

Gertrude Lawrence Rings Up the Curtain

Of Her Own Drama Between Two Wars By VIOLET BROWN

Gertrude Lawrence was in a touring company at Yarmouth in 1917 when her big chance to go to London came. The only trouble was she hadn't a shilling to pay her fare. Six soldiers in a regiment of gunners drilling nearby decided to take a "flier" on her and financed her journey. They escorted her to the London Express and waved her on her way. "Best of luck, Gertie!" they called. "Don't let us down."

- She didn't. And a whole era later she went back to blitzed England just before D-Day to join ENSA, the British USO. With it she toured the Western Front to within sound of Von Rundstedus mortars, trying to pay back to the GIs and the Tommies what she owed to those World War I gunners who gave Gertrude Lawrence, a chance to become a star before they sailed for Flanders.

She tells what happened in between in a sparkling autobiography called "A Star Danced," just published by Doubleday, Doran." It is written with the same apparent artlessness, the skill disguised by spontaneity, that mark her acting. Since it is the story of an actress, It is all theater. And since it is also the story of a woman with a heart, it has real drama.

She was born Gertrude Alexandra Dagmar Lawrence Klasen, daughter of a stage-struck English woman who had to pad her tights when she appeared in the chorus, and of a Dane who was fonder of the bottle than of his family. Her career really began one bank holiday in Brighton when she sang a little song called "It Ain't All Honey, and It Ain't All Jam." (Noel Coward was to use the Incident later in "Cavalcade.") She was six then. When she was ten she had cards printed reading, "Little, Gertie Lawrence, Child Actress and Danseuse.'_ Not long after she was on her own.

Her first break came soon after her Tommies seat her to London when Beatrice Lillie, for whom she was understudy, was thrown from a horse. "Little Gertle" was bregnant at the Uine but for seven months, to the steady delight of her audiences, she starred in "Charlot's Revue." The day Miss Lillie came back to her part, Gertrude Lawrence crawled into a nursing room and at the height of the biggest Zeppelin raid on London had her daughter Pamela. The episode barely interrupted her career. She went on to become the toast of two continents, a member of the gay, sophisticated set headed by the then Prince of Wales. She came to America with Charlot; she went back to Europe with Gershwin's "Oh, Kay!" She fell in love with a titled English gentleman and received a betel nut instead of a ruby she expected from an Indian prince. She met her childhood colleague, Noel Coward, again and starred in his "Private Lives," complaining that people have been confusing her with the heroine ever since and ascribing to her the "emotional stability of a shuttlecock."

It was not all undiluted glamour, of course. She never did have to revert to being a barmaid to pay her board bill as she had in her pre-London days, but she did go bankrupt. And there was considerable heartache before she met Richard Aldrich, now of the U.S. Navy, at the Cape Playhouse in Dennis. But she took it all with a light touch.

And she tells of it with a light touch, too, skillfully alternating flashback with the present. Gertrude Lawrence can write. But she ought to stick to the stage for a while longer yet. She can act, too.

CANDID CLOSE-UPS Lawrence Brooks of 'Song of Norway'

Proves Right Shy at Singing His Own Praises BY ROBERT FRANCIS

This corner dropped into "The Song of Norway" the other night to hear Lawrence-Brooks, who is the Edvard Grieg of the show, sing his namesake's beautiful melodies. Larry has been at the chore nearly a year now and the customers are still pouring in to hear him. A nice start for a young baritone at his first Broadway try.

It is also pleasant to report that Larry's success hasn't gone to his head.

"Why should it?" he grins. "After all, I just met the right people. I might just as well still be knocking my brains out chasing odd radio

"There are three people to whom I'll always be eternally grateful," he goes on." "When I came down to New York from Portland in 1937 I didn't know a soul and I didn't have much else but nerve. Estelle Liebling thought I might have something and took me on for vocal lessons practically for nothing. Gave me more time than her best-paying pupils, too-and scouted me radio jobs. I'm not likely to forget that. Then a couple of years ago I auditioned for a Summer job at Camp Tamiment. Two boys, Bob Wright and George Forrester, were in charge of the Saturday night shows. I guess they liked me. Anyway, after a 12-week Summer session they wangled me three weeks at the Copacabana. Guess Monte Proser must have liked me. too, because I stayed there six months.

