

## TAKING PART IN PANTO

The following pictures show some of the Cast of Sinbad the Sailor, which is now being presented by members of the Waterford Pantomime Society.



Included above are, E. Griffin, M. Grace, K. Howlett, V. Clancy, P. O'Donoghue, T. Browne, A. Mallon, and A. O'Neill.

### Theatre And Screen

#### TELEVISION COMMENT

From one point of view, TV could hardly have been introduced to the masses in Waterford at a more opportune moment. The dreadful weather conditions have kept whole families glued to their own firesides and, willy nilly, the Tellys Eireann programme were the focus of undivided attention. On the whole, it hasn't been an unpleasant chore, by any means, and I think most viewers have been pleasantly surprised by both the excellence of the reception from Mount Leinster and the variety of the programme presented.

It's early yet and there is still a great deal of the novelty effect to wear off before we'll get down to a realistic critical attitude of the programmes. Mind you, the children love it. They are getting enough horse operas and adventure films to gladden the heart of any juvenile and, let me confess, I am a bit partial to these all-action, gun-slinging, bandit-chasing sagas myself.

#### NO SUB-TITLES

Just making a speedy glance back over the programme I have witnessed to-date, there's one observation I feel should be made and that sub-titled films are not very suitable for TV. On Sunday night, a French film was presented at the peak viewing period. To one who could speak fluent and colloquial French, it might have been most enjoyable, but for the ordinary Philistine, the sub-titles were practically useless. Mostly, they were unreadable against the background and they flashed too quickly across the screen to register. Possibly Tellys Eireann's objective is to bring us the best in Continental as well as British and American films, but the limitations of the TV screen for sub-titling is something which will have to be realised.

I particularly liked the short opera screened on Christmas night, which had the tremendous advantage of absolute clarity of dic-



Olive Bowyer (left) as Sinbad, and Betty McGrath as the Fairy.

tion in the singing and added greatly to the production. I also liked very much the "Fleadh" programme, which was lively, gay, stylish and never flagged and did a lot more for native culture than some of the more boring language programmes.

#### JACKPOT

If the spate of letters to the national papers criticising the rules of the Quiz game, "Jackpot" is anything to go by, this programme is popular with many viewers. Gay Byrne brings a very homely and informal atmosphere to the whole affair and the competitors, themselves, provide the odd bit of unconscious humour. It's a game in which most viewers can participate because the questions aren't all that difficult and, as you well realise, it's the queer person who doesn't like to be able to say "I told you so."

Around this sport-loving City, biggest question mark is against the sports programmes. Because of the weather, there has been very little sport to talk about since Mount Leinster opened, but, as the weather improves, we'll be keeping a "weather" eye on the treatment of this important facet of the authority's activities. Earlier viewers have been conditioned by the wonderful sport coverage of the cross-Channel networks and T.E. will have to be very imaginative with their treatment, considering their far more limited scope.

#### MORE PLAYS

I think everybody would like to see more home-produced drama. The canned programmes are all very well in their way, but their way isn't altogether ours and, although "A Matter of Conscience" with Milo O'Shea, has been criticised as not exactly the right vehicle for the season, it still contained all the meat and the melodrama, which Irish theatre-goers appreciate. Some more of the same would go down well, I am sure.

One compliment I would like to pass to Tellys Eireann is on the excellence of their news commentators, who, to my mind, whether in Irish or English, are far superior to their much-beset colleagues on sound radio.

Finally, a word about our own Hal Roche, who compered the New Year's Eve Party and who left no doubt in anybody's mind about his birthplace. It's grand to have one of our own products who hasn't allowed sophistication to obliterate that once unfashionable word "Waterford." Hal was a very personable and amusing comper and obviously had his audience with him. That he may go from strength to strength in the New Year.

#### PITY THE PANTOMIME PEOPLE

On Friday night, last, in company with a half-filled theatre, I shivered at the opening night of the Waterford Pantomime Society's "Sinbad the Sailor" and I took home with me a feeling of admiration for the group and a deep sympathy with them that the weather had made their months-long efforts such an anticlimax. Because roadways and paths were almost impassable, the audience was a small one and when this theatre is only half-full, it can be very cold indeed. It's a great tribute to the company that for long intervals they made us forget our discomfort and the haunting spectre of the walk home in the snow.

I mentioned before that pantomime is for children of all ages and that is the spirit in which it should be approached. Those who went expecting a slick revue from these hard-working amateurs must have been disappointed, but those out for a bit of fun and a good laugh at themselves as well as the people on stage, could hardly have any complaints that they didn't get their money's worth.

Cowed with first-night jitters and the inevitable confusion and missed cues and lines, the cast could expect to get little encouragement from the preoccupied audience, but they worked manfully to put over the show and I am quite sure that if the weather improves before their run ends, they will reap the rewards of their enthusiasm.

#### GAY TRIO

Particular bouquets must be given to the comedy trio, Roger McGrath, Michael Kennedy and Michael Winkle. They put everything they had into their efforts to raise the laughs and get the audience into panto mood. The first-named pair as One-Bad and Two-Bad, threw themselves about with gay abandon, used their imaginations to bring a touch of novelty to hackneyed situations and, generally, were the life and soul of the party. But I think Michael Winkle as the Dame was the hit of the night. His make-up was excellent and his dance sequence with the Vizier (Richie Collins) was as funny as I've seen. Playing the Dame, a little la Noe! Purcell, he kept the pace moving when it tended to flag and always had the gift of expression to get the best out of even the least funny lines.

