

NICK LUCAS SINGS WAY TO GLORY

Five Bracks and Tireless Mr. Benny Heed Call of Orpheum Enthusiasts

(Reprinted from Monday's late edition)

BY PHILIP K. SCHEUER

They style themselves risley and trampoline performers—and while the average vaudeville-goer wouldn't know a risley or a trampoline if it walked up and slapped him in the face, that would be no real excuse for staying away from the Five Bracks' act at the Orpheum Theater this week. It is first on the bill and one of the best; and it is one of those ultrarapid affairs during the electrifying course of which a quintet of young gentlemen are catapulted through the air to a fare-thee-well. Such astonishing powers of locomotion do they develop, indeed, that one's only opportunity to ascertain that they are men and not high-tension springs in the general shape and garb of men comes when, at the close, they bounce ingratiatingly before the footlights to take their bows.

The balance of the program boasts two distinguished artists in the persons of Nick Lucas and Jack Benny. Mr. Lucas, of whom more anon, is that crooning troubadour who lulls you into gentle melancholy when you launch the magic needle of your phonograph down the ways; Mr. Benny is that elegant humorist who, while other variety folks tarry their one week or, more rarely, two weeks at the theater, lingers benignly on and watches the rest of the whirl go by, viewing with a compassionate and urbane eye the lengthening of winter into spring and then into summer, commenting gravely, as the spirit moves him, on the foibles of our modern civilization, and getting paid for it the while. Somewhere in the sweetly simple story of this man's success, it seems to me, there is a lesson for all of us—but what it is I haven't the faintest idea.

At the risk of drawing the furious fire of Mr. Lucas's host of admirers, I am moved to remark that he would be better off without his beloved guitar. This twangy, metallic instrument sounds all right when it is lost in the crowd of other instruments that occasionally keep it company, but as an obbligato to the voice of a serenader who has few peers among persuasive balladists, its dissonant flatness can only act as an irritant. Mr. Lucas is not entirely happy in his choice of numbers this week: "I'll Never Ask for More" stands alone in achieving a signal notability. Others are "I'll Get By," "The Song I Love," "How About Me?" "A Cup of Coffee" and the Neapolitan street song, "Marie."

Straight from the burlesque circuits (or, if he isn't, he should be) comes Sidney Marion, a ribald comic with an obvious "line" that never fails to please a vaudeville audience. The dance is taken care of by Don Lee and Mlle. Louise, the usual skit by Casey and Warren in "A Gem Jam," and the singing impersonation by Olive Olsen in "Feminine Caricatures." Olsen and Johnson close.

TENSE DRAMA LAID IN DARKEST RUSSIA

"Darkest Russia" has its inning this week at the Lincoln Theater, where the colored Lafayette Players are appearing in "The Yellow Ticket." The drama, which held New York spellbound for two seasons, has lost little of its original intriguing charm for audiences, as evidenced by the opening performance last night.

"The Yellow Ticket" furnishes forceful characterizations for practically every member of the company, and principally for Evelyn Preer and Edward Thompson.

Miss Preer is seen as Marya Varenka, a Jewish girl who outwits the Russian police after she has been forced to accept a "yellow ticket" passport as the only means of leaving the Jewish settlement to reach her dying father. The "yellow ticket" is the permit issued to outcasts—prostitutes—giving them the freedom of the large cities.

Thompson is seen as Julian Rolfe, an American journalist, who assists Marya in her fight against the injustice meted out to her by the Russian government. Other prominent parts are essayed by Lawrence Criner as the villainous baron, Charles Olden as Count Rostov, Cleo Desmond, Bebe Townsend, Sidney Kirkpatrick, Malcolm Patton and Laura Bowman.

"The Yellow Ticket" will be witnessed tonight by about 800 members of the women's Breakfast Club.

CHARACTER ACTOR IN ODD CHANCE MEETING

Human-interest touches are constantly unfolded in real life in Hollywood as well as in reel life. An example is the tale concerning Lucien Littlefield, character actor now appearing as the leading male in the cast making "The Girl in the Glass Cage," a First National all-talking picture, and Gustav Portos, Hungarian actor.

Approximately thirteen years ago Portos, then an officer in King Ferdinand's forces on the Pave, was leading his men against the determined soldiers of King Emanuel. Attached to the latter organization was a unit of Uncle Sam's Army Ambulance Corps in which was listed one Lucien Littlefield, sergeant's rank.