"Of course," Larry smilles, "Bob and George had the music and lyrics for this show in mind that Summer at Tamiment. And they used to say, when and if it came off, I was the guy to be Grieg. But I never took it too seriously."

In the meantime, Larry continued at the Copa until a talent scout for Warners dropped in one night and bid him for a screen test.

"I'd never seen California,' he chuckles, "and it seemed like a good chance to get there. I took the test and after the usual postponements, they offered me a six-month contract while they looked around for a spot to use me. No dice for me on that! I'd have gone crazy. But I was lucky again. Edwin Lester hired me for the lead in 'Sally.' He was prepping this show, too, at the time and this was what I wanted. But they'd already engaged Walter Castle for the part, too, so it was 'Sally' or nothing.'

Apparently, however, Messrs. Wright and Forrester didn't forget the Tamiment talks, because when Castle decided to withdraw from "Norway," Larry was immediately tapped to step into the Grieg shoes at the end of the second week.

"So you see." laughs Larry, "there's nothing to get swell-headed about. I'm just lucky. I knew the right people. They plugged for me-and 'Norway's' a big hit. That's all."

Maybe it is luck. But it's pretty certain that if Larry hadn't had something on the ball: (1) Estelle Liebling wouldn't have given him any time; (2) Wright and Forrester would have forgotten all about him after Tamiment; (3) the talent scout at the Copa would have passed him up, and (4) Edwin Lester wouldn't have switched him from a revival to head the cast of a potential new hit. Anyway, it's a nice modest way of looking at it.

Hampton didn't cure her. She'd act on "Fancy Free" and called it "On Noel Coward Play the Town." The rest is theater At Sayville Playhouse Theater Producers, Anc., announces the opening of 'its first Summer Playhouse this Tuesday evening. The initial production, scheduled for one week, will be BROOKLYN EAGLE, SUN., JULY 22, 1945 . 21

Beethoven and the Ballet Featured at Stadium Concerts

Beethoven and the ballet will vie for audiences during the sixth week f stadium concerts. Record crowds are expected for performances of the Beethoven Ninth Sympony and the dance program by Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin. Under the direction of Fabien Sevitzky, the music of Beethoven may be heard at the stadium three evenings this week. The Markova-Dolin evening ext Saturday, presenting the amous dancers with a company of our other soloists is one of the biggest nights-of the stadium season. Maurice Abravanel will conduct for his concert.

Tomorrow, Fabien Sevitzky, disinguished conductor of the Indianpolis Symphony Orchestra, will ofer familiar classics for his seventh tadium concert in the series of ten concerts under his leadership. In addition to the Beethoven Third Concerto with Ania Dorfmann at he piano, Mr. Sevitzky has programmed the Hadley Overture, "In Bohemia"; Brahms' Symphony No. in F major and the popular Polka and Fugue from Weinberger's opera, "Schwanda, the Bagpiper."

Tuesday will see an all-Russian program including two major symhonies and an overture: Kabalevky's Overture to "Colas Breugnon"; with Tchaikovsky's "Pathetique"

Merriman, contralto; Donald Dame, phony Orchestra. enor, and Edwin Fowler, baritone, with Hugh Ross as choral conductor

for the Schola Cantorum. The proprograms also include a performance of John' Alden Carpenter's "Song of Faith", with August J. Seiloff as narrator. This is not only a first time at the stadium but the first time this modern molding of chorus and orchestra has been heard in New York. Friday's concert features Fablen

Sevitzky conducting the Sibelius Symphony No. 2, in D major; the Praeludium and Allegro of Kreisler-Sevitzky; the Debussy Nocturnes, and Les Preludes'of Liszt.

