

'BITTERSWEET' HERE, WITTY AND BREEZY

**Noel Coward's Artistic Operetta
 From London Is Composed of
 Musical Miniatures.**

EVELYN LAYE IS RADIANT

**Author Acts Many Roles in His
 Costume Romance—A Decorous
 Entertainment.**

BITTER SWEET, an operetta in three acts and seven scenes by Noel Coward. Settings and costumes by G. E. Calthrop and Professor Ernst Stern; staged by the author; dances arranged by Tilly Losch; Charles B. Cochran's production, presented by Florenz Ziegfeld and Arch Selwyn. At the Ziegfeld Theatre.

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| Parker | | Trevor Glyn |
| Dolly Chamberlain | | Audrey Pointing |
| Lord Henry | | Patrick Ludlow |
| Vincent Howard | ..... | Max Kirby |
| The Marchioness of Chayne | ..... | Evelyn Laye |
| Sarah Millick | ..... | Evelyn Laye |
| Carl Linden | ..... | Gerald Nodin |
| Mrs. Millick | ..... | Isabel Ohmead |
| Mr. Hugh Devon | ..... | Tracy Holmes |
| Lady Devon | ..... | Kathlyn Lambelet |
| Sir Arthur Fenchurch | ..... | Charles Mortimer |
| The Marquis of Steere | ..... | Donald Gordon |
| Lord Edgar James | ..... | Richard Thorpe |
| Lord Sorrel | ..... | Hooper Russell |
| Mr. Vale | ..... | Leslie Bannister |
| Mr. Bethel | ..... | Anthony Neville |
| Mr. Proutie | ..... | Douglas Graeme-Brook |
| Jane | ..... | Winifred Talbot |
| Effie | ..... | Vesta Sylvia |
| Piccolo | ..... | Peter Donald |
| Lotte | ..... | Zoe Gordon |
| Freda | ..... | Nancy Barnett |
| Hansi | ..... | Dorothy Debenham |
| Gussie | ..... | Sylvia Leslie |
| Manon (La Crevette) | ..... | Miréille |
| Captain August Lutte | ..... | Desmond Jeans |
| Herr Schlick | ..... | Charles Mortimer |
| Sari Linden | ..... | Evelyn Laye |
| Gussie | ..... | Sylvia Leslie |
| Lieutenant Tranisch | ..... | Louis Miller |
| Burley | ..... | Albert Chapman |
| The Marquis of Chayne | ..... | John Evelyn |
| Mr. Bethel | ..... | Anthony Neville |
| Mrs. Vale (Jane) | ..... | Winifred Talbot |
| Mrs. Proutie (Gloria) | ..... | Nancy Brown |
| The Duchess of Tenterton (Victoria) | ..... | Marjorie Raymond |
| The Duke of Tenterton | ..... | Donald Gordon |
| Lady Sorrel (Honor) | ..... | Isla Bevan |
| Lord Sorrel | ..... | Hooper Russell |
| Lady Edgar James (Harriet) | ..... | Audrey Pointing |
| Lady Devon | ..... | Jane Moore |
| Vernon Craft | ..... | Cunningham Glen |
| Cedric Ballantyne | ..... | Paul Spender-Clay |
| Bertram Sellick | ..... | Hugh Cuenod |
| Lord Henry Jade | ..... | George Woolf |
| Accompanist | ..... | Lisbona |

By J. BROOKS ATKINSON.

Mr. Coward is the master of little things, and the virtuosity of his talents amounts to genius. For what he describes as his operetta, "Bitter Sweet," which was put on at the Ziegfeld last evening, he has written the book and the lyrics, composed the music, staged the production, and stopped just this side of acting all the parts. Although considerable showmanship has gone into the staging and the organization of the story, it is not a musical show in the rapid, flamboyant style to which we have become accustomed. But it is sheerly delightful by reason of the delicate perfection of the workmanship and the radiant splendor of Evelyn Laye, who has the principal rôle. It is a production composed of miniatures, each one neatly turned. It is charming; it is subtle and witty. By his mastery of little things Mr. Coward has mastered the artistry of musical entertainment in a refreshingly civilized style.

