

# "THE BELLE OF NEW YORK"

## CHELMSFORD AMATEURS IN MUSICAL PLAY

Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, now in their eighteenth season, are this week presenting that old favourite, "The Belle of New York," the first performance of which was given at the Regent Theatre on Monday.

Once again this talented and versatile Society, whose productions are always looked forward to with pleasurable anticipation, is providing delightful entertainment, such as is especially welcome and cheering in times like the present when war is common talk and crisis follows crisis. All who wish to forget for awhile the anxieties of the hour, and what Hitler may say to-day, should make a point of seeing the remaining performances to-night and to-morrow afternoon and evening.

While "The Belle of New York" is un-

again plays a very difficult part with skill and attractiveness. Her display as the ardent and alluring little Parisienne is typically vivacious. Another outstanding performer is Pat Rollason, whose dancing is one of the features of the show, and Betty Pearce and Eileen Hobart make valuable contributions to the success achieved.

Among the male principals, chief acting honours must go to Leonard Pease, who infuses great life and gusto into the production. Convincing in gesture and at ease in his very likeable part, he is quite the best exponent of humour and also sings a good song, although his voice seems to be not quite at its best. More than anyone else he holds the show together. Talent is also displayed by Alex Ogston, who scored a big success by his handling of a very difficult part. Members of the audience, especially those who sit in the circle, appreciate Pat Hobart, a newcomer, not merely



**"THE BELLE OF NEW YORK."**—Some of the principals in the Chelmsford Operatic and Dramatic Society's production at the Regent Theatre. Left to right: Ichabod Bronson (Leonard Pease), Violet Gray, a Salvation Army lassie (Joan Howard), and Harry Bronson (Alex. Ogston).  
Photos: Bonds Studio.

questionably a delightful musical play, it has not the general appeal of some of the more famous post-war shows such as "Rose Marie," with which the Chelmsford Society last year scored a record success. "Rose Marie" was undoubtedly the Society's greatest triumph, but it set a standard which will be difficult to maintain, much less surpass. In these modern days the public want something with plenty of humour, snap, rhythm and vitality. To some extent "The Belle of New York" meets these demands; its music is popular, lilting and tuneful, and the show is attractively dressed and brought up to date in many respects. But in regard to comedy, it fails to meet the requirements of the age. This is not a criticism of the performances which the local Society are giving, for in fact the production is first-rate. But there are some musical plays which appeal to all, whatever their personal predilections may be—and "The Belle of New York" is not at the top of that list.

Once again the Society entrusted the production to Madge Macklin, the results of whose efforts leave little to be desired. The unmistakable stamp of proficiency and smartness which characterise the performances are tribute to her painstaking work. A special word of praise is also due to the orchestra, which, under the able direction of Charles Hambourg, sustains the singing to just the right degree and tempo and is refreshment to mind and ear. All the principals act well. While in some cases the singing is lacking in power, it is perfectly tuneful. The chorus contains many new members, and their work is brilliant, and

for his very good acting, but also because in his singing he makes himself distinctly heard. His enunciation and quality of tone are splendid, and his performance generally, including a whistling solo, is excellent. It is also not difficult to hear Fred Bateson, who also makes the most of his part, and Alec Torry scores a great hit with a brilliant piece of acting as a "polite lunatic."

Others who assist are: Hon. Prompter, Major F. W. M. Powley; hon. accompanists, Mr. A. R. Barneveld and Mr. A. T. Heather; hon. call boy, Mr. F. J. Parrett; hon. property masters, Messrs. H. and D. Evans and G. Geoghegan; perruquiers, Claire Arnold, Miss Gladys Butcher, Mr. Percy Russell and Mr. R. H. Fish.

The Orchestra, with Charles Hambourg as musical director, comprises: Violins, Mr. W. H. Bateman (leader,) Miss B. Clarke, Miss B. Duncan, Mr. J. H. Duncan, Mrs. M. Cole, and Mr. V. F. Waldau; viola, Mrs. W. Adkins; 'cello, Mr. E. Hinton; bass, Mr. W. L. Barclay; clarinet, Mr. W. E. Dann; flute, Mr. H. D. Dove; oboe, Mr. F. Hart; bassoon, Mr. J. Biddulph; trumpets, Mr. G. Dann and Mr. J. Thomas; horns, Mr. V. F. Waller and Mr. G. Clarke; trombone, Mr. H. Groombridge; percussion, Mr. W. Wareham; piano, Mr. A. R. Barneveld.

Among those who saw the performance on Tuesday night was Mr. Mark Hambourg, the celebrated pianist, and cousin of Mr. Charles Hambourg. Afterwards he went on to the stage, where he heartily congratulated the cast on their performance, which he said, compared favourably with the original show he saw many years ago. A hundred boys from the Essex Home School for Boys were entertained by the Society—fifty on Monday and fifty on Tuesday.



BATHING BELLES IN "THE BELLE OF NEW YORK."

Photo : Bonds Studio.