

The New Play

By WARD MOREHOUSE.



Beautiful and Enthralling.

Maxwell Anderson and Kurt Weill, aided by the brilliant direction of Rouben Mamoulian, have given the New York stage a beautiful and frequently enthralling musical tragedy in "Lost in the Stars," put on last night at the Music Box. The Playwrights' Company distinguishes itself with its first production of the season.



Stobbe.
WARD MOREHOUSE

"Lost in the Stars" captures a great deal of the poignance of Alan Paton's fine novel, "Cry, the Beloved Country," upon which it is based. It also brings to you the feeling of the immensity of South Africa, that fabulous land of gold reefs and diamond mines, the bush and the veld and modern cities, of great economic problems and the ever-present possibilities of strife between its millions of blacks and its handful of whites. I was in the Union of South Africa last December. "Lost in the Stars" brought me right back to it last night.

Anderson and Weill, with Mamoulian contrib-

uting magical supervision and George Jenkins supplying mobile and imaginative scenery, have devised a show that moves along swiftly. Jenkins's skeletonized settings are particularly effective with the hills of Ixopo and the skyscrapers of Johannesburg in the background. Anderson has written the play's numerous scenes tautly; Weill's score is impressive, with such numbers as "Train to Johannesburg," "The Little Grey House" and "Thousands of Miles" being outstanding.

The choral work is superb throughout and Mamoulian's stage patterns, his groupings and ensemble effects, bring to mind his notable "Porgy" and his "Porgy and Bess."

"Lost in the Stars" recites its story of the simple Zulu clergyman who goes from his home in the hills to bewildering Johannesburg in the Transvaal, that mighty metropolis of gold-mine dumps and nearly a million people, in quest of his wayward son. The boy participates in a robbery, he kills a white man, the great benefactor of the blacks in the Union. He is tried for murder, confesses his guilt and is sentenced to be hanged. His anguished father and the grieving father of the man he slew, find, in their mutual desolation, friendship, a new faith, and a cause for living.

The Anderson-Weill work is a play of elemental emotions and it presents fine performances from Todd Duncan and Leslie Banks, coming all the way from Australia and London, respectively, to create their roles. Duncan has dignity, warmth and a positive radiance in his playing as Stephen Kumalo, a good man, and he reaches his greatest eloquence when he is seeking to give up his little church. Banks brings restraint and sensitivity to his characterization of the forgiving and wretched Jarvis, who finds compassion in his great sorrow.

Julian Mayfield is a convincing Absalom Kumalo. Warren Coleman has a lot of gusto as the parson's realistic brother. Jerome Shaw is excellent; so are George-ette Harvey, Sheila Guyse and Inez Matthews. The costumes of Anna Hill Johnstone are just right.

"Lost in the Stars" is a colorful and soaring musical show. Let's be grateful for it.

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Leslie Banks



A grieving father, who finds compassion.

'LOST IN THE STARS'

A musical tragedy, with book by Maxwell Anderson, music by Kurt Weill; based on Alan Paton's novel, "Cry, the Beloved Country"; staged by Rouben Mamoulian; settings by George Jenkins; musical conductor, Maurice Levine; costumes by Anna Hill Johnstone; presented by the Playwrights' Company at the Music Box Theater Sunday evening, October 30, 1949. The cast:

Leader	Frank Roane
Answerer	Joseph James
Nita	Elayne Richards
Grace Kumalo	Gertudo Jeannetta
Stephen Kumalo	Todd Duncan
The Young Man	Lavera 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 Arlen
Jared	William C. Smith
Alex	Herbert Coleman
Foreman	Jerome Shaw
Mrs. Mkize	Georgette Harvey
Hlabeni	William Marshall
Eland	Charles Grunwell
Linda	Sheila Guyse
Johannes Pafuri	Van Prince
Mkthwe Kumalo	William Greaves
Absalom Kumalo	Julian Mayfield
Rose	Gloria Smith
Irina	Inez Matthews
Policeman	Robert Byrn
White Woman	Blruta Ramoska
White Man	Mark Kramer
The Guard	Jerome Shaw
Burton	John W. Stanley
The Judge	Guy Spaul
Villager	Robert McFerrin