Although the plot of his costume romance is not highly inventive, Mr. Coward has managed to inform it with sufficient dramatic quality to carry the burden of his theme. When, in the first scene, the elderly Marchioness of Shayne surprises one of her party guests embracing the pianist, the story of her own high-spirited career begins. How, as a young lady of quality in 1875, she fell in love with her music teacher and ran off with him on the eve of the date set for her wedding to a gentleman of vast importance; how the music teacher became bandmaster in a Viennese café and she one of the hired dancing partners; how the bandmaster was slain in a duel with an officer who had kissed her; and how at length she returned to society as a famous singer and became the betrothed of the Marquis

of Shayne—this is the burden of Mr. Coward's evening of song.

Although it is no great shakes as a story, it has more continuity than most books for musical productions, and it serves Mr. Coward's purpose admirably. For, again, his interest is in the style of romance. What you enjoy in "Bitter Sweet" is the skill with which he has turned out the usual set-pieces—investing the usual ceremonies ball with a native gayety and a compelling caprice, and enlivening Herr Schlick's café with a revelry that does not travesty its setting. Meanwhile, he introduces diversissements that have an air of reticent originality—a nice-mannered frolic amid the prospective bridesmaids, a droll, piquant song for the shameless ladies of the town in Vienna, and a wry caricature of the Oscar Wildettes. It is decorous entertainment, reveling in the billowing costumes of a grandiose age of style, and courting humor in the bouncing bustle.

Really, the details hardly matter. All that matters is the unity of style in the sundry materials of musical romance. What makes Evelyn Laye so rare a presence in the leading part is not merely her fragile beauty but the daintiness with which she acts and sings in the precise spirit of the play. As an actress, she catches the ardor of the romantic love scenes of the first act; she trips through the dramatic episodes with a skill equal to Mr. Coward's composition. She has, moreover, a voice sweet in quality and full in tone—as competent for the warmth of such a piece as "Tell Me What Is Love" as it is for the girlishness of "The Last Dance" and the folk rhythms of the concluding "Zigeuner."

The cast of English players assembled for the American production includes many others of unusual skill—Gerald Nodin as the music teacher, Mireille as a saucy French café singer ("Life is very rough and tumble for the humble disease"), Sylvia Leslie, Zoe Gordon, Nancy Barnett and Dorothy Debenham as the audacious ladies of the town, Desmond Jeans as an imposing military captain, and a host of credible ladies and gentlemen of fashion.

If Mr. Howard, among his manifold activities, had found leisure to design and build the scenery, he might have had a more distinguished background for his innumerable cameos. His is not a devastating talent, but it has the texture of spun gold. And it draws out "Bitter Sweet" into a memorable pleasure.

NOTABLES IN AUDIENCE.

**Society, Theatre, Screen and Arts
 Represented at Premiere.**

Included in the audience at the premiere performance of "Bitter Sweet" last night at the Ziegfeld Theatre were many persons prominent in society, the theatre, motion pictures, literature and the arts, Mr. and Mrs. J. Leonard Replogle took a large party with them, their guests including Mrs. Edward F. Hutton, Mr. and Mrs. Condé Nast, Mrs. Florenz Ziegfeld (Billie Burke), Miss Patricia Burke Ziegfeld, Mr. and Mrs. Gurnee Munn, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert B. Swope and Mr. and Mrs. John C. King.

Among others in the gathering were Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Drexel Bidle Jr., Mr. and Mrs. William Thaw 3d and their débutante daughter, Miss Virginia Thaw; Mr. and Mrs. T. Markoe Robertson, Sir Harry Gloster Armstrong, the British Consul General, and Lady Armstrong; Mr. and Mrs. Harris Hammond, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Guggenheim, Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, with whom were Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Astor and Lytle Hull; Mr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Baruch, Count and Countess Vallombrosa, Sir William and Lady Wiseman, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Pulitzer, Sir Charles and Lady Mendl, Mr. and Mrs. Jules Glaenger, Prince and Princess Jean-Louis Faucigny Lucinge and Ernest Thornton-Smith.

Also Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Hammerstein, Mme. Mary Garden, Mrs. Somerset Maugham, Laurette Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Kern, Gilbert Miller, Arthur Hopkins, Sam H. Harris, Joseph Urban, Samuel Goldwyn, Jesse Lasky, Philip Barry, Edgar Selwyn, Alexander Woolcott, Cole Porter, Rudolph Friml, Professor George H. Baker, Ed Wynn and Professor Ernest Stern.