

POLKA DOMINATES

MADAME SHERRY

Very Little Waltzing in the New
Piece at the New Am-
sterdam.

GAY FRENCH VAUDEVILLE

Lina Abarbanell Sings German Again
and Ralph C. Herz Has Role
Which Fits Him.

MADAME SHERRY, a French vaudeville, in three acts, by Otto Hauerbach, music by Karl Hoschna. New Amsterdam Theatre.

LuluFrances Demarest
CatharineElizabeth Murray
PhillippeIgnacio Martinetti

Edward SherryJack Gardner
Leonard GomezJohn Reinhard
Pepita.....Dorothy Jardon

Yvonne SherryLina Abarbanell
Theophilus SherryRalph Herz
HectarFrank Johnson

There is one innovation in "Madame Sherry," which was produced at the New Amsterdam Theatre last night, which theatregoers will doubtless greet with their approval; it's not a waltz this time; it's a polka. And instead of making its appearance near the end of the second act, as the waltzes generally do, its strains are heard at the beginning of the first and continue thereafter. The polka is called "Every Little Movement," and it is a sort of an inversion of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song," but it has a manner of its own. By the time the end of the first act was reached last night everybody in the house knew it, but a string orchestra in the foyer, all unconscious of the fact, continued to play it.

"Madame Sherry" is different in other ways, too. It has no chorus men, for one thing—except two who look on now and then—and a strong nobody, not down on the programme, who is a very important factor in a dance which will be described somewhat further down in this column.

Another very important thing about "Madame Sherry" is the fact that, although there is a star, a great many other people have a great deal to do. In fact, everybody in the cast has something to do; even the young ladies who wear hobble skirts have lines written for them by the author.

Perhaps the most curious thing of all about the piece is that all the ladies concerned with its presentation resemble in a marked degree certain prima donnas of the opera stage. Miss Abarbanell, of course, resembles only herself, but it wasn't so very long ago that she was singing Gretel at the Metropolitan, and her "Donnerwetter" song last night indicated that she is still more at home in German than in English.

When Dorothy Jardon appeared there were some in the audience who were sure that Mme. Cavalieri was on the stage; Miss Frances Demarest is a very good fac simile of Mlle. Chenal, the Aphrodite of the Paris Opéra Comique, whom Americans are some time to hear, and Miss Elizabeth Murray—well, Miss Murray looks a great deal like Mme. Nordica.

As for the entertainment itself, it is not a Viennese operetta, nor yet is it a French vaudeville, nor again even an American musical comedy, but it is a sort of combination of all three, and when it is most like a French vaudeville it is more clever than at other times. The plot plays a much more important part than it usually does in an American musical comedy, but the plot would be difficult to set down on paper.

To be brief, it concerns a nephew who has deceived his rich uncle who is living abroad by writing him that he was married and has two children. Upon the arrival of the uncle, of course it is necessary to produce the wife and children. From this source spring the complications.

Some of the situations are very amusing. Most of them aroused laughter last night. A great many of the songs also will achieve popularity. The music is largely a hodge-podge, chosen like the music of the most recent revues, from various composers, Hoschna perhaps predominating. With the very rise of the curtain, as has been mentioned, Miss Demarest begins on the "Every Little Movement" motive which runs through the piece.

"I'm All Right," "The Dublin Rag" and a waltz which rejoices in the title of "The Birth of Passion" make the second act melodious, and the third act contains dances and songs enough to bring its interest up to that of the other two. Last night the musical numbers were all repeated so many times that it was long after 11 when the final curtain fell. Less repetition of some of these numbers will doubtless give more effect to the others.

Curiously enough Miss Abarbanell is not especially well suited in the leading part. It is not a rôle which by any means exhausts her possibilities, and in many parts of the piece she is playing at a distinct disadvantage. However, after some of the ingenuous songs of the first act are disposed of she is given more of a chance. Her "I'm All Right" song was deliciously well done, and her German "Donnerwetter" was one of the best bits in the piece. Her dancing is very exquisite.

Miss Frances Demarest is very beautiful and fills all the requirements of her part. She sings her songs very well, and her presence on the stage is always a delight to the eye.

Miss Elizabeth Murray made a great deal of an Irish character part, singing three songs with a great deal of spirit and acting a drunken scene with realism which was never offensive.

Miss Dorothy Jardon played a conventional stage character, a jealous Spanish woman, in a way which made her seem very unconventional. In the first place she wore gowns which doubtless instilled in the mind of every woman in the audience a desire to discover the name of her dressmaker. The first, a combination of orange and blue, was extraordinary enough, but the second one, of deep purple, was still more wonderful.

Miss Jardon did a song and dance in the first act which made the audience wish to see more of her, but it was forced to wait until the last, when in the midst of a sort of an Apache rag she turned herself into a living mummy—feet crossed and arms folded—and was twirled around the head of the Strong Nobody. In many ways this was the sensation of the evening.

Ralph Herz, who is also mentioned in big type as one of the stars, was most happily cast. In the rôle of the fussy old uncle he gives a deliciously droll performance. Mr. Ignacio Martinetti and Mr. Jack Gardner are no different from what might have been expected from their past performances. Mr. John Reinhard adds his voice now and then in a duet or concerted number, and Frank Johnson has to take a realistic fall, which he does very well indeed.

The scenery for the first act is very unhappy in color and design, as are the costumes, but the settings and costumes for the two following acts are all that could be desired.

It is likely from the attitude of last night's audience that "Madame Sherry" will be at home at the New Amsterdam every evening during the Fall season, and possibly through the Winter.