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ECCENTRIC PHOTO

Setting the Tempo

Another musical show gets underway as Ward Tollzien plays a number while Mrs. Ralph M. Fox (left), a member of the cast, and William E. Kegel try the words. Mrs. Eliot W. Higgins (behind Tollzien) is assistant director of the fifth Village Players' musical on which Tollzien and Kegel have collaborated.

Who's This Rodgers And Hammerstein?

By JULIE CANDLER

Broadway has nothing on Birmingham. At least the Village Players think so.

The Great White Way may have its Rodgers and Hammerstein. But Birmingham has its own musical collaborators, affectionately known by their wives as "Hammerstein and Hammerhead."

They're Ward Tollzien and William E. Kegel, who have something Broadway never had as they collaborate on their fifth musical show for the Village Players of Birmingham, slated for Saturday night.

They have the assistance for the fourth time of Mrs. Eliot W. Higgins, of 252 Clifton, Birmingham. Which they consider Broadway's loss. Because Tollzien and Kegel never have to worry about details as long as Mrs. Higgins is their assistant director.

INSTEAD, TOLLZIEN can concentrate on directing the show's musical accompaniment, and Kegel is left free to direct the singers and dancers.

Visit a rehearsal for Player's Christmas musical some night, and you'll see the three at work.

Tollzien at the piano, beats out the rhythms for the performers on stage. He sports a jaunty checkered cap atop his head.

"If he didn't have that hat on, I'd swear he couldn't play a note," says Mrs. Higgins. "For years he's worn a hat while he plays. Only now he has a sports car, so he wears a cap."

AS SHE TALKS, vivacious Mrs. Higgins sits in an audience chair, clipboard in hand, writing a draft of the program.

And the program itself is shaping up as Kegel watches the stage intently.

"Cut it!" the director shouts.

The marching chorus halts. Piano and orchestra stop. A great silence takes over as all eyes turn to Kegel, asking "What did we do wrong?"

Nattily-dressed Kegel drags on his cigarette, then struts to demonstrate the spirited marching he wants.

With a different cast, the scene has been familiar to Kegel and Tollzien since their first one-hour show in 1950.

They don't write words and music as their Broadway counterparts do. Instead, the local collaborators choose popular songs, sometimes changing words to fit their theme. (Since the show is for members of the Village Players only, royalties are avoided).

Tollzien, of 135 Harlan, Bloomfield Hills, loves to play the piano, when he can find time from his work as a salesman of automotive supplies. Kegel states, "when we were at Detroit's Northern high school together, Ward was a heck of a good piano player even then."

"Ward has been identified with musical shows at the Players," says Kegel, "since we put on "The Corn Is Green" about 1930. He's kept musicals alive here all these years."

Tollzien even wrote the music for an original three-act a few years back.

NOW HE AND Kegel collaborate on the writing of their one-hour shows, work out the sets and lighting, choose the songs and the 25 or 30 Players' members they feel would "fit the numbers."

Then they start rehearsals, with the motto toward their cast of "let them have fun."

"If it gets too elaborate and tries to be too professional it falls apart," says Kegel. "We have just enough rehearsals to keep the cast on its toes, then put on the show."

Broadway can have Rodgers and Hammerstein. The Village Players will take Tollzien and Kegel any day.

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Society

Sorority Sisters Fete Bride-Elect

Several showers have been given recently for bride-elect, Elizabeth Jane Wallace, daughter of the Donald J. Wallaces. Last month three classmates, Carol Cooley, Mary Ellen Glasgow and Elna Jo Wise feted Elizabeth at Mount Union college for a Bermuda party.

Her sorority sisters, Sandra Stinson, Jane McKenzie, Joyce Sharp and Popey Antony of Alpha Chi Omega entertained at a dinner and miscellaneous shower.

A tea and kitchen shower was given by Mrs. Norman Berry of Chesterfield road, Birmingham. Dinner and "Around the House" shower was given by Mrs. A. Gros-cop, Mrs. Robert Henderson, Mrs. F. P. Tapoile and Mrs. Kenneth Bottoms.

WOMEN'S CITY CLUB was the scene for a luncheon and linen shower given by Mrs. James Murphy and her daughter Ann of Grosse Pointe.

Mr. and Mrs. Glen C. Rehfuss, parents of the prospective groom, will entertain at the rehearsal dinner tomorrow at Devon Gables.

A brunch will be given by Mrs. M. A. Bergdahl and daughter Sue on their own guests the day of the wedding. Elizabeth will repeat her vows to Glen Curtis Rehfuss, Jr., Saturday.

200 Club Schedules Christmas Dance

Birmingham Country club will be the scene Dec. 28 for the 200 club's Christmas dance. Committee members are Dr. and Mrs. Jack Funkey, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Fox and Mr. and Mrs. Upton Brannack.

Cocktail parties before the dance will be given by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Woolson, Dr. and Mrs. E. L. Quinn and Mr. and Mrs. George Dungan.

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