Saturday Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin will present a dance program of exceptional caliber and appeal. Markov., and Dolin will themselves interpret the music of Chopin, Mendelssohn, Mozart and Tchaikovsky in ballet presentation, with dance artists Anne Simpson, Albla Kavan, Bettina Rosay and onn Kriza rounding out the com

BIRUTA RAMOSKA, who , will be soprano soloist for the performance of Beethoven's Ninth of "Chorol" Symphony at the Lewisohn Stadium Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

Symphony, No. 6, in, B minor and the Shostakovich Fifth Symphony, this madern composition, through The Beethoven Ninth or Choral which Milhaud describes for the Symphony, will be presented Wed- American and Allied armies the nesday and Thursday, with Mr. French provinces in which they Sevitzky in the podium; the Philhar- fought for world freedom. For both monic-Symphony Orchestra, t h e the orchestral and dance numbers Schola Cantorum of New York and of the Saturday program, the noted four young vocal artists, including conductor Maurice Abravanel will Biruta Ramoska, soprano; Nan conduct the Philharmonic Sym-

'OUTWARD BOUND' AT HOLYOKE Sutton Vane's popular drama, Cliveden-Banks.. The cast will also "Outward Bound," will be the Val- include Martha Jones, Terry Little, "Outward Bound," will be the Val- include Martha Jones, Terry Little, ley Players' vehicle for this week Hugh Franklin, Ronald Telfer, Robat the Mountain Park Casino, Hol- ert Emhardt and Edward A. Wright, yoke, Mass. Jean Guild will have who is spending part of his sab-

The Veteran Maurice Schwartz season at Long Island's Sayville

PERENNIAL "MAMA"-Mady Christians (left) and

Frances Heflin, who does the remembering in "I Remember

Mama," the John Van Druten play at the Music Box.

Comden and Green Team Got

On the Town' the Hard Way

of Betty Comden and Adolph a bright but bad student.

every bit of the way for it.

or starve-and almost did.

Meanwhile, Bronx-born Adolph, history.

No fairy godmothers with magic also 26, was no boy wonder. He lived

wands lurk behind the success story in movies and at concerts. He was

Green, authors and performers of Finally, Brooklyn and Bronx met.

'On the Town," who found recog- Then they met three other persons.

nition the hard way, and worked also looking for jobs on the stage.

They met back in 1938 on the un- in '38 the "Revuers" were born at

employment beat. Betty was doing the Village Vanguard. Little by little

the "Subway Circuit" (Newark to columnists and public alike passed

Brooklyn, walk-ons six nights and the word around, and the quintet

hree matinees for \$5 per week) and moved uptown and upstairs to the

Adolph was a "camp follower" Rainbow Roof, Next, the Music Hall.

Bronx hillbilly waiting tables at Then Musicraft recorded their act.

Summer spots while walting for a They went back to the basement

break-just any kind of break, mis- though after a radio contract fell

Betty, tall, dark and sultry of next. They toured the night clubs

voice, was born in Brooklyn 26 and ended up in Hollywood-on a

for the stage because she, felt her Bitter? A little. So for the next

looks wouldn't warrant it, she time, the all-for-one policy was

turned her talents to study at Ethi-abandoned. Half the Revuers stayed

al Culture School and Erasmus West, and Betty and Adolph came,

Hall High. Reading an N. Y. U. bro- home. En route they met friends

chure on dramatics, her love for the Paul. Feigay and Oliver Smith,

theater flared again and she young producers of the ballet "Fan-

promptly enrolled for the courses cy Free," with music by Leonard

I nothing elee, she'd teach speech. Bernstein, Five agam-they couldn't

Four years later she had her B.S. miss. They didn't. Betty Comden

degree and major in dramatics. A and Adolph Green sat down as one

season of Summer stock in East and wrote a book and lyrics based

years ago. Curbing an early desire cutting-room floor.

"Blithe Spirit," starring Dennis Maurice Schwartz, actor, direc-Jolson Theater he he King and featur tor, producer, who begins his 26th Brothers Ashkenazi." Another tour Valerie Cossart and Nydia West-Mason will play Prior and Jackson son University with the Valley season of the Yiddish Art Theater followed, embracing South America, man. Performances will be given

The five pooled resources and late

through. The World's Fair saw them

the part of Mrs. Midget, Gaylord batical leave of absence from Deni-Perkins will have the role of Mrs. Players.



