

STAGE AND SCREEN

News And Comments

(By Earl Connolly)

THE recent death of Mr. Douglas Ashleigh leaves a void in Limerick cinema circles that will be hard to fill. He was one of the best informed managers in the business, and a very popular personality.

Douglas Ashleigh has passed to his eternal reward but his name will be long associated with the cinema business in Limerick. His deep knowledge of the film industry was responsible for his astute booking policy which in the late 30's made the Lyric Cinema one of the entertainment centres of the south.

Films such as "San Francisco," "A Tale of Two Cities," "Captains Courageous" and "Mutiny On The Bounty" were among the classics which he brought to Limerick during his term of office at the Lyric. Later, as manager of the Carlton, his policy brought a boom period to that cinema and a dazzling list of successes found their way to the well-known Shannon Street house.

He evinced a great interest in the film industry and what he did not know about it could be written on the back of a stamp. A brilliant conversationalist and a good friend were among his many excellent traits of character and I personally feel saddened at the loss of one who was part and parcel of the local cinema scene.

May he rest in peace.

Provincial Premiere

It is amazing the number of times you read that such and such a film is an "Irish Premiere," but an announcement last week that Drogheda had the showing of "Brigadoon" before Dublin was the most sweeping of all. It was

YVONNE FURNEAUX



stated that it was the first time that a premiere was held in an Irish provincial centre.

Well, let me take the writer to task and say that Limerick had a European Premiere some years ago of "The Phantom Of The Opera." That film was shown in the Lyric Cinema prior to being shown in any other cinema in Europe.

If that is not a record then I do not know what is.

And I could name over a dozen films which had premieres here before being shown in Dublin.



Noel Coad In Limerick

Smiling and happy-go-lucky Noel Coad paid a brief visit to Limerick last week to meet the lady vocalists of the local dance orchestras. As secretary of the vocal section of the Irish Federation of Musicians, he was most anxious to meet the young ladies who take the stage and sing the top twenty to the dancing patrons.

Noel tells me that he has a 45-member choir in Dublin composed of the singers in all the metropolitan bands, and hopes to give a public recital in the near future. The programme will range from popular music to such pieces as "The Glass Mountain."

He hopes to set a higher standard of presentation among the city vocalists, and in this respect has enlisted their complete co-operation.

During his stay in Limerick he was the guest of local branch secretary, Con Phelan.



"Shakespeare Without Tears"

On a visit to Killarney recently I met my old friend Dennis Franks, who spends the winter and spring period giving his famous "Shakespeare Without Tears" lectures in schools, colleges and convents.

Born in Austrilinka, Poland, he speaks perfect English, and is in constant demand to give his lectures. At present, he is with the Dublin Repertory Company, who are playing in the Town

SPOTLIGHT ON DIANE CILENTO



Diane Cilento . . . the screen's newest female star . . . who registers forcibly as the only girl amid thirty men on board a ship sailing its "Passage Home." Anthony Steel and Peter Finch are her co-stars. The film opens at the Savoy on Thursday and will be supported by "Fire One" with Don Ameche.

sub-titled it, "The Brides of Garryowen," is to be presented next week in Limerick. Many years have passed since this old timer was performed locally, and the College Players have decided to essay forth in pastures new and let the younger patrons see what older patrons are so fond of recalling to mind. Boucicault though often labelled "ham" and "melodramatic," was, indeed, and is recognised to-day as a master craftsman in the theatre.

The old-fashioned asides, as in "The Colleen Bawn," have long since been dropped and the detailed explanations of what each character is thinking (made necessary by the totally unrestricted imagination of the author) may now be regarded as quaint, outmoded, and hardly credible to our modern ears, but they have their day, in the old Theatre Royal, the "Gaff" and St Michael's Hall.

Some new touches in ballad have been given to the play by the producer, Mr. Kevin Dinneer. The lyrics of Michael Hogan, Baron of Thomond, have been wedded to some old Irish airs and it is revealed that an abridged version of Hogan's famous epic, "Druid Ken Thady," is included.

It is certainly an ambitious opening to the season, being so different from the straight drama and Playhouse patrons will, no doubt, look forward to this gal opening on Sunday night next.



Death Of Bert Duval

News has just reached me from Coventry, England, that veteran actor and scenic artist, seventy-two-year-old Bert Duval, died yesterday.