

*Dramatic Productions
and Music*



Dramatic Productions

The primary aim of a junior college is to provide a means of self-expression for all its students. This means of expressing themselves must not be available in such a college only to those who are interested in the aesthetic activities. Everyone, especially in a country in which liberal arts are just having their beginning, must be exposed to drama, given the germ of appreciation without being criticized on the semi-professional basis which rules at most four-year colleges. To plant the seed of dramatic appreciation in Boise has been the aim of the dramatic department of Boise Junior College ever since the college's beginning.

In the year 1932-1933, the college's first year, it was represented dramatically by three productions. A three-act play, "The Youngest," by Phillip Barry, directed by Miss Gale Hungerford, was presented April 23, 1933. Pauline Johnson, Milton Thurber, Ernest Allman, Betty Callaway, Preston Hale, Lois Rankin, Dean Kloepfer, and Margaret Luther were in the cast. The play was staged in the Boise high school auditorium.

On March 11, 1933, was held "Romance Language Night," and two plays, one French and one Spanish were presented. "El Palacio Triate" by Martine Surra was the Spanish play; its cast included Marion Manson, Doris Kerlin, Owen Sproat, Otto Power, Milton Thurber, Clark Fails, Victor Lemon, Pauline Johnson, Kenneth Robertson, and Preston Hale. A comedy "L'Anglais Tel Quor Je Parle" by Tristau Bernard delighted French speaking people in the audience. Wallace Pefley, Lois Rankin, Fred Hershey, Betty Callaway, Vernon Gilbert, George Taylor, Arthur Allman, and Howard Kenzie were convincing as Frenchmen.

Later in the spring of 1933 the German classes arranged "Ein Abend In Deutschland," and two German plays were a part of the program. The first, "Einer Muss Heiraten" by Alexander Wilhelm, had in its cast Clyde Crooks, William Chatterton, Dorothy Lenfest, and Lellah Foster. The second, "Der Gute Dicner" was presented by the first-year German class.

These foreign language plays and the one three-act play were everything in the field of dramatics that the college attempted the first year—yet a great deal was done toward building up a creative attitude. The foreign language department has considered these performances of the 1932-1933 classes a precedent, and every year German, French, and Spanish students work on one or more plays.

As the college got on firmer ground, both financially and in the minds of the Boise people, interest in dramatics grew proportionately. There was an unconscious movement toward a little theatre group at the college. The 1933-1934 students formed no club, but they had the advantage of a class in dramatics taught by Dr. H. E. Childs, and ventured on December 15, 1933, to present "The Dover Road" by A. A. Milne, in the Boise high school auditorium. It was a fortunate choice and Loren Strawn, Clyde Crooks, Etha Pefley, Dorothy Ann McDonald, Stanton Stringfellow, Pauline Johnson, Vernon Gilbert, Eileen Peck, William Jorgensen, and George Taylor were believable in their roles.

Eileen Peck, Virginia Nagel, Preston Hale, and Otto Power also gave Sir James Barrie's "The Twelve Pound Look" before a student body assembly.

Boise Junior College dramatic students performed in public again in May, 1934. "Outward Bound" by Sutton Vane was presented by them at the little theatre in St. Margaret's Hall. Beautiful, fantastic "Outward Bound" is a difficult play, and it was an ambitious group of students who finally appeared on the stage of the little theatre May 4 and 5. "Outward Bound's" actors were: Clyde Crooks, Eileen Peck, Ray Randell, Vernon Gilbert, Betty McKee, Robert Elford, Virginia Nagel, Loren Strawn, and George Taylor.

Meanwhile, the foreign language play tradition was not being forgotten. March 19, 1934, saw the production of two one-act German dramas, Mueller als Svendenbock, "Die kleine Verwandten" and "Ein Amerikanisches Duell." April 13 was

"Romance Language Night." "Rosalie" by Max Maurey (first-year students) and "L'Entranglense" by Triston Bernard (advanced classes) were both lively comedies. A Spanish one-act, "Huyendo de perehil," by Tamayo y Boris was included on the program.

