

Audience, School Star's Concerns

Comedy Vet Jittery on First Night Daughter Wants Art Study Here

By BETTY PAYSNER
Special Writer

"Did they like it? Do you really think they like it?" The worried actor stopped passersby in front of his dressing room to ask how the opening night audience liked the play.

Reassured by the enthusiastic replies, Bert Lahr relaxed a little until the next person he could ask wandered by.

"Well, I guess the audience liked it, or they wouldn't have laughed so much," he finally said, looking relieved but still unsmiling. Moments before Lahr had delighted the audience, as he has done for almost 50 years, with his special combination of noble-faced comedy and pathos.

He is appearing at Northland playhouse through Sunday in "Visit to a Small Planet," a satire by Gore Vidal.

OFFSTAGE, the veteran comedian when I was 15 because I thought I could imitate comedy. It made people laugh. So here I am," he explained.

"Comedians are basically not funny people. Ed Wynn, Bob Clark, Charlie Chaplin—all are serious."

"Every man is serious," he quickly added. "In 'Waiting for Godot,' my favorite role, the comic tone of life is gripingly described. Godot is whatever you're waiting for. It can be your wife, hope, a dream. Some say it's God. I think that the author, Samuel Beckett, is a great writer. One who will live on."

LAHR'S DEPTH of understanding of his difficult role in "Waiting for Godot" won raves from the critics. The play was on Broadway two years ago.

Brightening suddenly he said: "I'm going to show you a secret. I'm dipping a brush into a bottle of solution he dabbed it at his forehead. To our surprise he removed a small toupee.

"I can't fool your friends, though," he remarked, almost smiling.

"I want people to have a good impression of me. I'm interested in them," he said simply.

Later we learned that Lahr endeavored himself to the Northland apprentices by joining them in a luncheon session of shop talk.

"BERT LAHR is the first star to talk about the theater with us and he was so informal that we were completely at ease," they related.

Agreeing with the apprentices, co-star Kenny Delmar added: "Despite Bert Lahr's modesty, he is a first-rate actor, top-notch fisherman, an authority on china and glassware, which he collects, and once was a golf tournament champion."

Lahr's favorite recreation is spending time with his second wife, Mildred, and their two children, John 17, and Jane, 14.

Another son, Herbert, 20, by his first wife, is in radio and television in Tucson.

LAHR HAS no plans to retire,

To Constance Bennett Cranbrook is more than the replacement of this area. (Her 17-year-old daughter, Lorinda, has set her heart on attending the art academy. Much to the regret of mother and daughter, registration is filled for this year.

"I'm hoping for a miracle so that Lorinda can attend the Cranbrook academy," Miss Bennett said. "From all I've heard it's an ideal place. I didn't have a chance to see it on previous trips to Detroit. This time a visit to Cranbrook is first on my list."

Miss Bennett is playing in a return engagement of "Auntie Mame" at the Schubert theatre through Saturday.

"MY DAUGHTER Lorinda has been interested in art ever since I can remember," she stated. "She studied sculpture and wood carving along with the regular curriculum at Miss Hewitt's school in New York."

"In the past year she has also been studying with Hovanes, the sculptor. He seems to think she's talented. We're going to have her work out to allow Lorinda to study at Cranbrook for three months."

Miss Bennett spoke about art and her daughter's hopes as she dashed from her hotel to a beauty parlor for a manicure. Except for nail care her glamour is strictly "do-it-yourself."

A NAVY CHIFFON scarf partly covered the pin curls she had set after washing her blonde hair. Miss Bennett can also accomplish that marvelous trick of cutting one's own hair. Her deep golden tan eliminates the need for powder.

Paying no heed to false vanity she wears horn-rimmed glasses through which her large, vivid blue eyes shine.

"I eat like a box constrictor," she laughed. But her figure remains trim.

"Lorinda is my oldest child," Miss Bennett explained. (Her father is Gilbert Roland, Miss Bennett's fourth husband.) "My youngest child, Jill Roland, is 16. I also have a step-daughter, Patricia. Her father is my husband, Colonel Goulier of the air force."

"RIGHT NOW Lorinda is on a tour in Europe," she remarked. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could welcome her home with news that she had been accepted at Cranbrook?"

Training in N. J.

Frank Michelson, airman apprentice, USN, son of Frank R. Michelson of Stanley street, Birmingham, is attending the Naval aviator's Mate school at the Aero-Naval technical training unit, Lakehurst, N. J.

though he has been a working actor for almost a lifetime. "Who can retire today? It takes a lot of money," he said soberly. "And I have two children in private schools."