MYSTERY IN FLATBUSH-Beverly Roberts and Michael Wholen in a tense moment from "Ten Little Indians," Agotha Christie mystery drama which returns to the Flatbush Theater Tuesday for a second engagement.



in October, has trouped all over the Europe, Palestine, Poland, Romania Tuesday through Sunday night with world, playing every conceivable and Lithuania. Last season he put matinees Saturday and Sunday. character, from a beggar to a king, on "The Family Carnovsky" at the Originator of the project is Eufrom a youth to an octogenarian, Adelphi for a season, and more Te- gene Lerner, youthful playwright, cently he has put on "Three Gene- who has worked on Broadway as even from a man to a woman. Born in Russia, Mr. Schwartz did rations." He has made three films, stage manager for "Manhattan not come from a theatrical family. "Tevya," "Uncle Moses" and "The Nocturne" and "Same Time Next He came to the United States at the Mission of Moscow" (the latter in Week." Associated with Mr. Lerner English). on the board of directors are Will age of 11. "It was my theater-loving uncle The Yiddish Art Theater in the Gould, chairman; Geoff Lumb and

who made me theater conscious when last 25 years presented more than Shirland Quin. who made me theater conscious when has as years presented more than Shirland Quin. he took me to see Jewish plays," he 125 new plays—plays from Shake-sald. "I watched from my balcony seat great actors like Jacob Adler, Schwartz has now leased the Yid-will double from his present chore David Kessler and Tomashefsky. 26th Season there in October He And late at night I always found 26th season there in October. He at Sayville,

And late at night I always found has engaged Joseph Rumshinsky. Although the first three weeks of dean of Yiddish composers, for the this Summer's season will be de-One night in the theater while season, and Mr. Rumshinsky will voted to presenting established obviously imitating an actor from write the music for five new plays: plays, the aim of Theater Producers, obylously imitating an actor from his balcony seat, a stranger tapped him on the shoulder: "Why don't you join our club—the Delancey w Sholam Alight States," by J. L. Peretz; Inc., is to make the Sayville house a tryout center for new works, principally those which have been street Dramatic Club? We need by Sholem Aleichem; Shakespeare's held on option for a time by Broad-talented hows" he said "King Lear" and "The Bal-shem," way producers and then rejected for talented boys," he said. way producers and then rejected for That began it. Maurice Schwartz by David Pinsky, reasons in no way connected with

joined the club, and when the club gave its first showing at a Brooklyn Aquadium Will Show

rehearsal hall, a manager from Bal-timore say him and engaged him Buster Crabbe Troupe The Aquadium at the Worlds Fate Led From Five-and-Ten mmediately.

In Baltimore Ellis F. Glickman, Fair site in Flushing Meadows ana producer from Chicago, saw young nounces that Buster Crabbe and his Right to 'Ten Little Indians' years in Chicago were followed by in the Water Follies of 1945 show an equal period in Philadelphia as next weekend.

Buster Crabbe is a former Olym- did Michael Whalen find himself landed him in a 5-and-10-cent actor-director. It was David Kessler who brought pic swimmer, holder of 36 national back on Broadway in the leading them. Schwartz to New York in 1911 titles and has appeared in many to his Second Avenue Theater. In pictures. to his Second Avenue Theater. In pictures. Agatha Christie mystery drama, through the death of his father, he 1918 Mr. Schwartz founded the Yid-

dish Art Theater at the Irving Place Theater. Among his players Harris Memorial

circuit after a year's run in Man- York to seek employment in the then were Munl Weisenfriend (Paul) A memorial service for Sam H. hattan, will pay a second visit to theater. Eva LeGallienne was the Muni), who was with him seven Harris, noted Broadway producer, the Flatbush Theater, starting Tues- obliging patron and for a year he years; Stella Adler, Joseph Buloff who died July 2, 1941, will be held day. Mr. Whalen will continue in played with her Civic Repertory and many other well known actors at 6 p.m. this Wednesday at the his original role of Philip Lombard, company.

their merit.

In 1930, he left for a South Ameri- cal Guild, 1564 Broadway, Manhat- his signature to a new film contract acted, sang and played the plano. can tour of one year. The following tan. George Jessel will deliver a when a wire from Lee Shubert A year later he was in Hollywood, year he produced "Yoshe Kalbe," eulogy and Rabbi Abraham Burstein caused him to hold off sufficiently where he acted in stock. Finally long to peruse a script of "Ten he appeared in a new play called which ran for two years. At the will officiate.

