

## "MERRIE ENGLAND"

The comic opera, "Merrie England," by Edward German, will be given in the Prince of Wales Theatre for six nights, commencing on Saturday next, by the Conservatorium Opera Class, under the direction of Mr. H. Winsloe.



MR. ROBERT STEEN,

who plays the part of Sir Walter Raleigh in three of the Conservatorium performances of the comic opera, "Merrie England," which commences at the Prince of Wales Theatre next Saturday in aid of local charities. Mr. Steen has had much experience in opera, having played in the "Marriage of Figaro," "Carmen," "Shamus O'Brien," and "Lochnivar."

Hall. It will be produced by Mr. Harold S. Denton. The charities benefiting from "Merrie England" are the Adelaide Children's Hospital, Adelaide Hospital Auxiliary, and the Kindergarten Union. The Conservatorium opera orchestra will support the production, and will be under the conductorship of Mr. H. Winsloe Hall, with Miss Kathleen Meegan as leader. The arranging of the dances is being done by Miss Phyllis Leitch. Plans at Allan's.

## "MERRIE ENGLAND"

### Conservatorium Play

Besides the numerous derisive references to a classic playwright by an actor with an insignificant name, there was more than a hint of Shakespeare in "Merrie England," which was produced tonight at the Prince of Wales Theatre by members of the Elder Conservatorium.

There was that play on words found so often in the work of Shakespeare, which tripped the train of thought and the sense of humor simultaneously. It was a habit common when Elizabeth ruled her Merrie England, but it falls on the ears of theatre-goers today with a sparkle of originality.

Adelaide is to be commended on its production of the play by Edward German and Basil Hood, which is under the direction of H. Winsloe Hall, with Harold S. Denton as producer.

All imposing was the Earl of Essex (Victor Innes-Morcom), who tried to betray to the Queen the love of Raleigh for her lady-in-waiting. He would not have succeeded, but Raleigh's love was so true that he sacrificed even his good favor with Elizabeth for the maid of his affections.

The two players who wandered into the forest from the stage, where they played the productions of "one Will Shakespeare," provided much of the merriment. They were Walter Wilkins and Silas Simkins, played respectively by John G. Jonas and Len Nettleton.

Valda Harvey was a captivating, if buxom, May Queen.

Phyllis Leitch, who arranged the dancing, gave some delightful solo demonstrations, and the ballets were excellent.

Dr. E. Harold Davies (Director of Elder Conservatorium) has every reason to be proud of the play produced under his direction.

## "MERRIE ENGLAND"

### First Performance To-night

The first performance of the comic opera, "Merrie England," will be given to-night at the Prince of Wales Theatre when many prominent citizens are expected to be present. The musical score of "Merrie England" is charming, and will be given with a full orchestra of 30 performers, under the leadership of Miss Kathleen Meegan. The opera will be staged for six nights only, and the proceeds are to be devoted to charities. It is full of bright ballets, melodious songs and choruses, and the company consists of 130 performers. The whole production will be under the direction of Mr. H. Winsloe Hall, Mr. Harold S. Denton being the producer. The ballets have been arranged by Miss Phyllis Leitch. Bouquets will be sold on the first and last nights of the opera. The Lady Mayoress (Mrs. Lavington Bonython) is the organiser of this section. Plans at Allan's Music Warehouse.

## "MERRIE ENGLAND"

### FOR TWO MORE NIGHTS

By ALEX. BURNARD

Sir Edward German's rollicking opera continues in full swing at the Prince of Wales Theatre. Wednesday night saw the principal parts re-allotted, and the players were keyed up, as with the incentive of a "first night." In sympathy with the jolly spirit of the work, one feels in the mood to distribute largesse of praise with one sweep of the arm. Certain members of the cast necessarily, however, carry more of the burden of the play—if burden it be—and call for individual mention.