#### STRAPPING "SINBAD"

I understand that Olive Bowyer will shortly be leaving Waterford to study in Dublin and she will be a big loss, because she has all the marks of the born trouper (there's an Irish proverb to cover that, too). She sang well, although some of the songs weren't suited to her voice and looked a strapping Sinbad in the style of the traditional panto Principal Boy. As the Princess, Angela Callanan, I thought, was more sinned against than sinning in the matter of her costumes, which weren't at all what one would have expected for a principal girl. She looked winsome and also has an appealing voice, but she might have looked more the part and less like one of the back row of the chorus. Talking about costumes, it was a pity that some of the dancing girls' costumes weren't better tailored. Some of them looked as if they were wearing oversize pyjama legs, some were diaphanous and some were not, and, altogether, the effect was not pleasing to the eye. I don't know if some tailoring could have been done to remedy this and knowing the limitation of costumes, it wouldn't be fair to blame the cast for something which was probably out of their control.

#### NICE TOUCHES

There were some very imaginative touches in the production and, for their success, much of the credit must go to Stage Manager, Michael O'Connell, who produced some wonderful backgrounds. I think the scene in the Valley of Jewels was most effective and the dancers with their luminous costumes made a colourful impact, although the skeletons were a bit anaemic, if one can use the word in that context.

I must also say that the young dancers from the Betty McGrath School, who gave an exhibition of precision dancing, were most effective and it's a great pity that we haven't more adult dancers with the same talent. Betty McGrath, herself, was a delightful Fairy Queen, but I think Dermot Graham must get a hearty pat on the back for his very convincing "Old Man of the Sea."

In the smaller parts, we had the inimitable Sean Trahan, who, alas, got little scope for his very considerable talents and delighted us with only one real song. Andy McManus was a suitably stern and unbending Captain and Richie Collins was always in character as the Vivier.

The chorus singing, rendered mainly by the A.C.E.C. Tops of the Town group was very pleasing and, at times, exhilarating and some of the dance routines in which they participated, although still a long way from first-class amateur standards, was still a big improvement in last year's effort.

One could be carping and pick many technical holes in the presentation, but working in difficult and unsympathetic circumstances this effort was well worth supporting and the only pity is that the weather has prevented them from getting the kind of audience reaction which would really have brought the best out of the cast. One thing I did miss was the traditional topical song. This, to my mind, is the piece de resistance of a panto and it's a pity that it was excluded. Over Christmas, I listened to another of last year's Tops of the Town artists rendering a topical med-

ORMONDE HALL, CARRICK-ON-SUIR

Sunday, 6th January

Return Visit of....

DENIS CRONIN

AND HIS

EASYBEATS

Admission: 5/ Dancing: 9-1

KILMOGANNY HARRIERS' HUNT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL

Hunt Ball

At The Ormonde Hall, Carrick-on-Suir

Wednesday, 16th January, 1963

THE SOCIAL EVENT OF THE SEASON

— Music by —

Mick Delahunty and His Orchestra

Dancing: 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Fully Licensed Bars,

CATERING BY LADIES' COMMITTEE.

Tickets (including Supper): 25/-

Annual General Meeting.—The Annual General Meeting of Kilmeehan Guild Muintir na Tire will be held in Ballyduff on tonight (Friday) at 8 p.m., when a very successful year's activities will be under review. Weather conditions permitting, speakers from headquarters will address the gathering after which the election of officers for the current year will be held, and all are asked to attend.

Dance Postponed.—Due to inclement weather a short dance under the auspices of the local Dramatic Group to be held in the Hall, Kilmeehan, on Sunday night last was postponed, and will now be held at a later date.

Won Hamper.—In a Christmas drawing of prizes held in Dublin by a national wholesale trading group, Mrs. N. Butler, Kilmeehan, was the winner of a valuable hamper.

Happy Event.—Congratulations are extended to both Mr. and Mrs. T. Nolan, New Line, Ballyduff, on the occasion of a recent happy event.

Bereaved.—Deepest sympathy is tendered to Mrs. P. O'Donnell, Ardeeneone, Kilmeehan; Mr. Michael Kelly, do., and Mrs. R. Heveran, Ross, Kilmeehan, on the unexpected death of their brother, Mr. Peter Kelly, Aghnacloy, County Tyrone, which occurred recently. To the bereaved widow and family, deepest sympathy is also extended.

Spent Christmas at Home.—The majority of emigrants from the district who spent Christmas with their families have by now returned to their various duties, and amongst them were the following: Miss Nellie Costelloe, Ballyduff; Mr. Michael Oates, Knockaderry; Mr. Tony Whelan, do.; Mr. Albert Norwood, Johnstown; Mr. William Gahan, jnr., Lacka Road, Kilmeehan, and from Dublin, Mr. Gerard McCarthy, Blackrock, do.

Interviewed.—Amongst those interviewed on the "Congo Chronicle" programme, broadcast from Radio Eireann on Monday night last, included Cpl. M. Cuddy, Blackrock, who is a member of the 38th Battalion, now serving in far away Elizabetville.

Severe Snowfall.—The severe snowfall which blanketed the entire countryside has caused much damage with the complete disruption of telephone communications, power failures, etc., and the farming community are experiencing great difficulty in feeding and sheltering their livestock. Many bye roads in the district were almost impassable and the inhabitants are finding travelling conditions almost impossible. Many minor mishaps were reported on the main Waterford-Dungarvan road, between Houghton's Cross and Tramore Cross, but luckily nobody was seriously injured.

Tuesday, January 8th (ONE day) — William Holden, Eleanor Parker, John Forsythe in ESCAPE FROM FORT BRAVO. (Technicolour) With William Demarest, Richard Anderson, Polly Bergen.

Thursday, January 10th (ONE day) — Yvonne De Carlo, Peter Ustinov, David Tomlinson in HOTEL SAHARA. Also Bela Lugosi, Suzanne Kaaren, Dave O'Brien in DEVIL BAT.