Little Indians." Anxious to make "Common Flesh." He was seen by his return to Broadway after such a a Broadway manager who wanted long interval, the screen offer was the play for Broadway, but was urned down. signed by a scout for the movies. As a boy in his home town of He has made 29 pictures, among Wilkes-Barre, Michael had early them "The Country Doctor," "Ellery otions of becoming a planist, but Queen" and "Tahiti Honey."

Only after an absence of 12 years his parents had other plans that

which swung over to the subway lost little time in hurrying to New

Free Band Concerts Mayor LaGuardia, the Park Department and Local 802, American Federation of Musicians, announce



certs this week. These concerts are "Harvey," Brock Pemberton's pro- included in an effort to bring "live fuction of Mary Chase's comedy hit music to the public." This is the at the Forty-Eighth Street Theater, eighth consecutive year during has been the recipient of many ac- which these concerts have been colades. Few plays have received as given.

many "firsts" as has this popular There will be one at Betsy Head comedy with the big white rabbit Park, Dumont and Hopkinson Aves. Tuesday at 8:15 p.m. in the title role.

In addition to the Pulltzer Prize. which Mary Chase won for the Recital Planned Todays best original play," other important Virginia Holt, soprano, and awards have been the Variety poll Martha Milburn, mezzo-soprano of the New York drama critics in will be heard in a joint recital toda which Frank Fay and Josephine at 1:30 p.m. in the sculpture court o Hull, respectively, won the critics the Brooklyn Museum, David Stivote for the "best actor on Broad- mer will be at the piano for bet way this season" and the "best sup- artists. porting actress on Broadway this

Lewischn Stadium fam Ave., 136th to 138th Sta.

season." Last week the Donaldson STADIUM CONCERTS award made by Billboard, the theatrical weekly, on the basis of a Amsterdan poll of 3,000 theater and newspaper PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY people, went to Frank Fay for the

pany of soloists. Of special interest this evening is the "Pas de Quatre" known to the present generation of dance lovers only from A. E. Chalon's famous lithograph of the four 12, 1845.

"BLITHE SPIRIT"-Dennis

King takes over the Charles

Condomine role in the Noel-

Coward play opening at the

Sayville Summer Playhouse

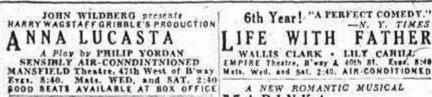
Tuesday night.

great nineteenth-century dancers, Taglioni, Cerito, Grisi and Grahn. It was originally arranged to the music of Cesare Pugni by Jules Perrot and first performed at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, in the presence of Queen Victoria on July The Saturday program also holds a musical highlight in the perform-



HARRY CAREY, in "China's Little Devils," at the Strand, with "A Sporting Chance."





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FABRAY MICRACKEN BROOKS WILSON REEVES MABEL MATT RIGHARD SMITH TALIAFERRO BRIGGS HUEY AIR-CONDITIONED EN 130-MIN. DRUTHORSD EN 130-MIN. DRUTHORSD EN 130-MIN. DRUTHORSD THE THEATRE GUILD DES NUSICAL HIT CAROUSEL MIL Wed. and Sil 230 THE THEATRE GUILD DES NUSICAL HIT CAROUSEL MILL WED. SALES DES NUSICAL HIT MUSIC BY RICHARD ROOGERS BOOK & Lyrice by OSGAR HAMMERSTEIN 22 Directed by ROUBEN MAMDULIAN DIRECTED BULLOFF WYCKOFF WESTON AIR-CONDITIONED THE THEATRE GUILD presents A New A

NEW YORK'S OWN MUSICAL HITJ OLIVER SMITH and PAUL FEIGAY Present BOND OSATO - NANCY WALKER IN ON THE TOWN DARK OF THE MOON A Dramatic Lettod by Howard Richardson a william BERNEY Errs. 8:40, Mats, WED, and SAT, at 2:10 (6TH ST, THEA, W. of B'way, Alr-Cond, Weile Status July 30 SEATS NOW

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