The Queen Elizabeth of Phyllis Everett quite stood out. All the aspects of that august monarch were faithfully delineated—her dignity, her passion for flattery, her woman's weakness. Miss Everett's singing seemed to me very near perfection, and her speaking voice told on every occasion. Isabel Burton proved a good, although nervous, Bessie Throckmorton. She has a voice of delightful quality and wide range, and uses it well. Stella Sobels, as "Jill-all-alone," was a joy. Her voice is somewhat small, but pure. Again, our friend the cat behaved itself most circum-spectly. As the May Queen, Enid Besanko proved herself as vivacious as ever. Her full voice is an asset to any chorus.

Leonard Nettleton, as Wilkins, was again a marvel of comedy. Without him it would seem that the part would have to go by the board. Essex, again personated by Mr. Victor Innes-Morcom, was almost all that could be desired. Robert Steen's excessive nervousness caused him to be at loggerheads with the orchestra two or three times, but he made a very plausible Raleigh on the whole. Arthur Stallard was again Simpkins, and pleased mightily. Leslie Coney and Harold Burrows were to the manner born the foresters Tom and Ben, though the former showed signs of nervousness once or twice. Trude Mudie made an admirable Queen's jester. Indeed, the whole was excellent. Congratulations are due to Mr. Winsloe Hall, Mr. Denton, the principals, ballet, chorus, orchestra, and all concerned.

### Prince of Wales Theatre

## "MERRIE ENGLAND"

### Comic Opera Concluding

"Merrie England" will be revived in all its glamor at the Prince of Wales Theatre for the last time tonight. The Conservatorium Opera Class has created a memorable impression with its delineation of the Edward German comic opera.

In the leading roles will be Phyllis Everett, Isabel Burton, Stella Sobels, Enid Besanko, Robert Steen, Les Coney, Harold Burrows, Victor Morcom, Arthur Stallard, and Len Nettleton.

Bouquets will be on sale at the theatre. Plans for the finale are at Allan's.

## "MERRIE ENGLAND"

### TRIUMPH FOR CONSERVATORIA OPERA CLASS

By ALEX. BURNARD

What does the average appreciative Adelaide audience want nowadays in the way of comic opera? Saturday night's performance of "Merrie England," in the Prince of Wales Theatre, seems sufficient answer. Too much credit cannot be given to Mr. H. Winsloe Hall (director of the opera and conductor of the orchestra), Mr. Harold Denton (producer), and the cast generally for their most meritorious effort.

The Elder Conservatorium opera class has been in existence some six years, and during that period has presented seven operas, the quality of performance being in a steadily increasing order of merit. Last year's essay, "Lochnivar" (by Mr. Winsloe Hall) is still fresh in our memories. Other names which occur are "Iphigenie in Aulis," "Shamus O'Brien," "Marriage of Figaro," "Carmen," "Prince Fereon," and "Gluck's Orphee."

"Merrie England," by Edward German and Basil Hood, had its first performance at the Savoy Theatre, London, in 1902, and bade fair to carry on the verdant Sullivan-Gilbert tradition of British comic opera. Score and libretto are most happily wedded, and abound in humor and light-heartedness. The music is typically Germanesque, fertile, and tuneful, and the orchestration is in the highest degree of taste. Hood has succeeded in maintaining a steady cumulative flow of action, and in introducing many of those iridescent "conceits" for which the Tudor period is famous. The plot hinges mainly on the love affairs of Raleigh and Miss Bessie Throckmorton (maid of honor to "Good Queen Bess"), and of Long Tom and "Jill-all-alone," two persons of quite humble stock; but many variously-colored threads are woven into the composite cloth. Queen Elizabeth, Essex, and Raleigh play their exalted parts, and the May Queen and lads and lassies of fair Windsor Town supply a picturesque note. Various interludes such as the "Alphabet" from "Romeo and Juliet," the "chess" dialogue between Essex and Raleigh, and the "Masque" of St. George and the Dragon, with its heated argument over the fore and hind legs of the dragon, are irresistibly funny.

