



Capacity Audience Witnesses Glee Club Presentation of "Romeo and Juliet"

Another of Dal's annual Shakespearean productions is on the boards this week. Once more, the Glee Club has turned to tragedy in choosing the tale of Verona's "star-crossed lovers"—"Romeo and Juliet"—probably the most popular love-story in English literature.

Mr. H. Leslie Pigot took over the direction of the production with the usual gratifying results. From all reports, the job of casting must have been particularly trying this year because of the small number trying out. I feel that we all owe Mr. Pigot our sincere thanks for his hard work as well as our hearty congratulations for his success.

I am dismayed by the discourtesy shown by a large portion of the student body, who attended the performance Wednesday night. I think it highly unlikely that any gathering of equal educational standing could, or would display more rudeness and insensitiveness than that audience.

Such a display might be expected from the "groundlings" of Shakespeare's day but, if I am to believe all I am told, the leaders of tomorrow were among the audience. I can only hope that those with the over-developed sense of humour will be eliminated at the polls.

The play naturally revolves around the youthful love of Romeo and Juliet, and the effect of the Capulet-Montague feud on their romance. The success of the play, therefore, depends on the way these roles are handled.

Joanne Murphy's Juliet was usually believable and entrancing, although there were times when she seemed a very grown-up fourteen. Her voice was clearly audible except when the weather and a boisterous audience contrived to drown her out. The balcony scene, a scene of magnificent lyrical quality, was beautifully done by Miss Murphy. Unfortunately, the reaction of the audience shattered the mood of the lovers' parting in the bedroom scene. This performance definitely makes Miss Murphy one of Dal's leading actresses this year, and will probably pave the way to other successful appearances in the next few years.

Romeo, the young man with whom Juliet is so deeply in love, was very successfully performed by George Tracy, who has several excellent performances to his credit. Tracy's reading of Shakespeare is always understanding, and his interpretation of Romeo was no exception to this record. His performance was both sensitive and sincere, qualities which are indispensable to the role.

Robin MacNeil turned in a sparkling performance as the high-spirited Mercutio. His interpretation had a spontaneity which was unequalled by the rest of the cast. His Queen Mab scene was particularly effective, his perfect-

ly timed, antic gestures making it a delight to behold.

Another very good performance was turned in by Alan Marshall, as Peter, an illiterate servant of the Capulet household.

Dave Bryson's Tybalt was properly menacing and quick-tempered, though his lines could not always be heard. Nevertheless, I think he was convincing in this violent role.

One of the hardest parts in the play, in my opinion, was that of Juliet's nurse, taken by Marie Kennedy. On the whole, Miss Kennedy did a very good job with the part. Her cry for help when she discovered Juliet "dead" was probably the weakest point in her performance. I was expecting to hear a scream to make the scenery tremble, and I think the rest of the audience was too, but all that came out was a tiny squeal that was disappointing to say the least. I was disappointed to find that many of the nurse's lines had been cut but, in view of the juvenile behaviour of the audience, I am forced to admit that the censorship was probably well-advised.

John Nichols' portrayal of Friar Lawrence was not as convincing as could have been desired. Although I think that Nichols did his best, he failed to overcome completely the handicap of a too-youthful voice. Perhaps this was partly due to nervousness which he may lose in succeeding performances.

Capulet, as played by Bernie Keeler was mostly only adequate, but his denunciation of Juliet, for disobedience in the matter of her proposed marriage to Paris, rose far above the general level of his performance.

Benvolio, a friend of Romeo and Mercutio, was very well done by Bob Mazzerole, who gave the even-tempered interpretation which the part demands very convincingly.

Lady Capulet was very well done by Barbara McColough, though she had a brief lapse in Juliet's "death" scene. I suspect that something had gone wrong back-stage, because the whole scene was disappointing.

Robin MacNeil achieved a minor triumph in the role of the apothecary. This, combined with his excellent portrayal of Mercutio, made him, in my opinion, the star of the production.

Edwin Rubin turned in a satisfactory performance as Escalus, but had not entirely succeeded in "getting inside" the character.

The part of Paris was also slightly lacking in conviction at times. Michael Delory played the part, and it should be said in his defence that the recommendation Paris receives from the characters in the play would be difficult for anyone to live up to completely. On the whole, he did a good job.

Very satisfactory performances were turned in by other members

of the cast, but space does not permit detailed comment. I must turn instead to costume, makeup and scenery.

The costumes this year seemed to be several cuts above those of last year, although Montague's costume was hardly that of a man who could afford to put up a golden statue, however small; a minor point I will admit.

The makeup was mainly good, but I have a few complaints to make. The wigs (are they costume or makeup?) could have been combed surely. Both Montague and Capulet looked extreme unkempt; which is not necessarily an adjunct of approaching age, I believe. Another thing, Madame Capulet is, according to my calculations less than thirty, but she could have easily passed for a woman of forty.

The scenery was a triumph in itself. Those noble few who helped to build it deserve high praise indeed.

Speaking of scenery reminds me of the long waits between scenes. May I suggest that some of those clapping hands and stamping feet (Wednesday) could have found more useful employment backstage? 'Nuf sed!

The lighting was very effective most of the time. However, in the bedroom scenes, I felt that the effects of night and day were slightly confusing.

Though I may seem very critical, I really enjoyed myself, and hope that I may see many more.

NOTICES

Staff Invited—Members of the Gazette staff are invited by Dr. and Mrs. Kerr to afternoon tea at their residence, 24 Oxford Street, January 28, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Newman Club—There will be a Communion Breakfast for Newman Club members at the club rooms on the corner of Harvey and Barrington Street on Sunday morning, Jan. 27 at 9.15.

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Sixty-five Years of Glee Club

Back in 1886 the feeble voice of the Society that fifty years later was to be declared the largest student organization on the campus was heard for the first time. It is sixty-five years ago that a committee was organized to found a Glee Club at Dalhousie and the years since then have witnessed a steady growth both in the size and calibre of its productions.

It was strictly a Glee Club at the time of its founding and the choir used to give concerts in the old Orpheus Hall in Halifax. They went as far afield as New Glasgow and Truro, concerts being given in those two towns in 1894. In 1905 the Halifax Chronicle commented that the concert of that year was one of the best ever given in Halifax.

It was not until around 1914 that the Dalhousie Dramatic Club was formed. It was a vigorous society from the beginning, producing six or seven shows a year including a Freshman and Munro Day Show. They went barnstorming across the province in that year and produced the "College Widow" in New Glasgow, Sydney, Truro and Glace Bay. "It was great!! It was grand! It was glorious!" commented the players on their return.

Captain Joe Connolly who attended Dal from 1919-22 was the

person who really set the Society on its feet, and after he graduated presented the Connolly Shield for the best one-act play presented at Dal in the Competition of that name. It was his hope that Dalhousie would realize in the not too distant future "the idea of having a chair of dramatic art."

The present system of presenting a Shakespearean play and an operetta as the major productions of the Society each year was adopted in 1945. At that time Mr. H. Leslie Pigot took over the direction of the plays and the high calibre of the productions since that time is evidence enough of the part he has played in making the Society one of the best and largest on the campus.

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