five acts points up a crying need for expansion of the Curtain Club facilities.

With two large "drawing room" sets (done as usual with the club's fine attention to detail right down to tuning forks for the Professor's phonetics lessons with Eliza) and several anteroom scenes, set-changing on the small stage, although well-handled, must have caused stagehands to shudder.

The opening scene for example at Covent Garden had eight actors on stage in a space less than five feet wide.

Other amateur groups with considerably less talent and financial backing than the Curtain Club have managed to build or campaign for funds to build their own theatre in communities much smaller than Richmond Hill.

The Curtain Club would likely have no trouble finding support for a building scheme and although there is no centennial money left, could conceivably start now to plan for new quarters by Canada's 1967 birthday.

## Deserting Husbands Present Welfare Problem

Ottawa City Council has been warned that an increase in the number of cases of desertion and non-support may be the chief factor in the rising number of "unemployables" receiving public welfare in that city.

Welfare Commissioner Stuart Godfrey reported that definite steps were being taken to reduce the numbers on assistance. He warned that "inevitably there will be complaints from people who have come to regard some of these forms of assistance as permanent forms of income."

Home and school associations are needed in secondary schools where "developments have been explosive", is the theme of the following press release, signed by G. C. Gray, chairman of public relations of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc. Mr. Gray lives on Axminster Drive, Beverley Acres.

These questions underline the reasons why the Ontario Federation of Home and Schools is anxious to see more home and school associations established in secondary schools. The basic aims are the same in elementary and secondary home and school associations: to work for the good of the children—the direction of effort, and the needs are different.

## Parents' Role Very Important In Secondary School Program

"We must be realistic and take a firm stand on some of these, otherwise we shall be overwhelmed," he warned.

That this problem is common to all parts of Canada is evidenced in a recent decision of a civic committee in Winnipeg to seek means to strengthen laws to combat increases in the number of runaway husbands.

The committee has agreed that more attempts should be made to bring husbands into court on desertion charges and that fines should be steeper.

The federal Criminal Code provides a penalty for wife desertion, but legal action against runaway husbands generally comes under provincial acts relating to wives and children's maintenance.

The committee hopes to make desertion less interesting by laying more charges under the Criminal Code instead of the provincial act. It would also like to see the City of Winnipeg legal department increased to give more attention to the situation.

Assistance had been necessary in many cases last winter, he reported, to families whose supply of power and fuel had been cut off because they were in arrears on their accounts and to families who faced eviction because they hadn't paid their rent. Mr. Godfrey said that by supplementing income in these situations the department had prevented families going entirely on full assistance and had prevented further suffering on the part of the children involved.

He told council he believed the supplementary payments should be for limited periods or to meet specific crises. "There is a danger—already apparent—that some people feel that they can rely upon it as a permanent increase to

their basic income, earned or unearned. Richmond Hill has for some time been in the particularly fortunate position, through excellent welfare administration, of having no employables on the welfare list. Welfare officials have said that desertion and non-support play a minor role in their local welfare problems.

Education in the elementary schools has not changed too radically in the past generation, whereas developments in secondary education have been explosive in the past decade or so. Many parents who have been out of high school for upwards of 15 years, have little or no conception of what goes on inside a modern high school.

What therefore is the effect of parental ignorance of the new methods, new courses, new emphasis, new opportunities, new problems in high school today? Should the parents leave the direction the child takes in high school completely up to the school system?

How many students are being put into unsuitable streams, or left in wrong channels when they could easily have been redirected, because parents did not realize the situation or know the remedies? How many times have we seen a promising student dulled to mediocrity, and then dropping out of school, disheartened when fuller understanding on the part of his parents might have sustained him through the period of discouragement?

Many of our young people would go into life better educated, better qualified, if parents knew of the availability of bursaries and other financial aids to students, some of which are never awarded because of lack of applications. How many gifted youngsters are in jobs without challenge or reward when they might have been teachers or engineers if their parents had known that interest-free loans were available for the asking to finance a university education for any academically qualified student?

Interviewed by "The Liberal" Norman Lewis, newly appointed welfare officer for the County of York, who handled welfare matters in Richmond Hill and Markham Township for a number of years, said that desertions have always played a large part in welfare problems and probably will continue to do so. Some of this help is of a temporary nature, he noted.

In high school associations the dominant need is to educate the parents so that they have a better understanding of all the ways they can support the education system to ensure that their children and others, get the most out of opportunities available in today's secondary schools.

Langstaff house mover Charlie Matthews is going to have to move the building across a field of winter wheat from its present location at George Bailey School on Keele Street, trustees learned.

If there's any damage to crop, the board felt it should set a maximum damage cost at 40-50 bushels of wheat per acre at \$1.75 a bushel, "just in case".

NEWMARKET: Jerry Shields, a grade 8 student at Stuart Scott School collected 28 points out of a possible 30 to capture the over-all meet title at the annual Newmarket Recreation Commission sponsored Junior Olympics track and field meet.

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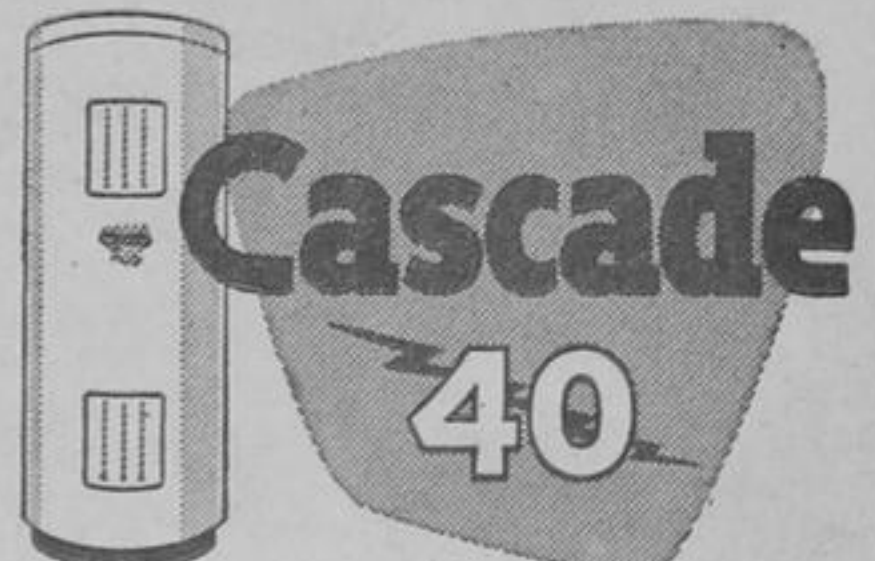
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