Boise Junior College students of 1934-35 have had to work hard and intelligently to keep up the standard of dramatic work, and the fact that the standard has been so newly set up makes it the harder for us. All three years dramatic students have had to be the pioneers in the field of creative expression in the college.

At the beginning of the 1934 semester, a meeting of all students interested in dramatics was called. At this meeting David Shawe was elected president of the first formal Boise Junior College Dramatic club (later to be called St. Margaret's Players) and plans were made to begin the production of "R. U. R." by Karel Copek. In October tryouts for the play were held. The cast as it presented "R. U. R." on November 2 and 3, 1934, read: David Shawe, Frances Baird, Carroll Elford, Mary Crooks, Sarah Walker, Avery Thomas, Farris Harrison, Dee Anderson, Elmer Fox, Loy Renshaw, Betty McKee, Gale Farley, Grace Watson, Clarke Collins, John Steel, Charles Joslyn, Vida Pope, Georgette Brunner.

"R. U. R." is the fascinating story of how robots, who have been created merely as work machines, are made sensitive to life around them, and rebel, overcoming their creators, human beings. Karel Copek, its author, is a Hungarian playwright, whose play "Lilium" was such a success on the New York stage.

Our production of this play in the little theatre in St. Margaret's Hall laid no claims to being anything but a student production. The director was working on this play with material that was almost wholly inexperienced. But there were bits of good characterization, good make-up, and good staging. In "R. U. R." this year's two student directors, Eileen Peck and Virginia Nagel, made their bow.

The business managing of "R. U. R." was in the hands of Boyd Moore, assisted by John Edlefsen, and the financial success of the play proved their efficiency. Helen Jorgensen was in charge of the properties; Robert McKee managed the execution of the set; and Elmer Fox was chairman of the committee on make-up. June Whitmore and Barbara Smith, two of Miss Westfall's art students, designed the set.

The presentation of the play "R. U. R.," under the sponsorship of St. Margaret's Players, was looked upon by the students as adding definite fire to the flame of dramatic interest kindled in the minds of the first Boise Junior College class. Before this year there had been no dramatics club. Now there was St. Margaret's Players. The roots of dramatic tradition were definitely stronger.

The second performance sponsored by St. Margaret's Players was a group of three one-act plays. February 15 and 16, saw the production of "The Far-Away Princess" by Hermann Sudermann, "The Dweller In the Darkness" by Reginald Berkely, and "The Boor" by Anton Tchekov. The first was very much of a romantic comedy, in which a student meets a princess, and (proverbially unaware of her identity) tells her of his hopeless love for the princess. In the play, he discovers who this young woman is, and the play ends, a little sadly, as the student concludes he'd rather keep his princess "far-away." Student director Virginia Nagel handled a cast of eight: Violetta Deckard, Grace Watson, Elmer Fox, Sarah Walker, Helen Harper, Frances Baird, Elizabeth McKee, and Margaret Kroeger. The second play was unusual in that most of the action of the play was carried on in the dark. It even boasted a seance, and there were many hearts pounding, when, after the lights came on, Mary Crooks screamed the last line, "He hasn't got a face! He hasn't got a face!" Eileen Peck was student director for this thriller, and Catherine Herrick, Sam Forter, Mary Crooks, Charles Joslyn, Loy Renshaw, and John Norton were its actors.

"The Boor" by Anton Tchekov, the last play of the evening, is one of those oft-spoken-of-but-seldom-met "plays of which one never tires." It is a lively but nevertheless subtle comedy, and its scene, although laid in pre-war Russia, might be laid anywhere, at any time. Luka, the servant, was done by George Oram, Virginia Nagel played Helena Ivanova Popan, William Jorgensen did Grigori Stepanovitch Smirnov, and the roles of two servants was acted by Clarke Collins and Frederick Hershey.