Concerning the cast itself, I cannot but award the palm to the docile black cat. He, she, or it, nestled in the arms of "Jill-all-alone" during several of her scenes, and sustained a difficult part most nobly, winning everybody's heart. It was the touch, the added touch, of nature which made us all kin, and kindle (not to be behindhand with a "conceit"). Passing to his, her, or its human collaborators, the names of Kathleen Margarey (Bessie "Jill") and Hilda Barnes (Bessie Throckmorton) must at once be mentioned. Their acting and singing were equally convincing, and their roles were not at all easy ones to sustain. The latter's acting with Raleigh, and her singing of "O, Who Shall Say that Love is Cruel?" (in the style of a Viennese waltz, with cadenzas which show that the cadenza can be charming and relevant occasionally), are things to be remembered. Valda Harvey as the May Queen was none other than charming. Her voice has improved out of all knowledge, and has lost every trace of its former rather unpleasant nasal timbre. Rita Watson's Queen Elizabeth was quite good; her acting possibly better than her singing. I suggest that she moderate somewhat her excessive mouthing of consonants, and her vibrato. What a lovely tune, by the way, is that which she sings, "O, Peaceful England!" Of the men—

I place Leonard Nettleton unquestionably first for acting and dialogue (very difficult occasionally), and for singing Victor Innes-Morcom (Essex). Mr. Nettleton was inclined at times to overdo the part, and occasionally forgot a lead, as in "King Neptune," but altogether he was a perpetual delight. There were wonderfully diversified entries in this song, with chorus ("King Neptune"), and richly cumula-

tive crescendo. Mr. Innes-Morcom was sufficiently dignified for his part of Essex, and possesses a voice of no little promise. He was rather over-inclined to point each syllable, as it were, with a mark of exclamation in that fine song, "Who Were the Yeomen?" but was otherwise admirable. Among the minor characters, Arthur Stallard, Peter Hooper, and Tom Hamilton sustained their parts well, and Leslie Coney's basso gave just the right bucolic touch to his butcher.

The ballet, dances for which were most skillfully arranged by Phyllis Leitch, who was also responsible for two ravishing solo dances, lent an added sense of polish to the whole thing. Especially noteworthy were the Egyptian dance and the hornpipe. The scenery, though most simple, was good, and the costumes excellent.

A word must be said as to the general efficiency of the chorus. Except for an occasional weak attack, and at times a tendency to lag, they provided that sense of communal elevation which the chorus alone can give. The orchestra, under Mr. Winsloe Hall, was at all times to be relied upon. The same cast will appear on Monday and Tuesday nights, and the following three performances will see a re-shuffle of parts, when the characters may be confidently expected to maintain the high standard already set. Mrs. Lavington Bonython and Madame Delmar Hall are to be congratulated on the success which has crowned their exacting labors on behalf of three most deserving charities. But, entirely apart from any sentimental reasons, I most heartily commend the production to musicians and general public alike.

### AT THE PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE

A change in the cast at the Prince of Wales Theatre on Wednesday night aroused fresh interest in the performance of the young operatic stars of the Elder Conservatorium. Miss Enid Besanko played the May Queen in place of Miss Valda Harvey, and Miss Stella Sobels succeeded Miss Magarey as Jill-all-alone. The chorus generally have acquired greater confidence and dash. The sale of sweets and programmes was again in the hands of the Free Kindergarten Association, Mrs. A. V. Menz being convener, assisted by Mesdames J. Stanley Verco, Sydney Reid, Bernard Dawson, R. K. Wood, and Miss Doris Beeston. The helpers were Misses Tleeman, E. Bridgland, Constance Tassie, E. and D. Reid, Gwentyth Burford, M. Clayton, Mollie Beaver, Cynthia Coles, Peggy Dawson, Evelyn Stokes, Kath Bonnin, Gwen Griffiths, Roma Woolcock, Phyllis Slater, R. Gerney, S. Neate, Susie Chaplin, and Boy Scouts.

Among those present were Mrs. A. Mellor, Miss Bosch, Mrs. Arthur Rymill, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Forbes, Miss Betty Corbin, Mrs. Ernest Balls, Miss June Balls, Mr. Angus Lilliecrapp, Mr. J. Johnson, Miss Yvonne Richardson, Miss N. Williams, Miss Lane, Mrs. Sobels, Miss Ralph, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, Miss Hamilton, and Miss Warnes.

