

# THE THEATERS

By HOWARD BARNES

"LOST IN THE STARS," a musical play based on Alan Paton's novel "Cry, the Beloved Country" with words by Maxwell Anderson, music by Kurt Weill, settings by George Jenkins, costumes by Anna Hill Johnstone, staged by Rouben Mamoulian and presented by the Playwrights' Company at the Music Box Theater with the following cast:

Leader .....	Frank Roane
Answerer .....	Joseph James
Mita .....	Elayne Richards
Grace Kumalo .....	Gertrude Jeannette
Stephen Kumalo .....	Todd Duncan
The Young Man .....	Lavern French
The Young Woman .....	Mabel Hart
James Jarvis .....	Leslie Banks
Edward Jarvis .....	Judson Rees
Arthur Jarvis .....	John Morley
John Kumalo .....	Warren Coleman
Paulus .....	Charles McRae
William .....	Roy Allen
Jared .....	William C. Smith
Alex .....	Herbert Coleman
Foreman .....	Jerome Shaw
Mrs. Mkize .....	Georgette Harvey
Hiabeni .....	William Marshall
Eland .....	Charles Grunwell
Linda .....	Shella Guyse
Johannes Pafuri .....	Van Prince
Matthew Kumalo .....	William Greaves
Abalom Kumalo .....	Julian Mayfield
Rose .....	Gloria Smith
Irina .....	Inez Matthews
Policeman .....	Robert Byrn
White Woman .....	Biruta Ramoska
White Man .....	Mark Kramer
The Guard .....	Jerome Shaw
Burlon .....	John W. Stanley
The Judge .....	Guy Spauli
Villager .....	Robert McFerrin

## All-Star Triumph

A SOARING musical tragedy has opened at the Music Box. "Lost in the Stars" has excitement, flavor, heart and a stern authority. Maxwell Anderson has adapted Alan Paton's fine novel, "Cry, the Beloved Country" with immense skill and fidelity. Kurt Weill has composed a beautifully integrated score, which makes dynamic use of both solo and ensemble numbers, while Rouben Mamoulian has staged the offering superbly. Since Todd Duncan, Leslie Banks and their colleagues give every inflection to a work of true dimensions, there is virtually nothing wanting in "Lost in the Stars." It is a harrowing theatrical experience, but one of deep satisfaction.

Anderson faced a stupendous job in translating a tale of Negroes and whites in South Africa to terms of a libretto and lyrics. He has handled it magnificently. Interlacing fragments of straight melodrama and moving drama with songs which continually add to the sense and momentum of the action, he has captured the full essence of the original in striking stage patterns. The singing ensemble acts as a sort of Greek chorus,

while individual scenes are spotted rapidly in George Jenkins flexible and imaginative settings. The chief point is that the tragedy of the Negro minister, who discovers that his son has killed the greatest white benefactor of his race, is never lost sight of in the complexities of the mounting. The show moves to its climax inexorably and with a tremendous crescendo.

Duncan was the perfect choice for Stephen Kumalo, the Zulu man of God who typifies the agony of his race. He sings such numbers as "Thousands of Miles," "The Little Grey House," or "Lost in the Stars" with rich effect, but he is equally splendid in the dramatic passages which lead him from his small village in Ndotsheni to Johannesburg only to find his simple faith shaken to its foundations. His scenes with Banks, who plays James Jarvis, the father of the slain friend of all men with compelling intensity, are electric and terribly touching in the ending. He is equally fine in those with Inez Matthews, the common law wife of his doomed son and with the boy himself, portrayed admirably by Julian Mayfield.

Weill's music is not overly distinguished, but it has some lovely melodies and stirring dirges which are perfectly supplementary to the book. When the chorus, led by Frank Roane, intones "Train to Johannesburg," "Fear" or "Cry the Beloved Country" an engrossing theatrical symphony is performed at the Music Box. Miss Matthews has several fine songs, notably "Stay Well"; little Herbert Coleman is enchanting in "The Mole" and there is a hot number in a Shantytown dive called "Who'll Buy," which gives variety to the musical texture.

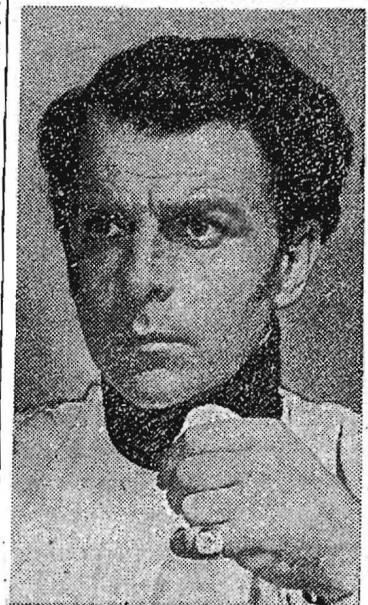
The supporting players are all so good that it is difficult to give credit to more than a few. Warren Coleman is savagely right as the minister's venal brother who runs a tobacco shop in Johannesburg, William Greaves is fine as a petty thief who involves Ab-

Todd Duncan



In "Lost in the Stars"

Emlyn Williams



In "Montserrat"

salom Kumalo in a killing and Shella Guyse is extraordinarily effective as a Negro trollop. That they all participate in "Lost in the Stars" with no confusion is, of course, largely due to Mamoulian's inspired staging. There is rhythm, surging movement and an immaculate pace in this Playwrights' Company production. It does great honor to the season.