Stage manager for this production was Carroll Elford and he was assisted in the set-execution by Richard Frazier, Robert Hart, Ronald Baker, Frederick Hershey, Barbara Smith, and Ruth Estelle. The property managing was very efficiently handled by Vida Pope. Boyd Moore repeated his duty as business manager for the plays, and John Edlefsen was again assistant.

This evening of one-act plays was the first production of its kind to be held in St. Margaret's little theatre since the very beginning of Boise Junior College. The plays were another link in the chain of semi-professional tradition that St. Margaret's players are welding for Boise Junior College dramatics. Their quality, as a whole, was definitely collegiate.

These two college productions were not the extent of St. Margaret's Players ambitions. On March 15, the State College Dramatic and Florensic meet was held at Pocatello. Eleven members of St. Margaret's Players, and Dr. Childs were sent to this meet to represent Boise Junior College, with two one-act plays and a dramatic reading. Miss Eileen Peck's reading of "The Last Duchess" by Robert Browning was awarded second place by the judge. The two plays, "The Boor" by Anton Tchekov, and "The Innocent" by Heinrich Mann (translated from the German by Dr. Childs) were presented on the evening of March 15. The cast of "The Innocent," a serious, psychological problem play, included David Shawe, Grace Watson, and Vida Pope; the cast of "The Boor" was the same as in its earlier performance, except that Carroll Elford and David Shawe were the two bewhiskered Russian servants. The contesting idea was eliminated in the presentation of the plays, but the contestants themselves commented on each college's production.

The college's last dramatic appearance before the public was in the three foreign language plays. This year the plays were given on April 15, 1935, the French, the German, and the Spanish plays all as a part of one program. Camille B. Power, instructor in French and Spanish, chose, cast and directed "Parada y fonda" by Vital Aza, the Spanish comedy, and "Antoinette on le retour du Marquis" by Trastan Bernard, the French play. Seven first-year German students performed in "Der Spaete Gast" by Georg Boettischer.

The cast for "Parada y fonda" read: Dorothy Robbins, Milton Thurber, Samuel Forter, Thomas Davis, Gus Urresti, John Orbea, and John Anduiza. The play was chosen especially so that it would be understood by those in the audience who did not speak Spanish. The double plot, involving a man who was marrying a girl for money, her uncle whom he meets unbeknownst, a travelling salesman, and their several attempts to occupy the same bed, made even the English audience laugh.

"Antoinette on le retour du Marquis" surprised its listeners into interest from the first movement. Half the cast was planted in the audience, and as Antoinette began her part, her mother, her gentlemen friend, and a protesting member of the audience tossed pleasantries back and forth in French. David Shawe, Mary Crooks, Elmer Fox, William Jorgensen, Elaine Whitson, Ellen Byrnes, David Bisby, Milton Thurber, Delbert Crank, Frederick Hershey, and Carroll Elford were the actors.

The German play, presented the same evening as the French and Spanish, was "Der Spaete Gast." It was a pretty little Cinderella story of the 1890's, about a young lady who cries about having to stay home from the ball, but recovers when her bashful student beau comes to see her. He drinks punch, gets a little "squiffy," and all in all, has a delightful time. The cast included: Grace Arnold, Grace Watson, Carl MacFarlan, Marjorie Robbins, Betty McKee, Vida Pope, and John Norton. Eileen Peck was a charming master of ceremonies for "Foreign Language Night," and explained the plots of the plays to the audience. Carroll Elford, Frederick Hershey, and Richard Frazier managed the stage; Vida Pope, Catherine Herrick, and Clarke Collins furnished the properties, and John Edlefsen and Lowell Carpenter were business managers.

These three pioneering years in the history of Boise Junior College have been hard, but interesting, and dramatics is one of the few creative arts which now has a foundation at Boise Junior College. The tradition has been made. We can only hope now that the nameless players who follow these will continue to keep open the door to the little theatre in St. Margaret's Hall, and to hold as 'twere, the mirror up to nature.

