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CALM BACKSTAGE AT TECH SHOW STRIKING
Huge Stage at the Opera House Devoid of Excitement and Confusion

Looking in at the show from backstage last night was more like looking into a grandfather's clock than the hurrying, scurrying crowd that we expected. We arrived about eight o'clock, and from the scarcity of excitement one might have thought it was going to be a midnight cabaret. Around the edges of the mammoth stage there were a few fellows quietly talking with one another, and sometimes there were several of the "girls" lounging about.

Plenty of Room
The stage is large enough to lose an ordinary house in, being four or five stories high, and about four times as deep as the set that they use. Around the back is a huge curtain that represents the sky when the opera plays there. The dressing rooms are along one side and there are four stories of them. The principals of the cast have the ground floor, the minor parts have the second and the chorus with some of the ballet has the third, while the rest of the ballet has a large room on the fourth floor.

The Back Stage Heart
On one side of the stage is the switch board that controls the house lights, the lights in the orchestra pit and the dressing rooms. It is here that the telephones from the spotlights and the other parts of the theatre are connected, and where the curtain is controlled. There is also a fire alarm box that an alarm may be turned with all possible haste in case of emergency. It might rightly be called the heart of the backstage.

Procedure Very Quiet
At 8:15 o'clock the orchestra was sent in the pit and the overture was started. The curtain is so thick, however, that hardly a sound was heard on the stage. The call for the opening chorus was sent in and the curtain went up. There was still a

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The Sun Temple
Tech Show 1923

By R. E. Rogers
Professor of English

Tech Show 1923 was very, very easy to look at. That, I suppose, will be my abiding impression of the show this year. And that goes in two senses. Second, it kept you amused and interested without fidgeting to the final curtain. The dull spots—an occasional moment of pure plot—were very few. The rest was pretty constant amusement. But first, the more important first, it was a very good looking show. The scenery was well designed, colorful and full of illusion. The costumes were uniformly successful, especially in the second act.

And the folks.....I suppose it was the prettiest girls' chorus Tech Show ever had, very fetching in its marcel and party dresses, but a knock-out in the smooth black locks of Indian girls. The chorus boys were well chosen and well groomed, and the principals looked and dressed like professionals. That was the effect of the whole thing. There were almost no bad makeups, everything was smart, or, as Henry James would say, done. There were some positive triumphs, Mrs. Hubbard's complexion and profile and ankles, the chorus girl in orange who looked like Helen Hayes, the statuesque peasant girl who got into the photographs, the extraordinary effect Keegan gave in the second act of being a girl in boy's clothes, Estanzo's bandit garb, and, of course, Seraphina's total get-up.

First Act Holds Audience
Although it was surprising how well the straight romance of the first act carried and held the audience, and even the sentiment, yet the comic scenes were, as they should be, the real triumphs. Never obtrusive or lugged in, never deplorable in the undergraduate fashion or vulgar, two or three of the concerted comic bits linger in the mind as being the most smart, ship-shape, things in the show. They went snap-snap like clockwork. Keegan and Sylvester's scenes together had that quality, Worthington and Gage more than once, above all Gage and the four boys in the hat scene. But the same quality permeated nearly every scene as a scene—intelligence, response, co-ordination and click-click, the cues coming pat. It was that which kept the audience contented till 10.45 with no sense that time was passing, and it is one of the most effective things done by Mr. Harlowe as director. The show moved like greased lightning.

Another thing the director did, apparently, was to make the actors forget themselves and enjoy the thing for its own sake. One had that sense as the show went on, increasing spontaneously, a tendency to let the chips fall where they might. Keegan, of course, was irreplaceable from the beginning. Gage by the second act was letting himself go like Chaplin, and, most extraordinary, Worthington was actually melting into comic opera instead of the last act of Carmen. The



result was that Gage has never been so good. After seeing him for three years I had come to the conclusion that here was an unusual musician, a superb voice and method for putting over a song, but as an actor a good deal of a dumb-bell. But last night he acted all over the place and was about the funniest comedian I have ever seen in a Tech Show. And the less straight he was the funnier he got. I used Professor Spofford as a barometer to see how good the show was, and I noticed that unflinchingly it was Gage who caved him in.

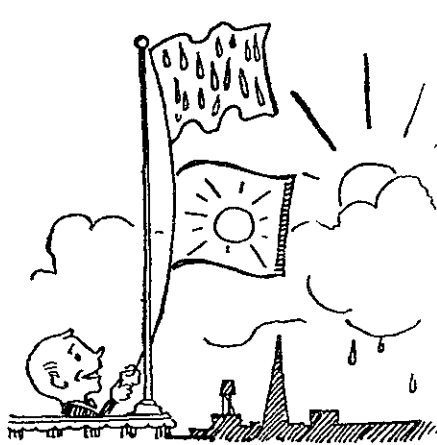
Joe Keegan "Some Girl"
Next to Gage the audience probably liked Keegan best. Madge came near being an impersonation. Those big Irish eyes, that smile, the coo in her voice and the hint of spring-halt in her gait got the audience, particularly the girls, every time. Keegan never fell out of the part for a moment. But Sylvester played up to him so adroitly that it is the pair of them that deserves the praise.

Worthington, of course, was in a class by himself. There was in Seraphina no sense of either college-boy show nor even of musical comedy. Here was something dangerously like a finished piece of serious acting, built up moment by moment, bit by bit, in every detail of pose, gesture and inflection. There was perhaps not enough comedy in it; certainly there was no involuntary comedy. The audience took Seraphina as seriously as Worthington did. She was something out of Carmen strayed into Tech Show and everybody who remembered the hard work and the artistry Worthington had put for three years into a chorus part was glad to see this serious talent given its chance.

Liked Cochrane as Estanzo
I was glad to see Cochrane as Estanzo. The Chaperon last year was a better part, in a way, but I liked Estanzo better. It was simple, direct, intelligent, well-bred, picturesque and effective—a model of what a leading straight part can be. The others are too many to mention individually, but there was none who was inadequate, none who did not contribute genuinely to the smooth, rapid and easy ensemble. The verve of the chorus dancing, too, helped a great deal.

Although there are a good many alumni and undergraduates who feel that our particular type of ballet is a bit played out, yet here in The Sun Temple, as last year in The Wrong Steer, it came in so naturally that one could not object. Anything but an Aztec ballet was unthinkable. As usual Miss Tanner has devised an interesting story and clothed it with a wealth of accurate and beautiful archaeological detail, expressive modern music, and a variety of simple but novel and dramatic dances. Gray as the Girl showed himself again our best dancer, and Robinson, the white prisoner, and Murdock, the intervening god, were extraordinarily effective.

Rivals "Patsy"
Of course the Show has never had so many smashing musical hits in one performance as it had in "Patsy," but one can be sure that "Followed," "Back to the Country," and "I'm Not Calling There Any More" will be whistled and remembered. A good deal of the Spanish music, too, was musically and interesting, though the arrangements were often too low for the voices who had to carry the airs. The music, purely from the point of view of an audience that wants a good many lively and memorable numbers, is perhaps the weakest point of this year's show. One could have wished, also, for some more imaginative and modern experiments in lighting—in that respect the Show has been for years out of date—but these are the only two regrets, and afterthoughts at that, for a performance which almost constantly amused and charmed and interested.



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The Boston Evening Transcript
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