## FINE SINGING IN COMIC OPERA

### Merrie England Put On By Conservatorium

THE Conservatorium Opera Class scored a great success with Edward German's comic opera, Merrie England, at the Prince of Wales Theatre on Saturday night.

Charming music, and the clever libretto by Basil Hood, gave ample scope for a very bright show, with the colourful days of Good Queen Bess as the background.

The producer, Mr. Harold Denton, made the most of his material. The cast was particularly well chosen, and there was not a dull moment in the performance.

The comic relief of Len Nettleton as Walter Wilkins, a player of Shakespeare, was splendid. His clever fooling and pert play upon words, characteristic of the period, kept the audience in a simmer of laughter. His masque of St. George and the Dragon was a fine piece of comedy, in which he was aided by Arthur Stallard as Silas Simkins. Highest artistic laurels went to Kathleen

### AT THE PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE

"Merrie England," under the direction of Mr. H. Winsloe Hall, and produced by Mr. Harold S. Denton, was presented at the Prince of Wales Theatre on Saturday night, in aid of the Adelaide Children's Hospital, Adelaide Hospital Auxiliary, and Kindergarten Union. It was under viceregal and mayoral patronage. With so many talented young people in the Conservatorium opera class the cast has been duplicated, and they play three nights each. The costumes are of the Elizabethan period. Miss Rita Watson as Queen Elizabeth, was gowned in flame red and yellow, with the high standing ruff for which the Queen was remarkable, and the red wig. Miss Bessie Throckmorton, played by Miss Hilda Barnes, wore a dead gold skirt with hip ruche, and bodice of green. Miss Kathleen Magarey, as Jill-all-alone, was in a frock of brown, picturesquely hanging in tatters, the bodice yellow with green leaves across the front, and the same on her fair hair, which hung below her waist. The costumes, made under the supervision of Madame Delmar Hall, were correct in every detail. The ballets were a feature, the most striking being the Egyptians in black and gold. Miss Phyllis Leitch, who contributed the solo, wore a golden costume.

The effort on Saturday night was assisted by the Adelaide Hospital Auxiliary. Programme sellers, helped by Boy Scouts, were Mesdames A. W. Dunstone, Axford, and Kaehne. The sweets were under the supervision of Mesdames L. L. Hill, J. H. Saunders, H. Bone, D. Livingston, J. V. H. Saunders, Misses Nancy and Nellie Letcher, P. Leschen, M. Woods, P. Sutherland, Betty Beach, R. and N. Murray, L. Short, and W. Morrison. The flowers were supplied by Mesdames L. Yenn, B. H. Morris, F. Berk, Weir Edwards, J. Woods, L. Conrad, Misses D. Willis, M. Devyer, P. Bone.

His Excellency the Governor, attended by Lieutenant Robertson Aikman, was present. He was received by Professor Harold Davies and escorted to his seat in the dress circle. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. Lavington Bonython) were also present, as were Mrs. Harold Davies, Professor and Mrs. Madigan, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. T. Goodman, Miss Joan Goodman, Dr. and Mrs. B. H. Morris, Dr. and Mrs. H. C. Nott, Dr. W. Hamilton, Mrs. Douglas Murray,

Misses Amy and Dorothy Jessop, Mrs. Skinner, Mr. Mostyn Skinner, Mrs. T. R. Scarfe, Miss Susie Valentine, Dr. Violet Plummer, Miss Eleanor Plummer, Mrs. W. D. Ald, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Cowan, Miss Cowan, Mr. Cowan, jun., Mrs. Killecoat, Miss V. Ople, Miss Prince, Miss Fuller, Miss Sabine, Miss Pritchard, Miss Sobels, Miss Fisher, Mrs. Magarey, and Mrs. Field.

## "MERRIE ENGLAND"

### Final Performance To-night

To-night will mark the final production of the comic opera, "Merrie England," which is being staged at the Prince of Wales Theatre in aid of local charities. Bouquets will be sold by lady helpers of the different hospitals benefiting from the production. Plans at Allan's.