Music

The Boise Junior College School of Music is represented by Lucille Tavey Forter, teacher of voice; James L. Strachan, teacher of piano and organ; Katherine Eckhardt, violin teacher. Students that can take lessons from these instructors are fortunate indeed.

For a time the college had a girl's glee club which was under the direction of Mr. James Strachan. Each Sunday afternoon several members of the music department of the college gave a recital over KIDO from St. Micheal's Cathedral. Some Sundays the students of music at the college gave recitals in St. Margaret's Hall auditorium. These recitals were well attended and well appreciated.

The Boise Junior College School of Music's most ambitious presentation was its performance of the opera "Faust" by Gounod. The opera was directed by Lucille Tavey Forter and was presented twice, first on March 1, 1935, and was repeated the last evening of Music Week, Friday, May 24, 1935.

The opera was greatly abbreviated, the missing scenes being told charmingly and interestingly by Miss Eileen Peck. The cast of characters included: Margaret Watson as Magarita, William V. Joyce as Faust, Lewis W. Ensign as Mephistopheles, Ruth McBirney as Siebel, Dorothy Beggs Pratt as Martha, and Avery Thomas as Wagner. The chorus of soldiers and villagers consisted of: David Bisby, Dean Goserud, Walter Johnson, George Oram, Farris Harrison, Carl MacFarland, Lowell Carpenter, Jack Lyle Rowell, Bob White, Bill Hart, Glen Call, Frank Dunne, Willis Hughes, Elaine Whitson, Helen Harper, Minnie McCurry, Beverly Oakley, Bessie Harper, Violetta Deckard, Maxine Jones, Jean Deakin, Grace Arnold, Helen Billock, Grace Watson, Beverly Dodge and Marguerite Clark.

The very appropriate scenery was designed by Carroll Elford, Joe Black, Sam Forter, Frederick Hershey, Barbara Smith and the Songsmiths.

A lovely voice, an ease of manner and a winning smile made Mrs. Marguerite Watson the favorite of the evening as she sang the role of Margarita. Her finest work was done in the ensemble "Ah, Tis I" and in the finale when the entire cast supported by the well-trained chorus gave a splendid piece.

Ruth McBirney as the young Siebel certainly deserved honorable praise. Her very sweet young voice showed great promise. Her natural performance was part of the work of Dr. H. E. Childs, dramatic coach.

Dorothy Beggs Pratt was a convincing actress as Martha and thrilled the audience with her rich alto voice. William V. Joyce, who sings the title role, has a splendid tenor voice and was an outstanding feature of the presentation.

Mr. Lewis Ensign, who played Mephistopheles, will be remembered by many Boiseans as being cast in the same role a few years ago during Music Week. Avery Thomas, as Wagner, had a fine voice. Avery has been this year the leader of a popular orchestra which has been famed both for its ability to present jazz and good music.

The assistance of Bill Jorgensen from the department of education, and Sam Forter from the department of engineering has been greatly appreciated. Jack Sharp took care of the seating arrangements and Elmer Fox acted as make-up artist.

James L. Strachan, instructor in the Boise Junior College School of Music, furnished perfect accompaniment, and played three numbers at the beginning of act one and another at the beginning of act three.

An unusually large audience packed the little theatre in St. Margaret's Hall to its capacity and both doorways were filled with interested Boiseans who stood during the entire performance. This was the first time it was produced on the evening of March 1. It went over beautifully on the Music Week platform in front of the state house. The large audience there was particularly receptive.

"In a small school like Boise Junior College, the ingenuity and cooperation of the different departments have to take the place of the facilities to which larger schools are accustomed," said Mrs. Lucille Tavey Forter, vocal instructor at the Boise Junior College. "We have been given splendid assistance by the various departments toward the production of 'Faust.'"