"I hope I've given you enough information for your article," he said as we rose to leave.

"Is there anything in particular you'd like to have mentioned?" we inquired.

"No," he replied. "Remember, I said I want people to have a good impression of me. This time he was smiling."



Award Flag Unfurled

Hoisting Birmingham post office's newly-acquired safety award banner are (left to right) safety training officer Otto Miel, Postmaster Roland Reese and Leo Dunne, one of the office's 25 safe driver award winners. The flag, for proficiency in accident prevention, and the driver citations were awarded by the National Safety Council.

Recreation Round Up

SATURDAY SWIMMING:

Registration for the fall session of Saturday swimming has been set up for Sept. 15-19. You may come in to the office or mail in your registration. Include the child's name, class, pool, address and phone number and enclose the fee of \$2.50 for the 10 lessons. For further information contact the recreation office in the Municipal building. Requirements: Must be residents of Birmingham or the Birmingham school district. Child must be 40 inches from chin to floor for Derby and Birmingham pools, 45 inches from chin to floor at Barnum.

TEEN CENTER:

This is the last week of teen center activities. A dance was held Tuesday evening, under the chairmanship of Carol Edger.

Register Dates For Troy Schools

School district of the city of Troy will open for all grades on Sept. 4. All elementary students registering in Troy schools for the first time will register at the Troy high school at 4 p.m. Sept. 3.

Kindergartners who are pre-registered have been notified of the time, date and school where they are to report. Parents are asked to provide transportation for their kindergarten youngsters the first day. Please bring certified record of birth if it has not been presented.

Seventh, eighth and ninth grade students will register at Baker junior high school beginning Aug. 25.

If you keep your car to the ground you can pick up a lot of dirt.

Rek Chief Praises Net Tournney Results

Birmingham's first community tennis tournament, held Aug. 11-17 at Eton park, has been deemed a major success by Robert E. Girardin, city recreation director. Girardin this week sent the following letter to George Wm. Averill, managing editor of The Birmingham Ecceentric:

"As is true with any community function, success is determined by individuals ready and willing to give of themselves. The highly successful Community Tennis tournament held this year, co-sponsored by The Ecceentric and the recreation board, was a perfect example of this community spirit.

"THE SERVICE rendered to the citizenry of Birmingham by The Ecceentric and the volunteer tournament officials was exemplary of the spirit of Birmingham.

"I wish to express to you appreciation for the 110 participants plus the several hundred spectators who thoroughly enjoyed the matches. Les Lins did a splendid job in working with our tournament director, Lew Parry, in handling the myriad of detail which is entailed in a venture this size."

THE TOURNAMENT is featured in a full page of photographs in page 1-B of this week's Ecceentric. Included in the special layout are photos of the eight champions, action pictures and other highlights of the new event.

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La Belles

137 WEST MAPLE



Teachers in Training

Dr. Robert F. Thomson (left), head of General Motors research laboratories metallurgical engineering department, discusses automotive gas turbine engines with Kenneth E. Hathaway (center). Walled Lake senior high school chemistry and mathematics teacher, and Ralph H. Battenhouse, Birmingham science teacher. The two teachers were attending the 1958 GM Conference for high school science teachers, after completing summer assignments with various GM staffs and divisions. Battenhouse was employed by GM process development staff and Hathaway was with GM engineering staff at GM technical center.

Guest List Hits 300 For 5th Get-Together

A faculty-school board dinner that in four years has become a rather pleasant tradition in Bloomfield Hills has mushroomed this year to record size.

Three hundred teachers and board members with their husbands and wives will attend this year's get-together next Wednesday in Bloomfield Hills high school cafeteria.

Four years ago Superintendent Eugene L. Johnson instituted the first such dinner to help the board and the district's teachers become better acquainted. Only 60 places had to be set then.

In inviting the board to this year's dinner, Johnson admitted he doesn't know how many more years the tradition can continue if the district continues to grow as anticipated.

The district feels funds spent on the dinner, prepared by the regular high school cafeteria staff, are worth every penny in good relations.

"Since the board of education does not even accept token expense money for its services, it long ago requested that such monies be used for good public relations. The dinner is one way these 'good relations' are furthered.

This year the board will meet 53 new teachers. More than half of these are newly hired to staff the new Pine Lake elementary school, Eastover elementary addition and the new junior-high school. The rest are replacements.

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