

IT WON ALL HEARTS.

"Midwinter Night's Dream" a Beatific Vision.

A THEATER FULL OF BEAUTY.

The Seattle Athletic Club's Travesty Proves a Brilliant Success in Every Respect.

Cordray's theater last evening was a glittering mass of rich toilets, jewels, flowers, handsome women and gallant men in full evening toilets gathered to witness the first night's production of "Midwinter Night's Dream" by the talented members of the Seattle Athletic club. Every seat in the house was taken with several hundred left standing in the aisles, and the charm of the catchy music, written by Professor Charles E. Bray to Mr. F. Otto Collings' libretto of the travesty on Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," together with well-trained and blended voices of the soloists and choruses made up such a tuneful and happy whole that it caught the audience from the outset and proved a complete success to the end. Not a hitch, halt or break marred the excellence of the three interesting acts; the singers were in good voice, the costumes were rich and picturesque, the dancing of the ballet "girls" charming and the curtain went down on the last act on one of the best all round amateur lyric performances ever given in this city, and for the matter of that on the coast. The audience never tired of applauding the earnest efforts of the performers, and the songs, duos, trios, and concerted pieces had all to be repeated before the enthusiastic audience would be satisfied. The performance was a triumphant success, reflecting the greatest credit on the skill and patience of Mr. A. Cookingham and Miss Beaupre, who trained the ballet; Mr. Collings, who conducted the stage, and the care exercised by Professor Bray in directing the music.

The Seattle Athletic club has the faculty of doing everything just about right and about as perfectly as human skill and ingenuity can make it. The club from its inception has taken a vigorous lead in athletic sports and social gathering, elevating the former to a standard to make them interesting and popular with the better element of the citizens. The many social club gatherings have been among the most noted features of Seattle's events, while the annual benefit performances have been eagerly anticipated from the originality of every year's production and the general excellence that has characterized every such performance. The brain, muscle and skill of the club has been trained to take part in these affairs and every year has seen the evolution of something far superior to that of the previous twelve months. This year was no exception to the rule, except in that the results were so far superior to anything yet given that it seems incredible that the club will be able to improve on it another year.

The audience last evening was a typical "first night" crowd, embracing all the social element of the city, as well as many people from Tacoma and Everett, and full dress in the strictest sense of the word was the order of the evening, the air of the theater being redolent with delicate perfumes and the scent of hot-house roses. The performers being all well represented in the audience by friends and relatives, placed the players and audience en rapport, so that the people on the stage were not stinted in their full share of applause, in which the ladies often led. Each lady on entering was presented with a souvenir programme, being a handsomely bound book of some fifty pages, with photographs of the various leaders and performers of the evening's entertainment, scores of some of the airs of the travesty as well as many of the verses of the libretto. The work is a gem of the printer's and photographer's art, and, being the production of a Seattle firm, has an added value placed on it as the result.

At the close of the first act loud calls were made for Mr. Collings, the author of the libretto. On his coming out a handsome floral scroll with the initials S. A. C., in red and white roses, the whole standing three feet in height, was passed over the footlights to the blushing young man. He made a neat little speech thanking the audience on behalf of the club for the kindness with which it had received the first act and its liberal patronage. The speaker was happy in his delivery and his remarks were well received and loudly applauded.

The general excellence of the travesty and its production makes it difficult to point out any one person in the cast who excelled over the other. There was a spirit of unanimity perceptible in one and all to which much of the success of the entertainment is attributable. All strove to do their best and all succeeded to the full anticipation of that vast audience. The play abounded in musical selections whose catchy tunes will make them popular. The dancing of the young men was a feature as pleasing as it was remarkable, especially the moonlight dancing of the eight fairies in the third act with changing calcium light effects, which was so realistic and perfect in execution as to cause many in the audience to doubt that they were young men, believing that the club had smuggled eight handsome young ladies as a substitute.

The comedy element of the piece was in the hands of Mr. H. V. V. Bean and Mr. George Noble as Bottom and Puck respectively, and the characteristic dry humor of each kept the audience in good temper. Mr. Bean had a good conception of the avaricious Bottom and introduced a number of catchy songs, his best effort being a topical song on current events that caught the house and secured for it several encores. Mr. Noble as Puck was robust, and his ease and excellent vocalization added force to the part. Mr. F. W. Clayton has a good figure and a splendid baritone voice that was heard to good effect as Theseus, the Duke of Athens. Mr. William A. Collins as Pyramus and Mr. Frank B. Ingersoll, the two lovers in hard luck, gave pleasing representations of their various parts and secured hearty recognition for their singing. The female portion of the cast, however, secured the greatest attention and created the most merriment. All were made up with powder and wigs to an extent that made each actually pretty. Mr. Gilbert B. Smith as Thisbe, and Mr. Harry Frederick as Hermia, fully shared the honors in this respect as well as for the excellence of their singing and acting. Each had studied the ways of womankind to perfection, though sometimes one or the other would forget himself in his walk and so create a laugh at his expense. All the others were equally amusing, and space precludes giving in detail the good points of each and all the performers.

The same performance will be repeated this and tomorrow evening.