

DIANE LAWSON SCORES A HIT AS 'NANETTE'

The production of "No, No, Nanette" by the Chelmsford Operatic Society at the Regent Theatre, Chelmsford, on Monday, introduced a charming and talented newcomer in the youthful Diane Lawson in the leading part (writes "Critic").

She brought a much needed freshness to a musical play which, while containing two songs that we still sing to-day, is the typical product of a day and age now gone forever.

Even the songs "I want to be Happy" and "Tea for Two" draw most of their popularity from the nostalgia they carry with them.

Miss Lawson has real talent and played her part with a delightful mixture of naivete and assurance. Her lack of technique is not important in this part and experience will alter that.

There is no part in this play worthy of Mr. Fred Munnion's talents, and only rarely did he triumph over inadequate material, but when he did he was a joy to watch. His third act duet with Miss Lawson was, without doubt the best number in the show.

Biggest laugh

Mr. Donald Leech worked himself up to quite a nice sense of abandon in the second act, and his wire-walking act with Mr. Munnion gave us the biggest laugh.

The second act was helped tremendously by the arrival—far too late, in my opinion—of Miss Dorothy Cox, who took the stage with the praise of the true artiste. It was a great disappointment that she had no singing to do, and even a little more of her excellent line in broad comedy would have helped.

As a dancer, Miss June Gisbey has a talent deserving greater opportunities, and of the men Mr. Richard Wood stands out particularly as worthy of something better.

The costumes are very successful in this production, the New Look being well to the fore. At all times there is a good blaze of colour on the stage and some of the frocks are really lovely.

One remembers particularly Miss Gisbey in light blue, Miss Gornall in dark blue and Miss Cox in parchment colour looking very lovely indeed.

Altogether, it is well-dressed production and reflects great credit, both to the cast and the hard-working producer, Miss Madge Macklin.

Other members of the cast were Miss Rose Blooman as Lucille, Miss Dorothy Matthews as Pauline, Miss Lilian Hamilton as Sue Smith, and Mr. Maurice Carter as Tom Trainor. Miss Hilda Tilley dances a specialty number, and Mr. Barneveld led the orchestra of 20. There is a supporting chorus of 40 members.