Magarey, whose portrayal of Jill-all-alone, the girl who is accursed of witchcraft, was one of the gems of the opera. She sang and acted charmingly. Her solo, Oh, Where the Deer Do Lie, and her duet with Raleigh, were charmingly done.

The dancing of the ballet, led by Phyllis Leitch, was an entertainment in itself.

As the stately Queen Elizabeth, Rita Watson filled her part admirably. Valda Harvey was splendid as the May Queen, and Hilda Barnes added a touch of drama as the lady who outwits Queen Elizabeth for the love of Sir Walter Raleigh. As Long Tom and Big Ben respectively, Peter Hooper and Tom Hamilton were well in the picture. The Queen's jester was excellently portrayed by Nellie Mummery.

The performances are for charity. The opera will run until Friday night, with a change on some of the principles on Wednesday night.

### Prince of Wales Theatre

## "MERRIE ENGLAND"

### Opera Class Success

The six-year-old Elder Conservatorium opera class presented "Merrie England" at the Prince of Wales Theatre on Saturday night in a manner worthy of a company with many more years of experience.

"Merrie England" is by Edward German and Basil Hood. It was first produced in Britain 28 years ago, and is set in the ever interesting days of Queen Elizabeth and the sea-dogs.

Mr. Harold Denton (producer) chose his cast well and made good use of all types. Credit is due to Mr. H. Winsloe Hall (director of the opera and conductor of the orchestra) for a successful effort.

Although the plot revolves round the love affairs of Sir Walter Raleigh and Miss Bessie Throckmorton (maid of honor to the queen) and of Long Tom and Jill-all-alone, all other parts do much to brighten and strengthen the opera.

Leonard Nettleton as Walter Wilkins, a Shakespearean actor convulsed the audience with his clever play upon words and buffoonery typical of his class in the Elizabethan period. Arthur Stallard gave him sterling aid as Silas Simkins in his masque of St. George and the Dragon, and both men co-operated to make this a fine piece of comedy.

First among the women of the cast was Kathleen Magarey (Jill-all-alone), who was accused of being a witch. The part was a hard one and Miss Magarey played it soundly. Her singing was good. Hilda Barnes, who played Miss Throckmorton, the maid of honor, acted and sang a strenuous part confidently.

Phyllis Leitch charmed with two beautiful solo dances, and the ballet, which was under her skilled guidance, was a delight.

As the great Queen Elizabeth Rita Watson acted well, and her singing showed a decided improvement. Her solo, "O Peaceful England!" was impressive.

Valda Harvey, Nellie Mummery, Peter Hooper, Tom Hamilton, and the supporters of the cast all worked well.

Tonight and tomorrow night the cast will remain unaltered but for the following three performances parts will be reallocated.

### New Cast Does Well In Merrie England

A BRIGHT performance of Merrie England was given by the Conservatorium Opera Class in the Prince of Wales Theatre last night with several new principles. Phyllis Everett made a commanding Queen Elizabeth, her acting and singing being strikingly good.

Isabel Burton sang delightfully as Bessie Throckmorton, and her duets with Raleigh (John Jones) were charmingly done. As the coquettish May Queen, Enid Besanko made the most of her part, and Stella Sobels was excellent as Jill-all-alone. Victor Morcom was in splendid voice as the courtly and scheming Essex. Trude Mudie made a pert court jester, and Len Nettleton again led the fun as Walter Wilkins.

There will be two more performances with the new cast.

### AT THE PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.

On Tuesday evening the sale of sweets and programmes at the performance of "Merrie England" at the Prince of Wales Theatre was under the supervision of the Kindergarten Union of South Australia. Mrs. H. V. Menz was convener, assisted by Mesdames L. B. Bull, J. A. C. Marshall, Clem Matters, and Miss Doris Beeston. Those selling the programmes and sweets included Misses Catherine Gilbert, Erica Stewart, Gwen Temple, Dorothy Bridgland, Pat Bruce, Helen Oldham, Mary Gurney, Nancy Marshall, Barbara Beddome, Marjorie and Patty Verco, Nancy Acraman, Margaret Martin, Joan Matters, Margaret Davis, P. Hayward, and the Boy Scouts.