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Mask & Wig!

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Mask and Wig Carries On

With only three veterans on the stage, Wiggers invade the campus playing at Irvine Auditorium to capacity audiences. "Red Points and Blue," the fifty-sixth annual production, is tribute to real Pennsylvania spirit.

By THOMAS HART, '16 C., '29 L., President of the Mask and Wig Club

THERE were those who, last September, merely said, "It can't be done," referring, of course, to the fact that changed conditions on the campus, with Army and Navy interest on the big job that is theirs, would prevent the possibility of securing enough men who had enough time to give to Mask and Wig's annual production. An early conference with the University authorities and with Captain Lemuel M. Stevens, U. S. N. (retired), in charge of the V-12 program, however, soon gave courage to the Mask and Wig administration, and the plans which resulted in keeping our flag flying through a trying year were carefully drawn. The result—it was done—and "Red Points and Blue" with a musical score sired by the redoubtable Lieutenant Commander Clay A. Boland, '26 D., has been added to the long list of previous Wigger successes, the fifty-sixth annual production.

With only three "veterans" on stage, "Micky" McWilliams, Lew Morris of the V-12 group, and Edmund Rogers, Jr., the Mask and Wig Club for the first time in its long career invaded the campus, playing at Irvine Auditorium for three evening performances and

one matinee, February 10, 11 and 12, to capacity audiences culminating in an enthusiastic Saturday evening closing with Mask and Wig spirit in the ascendancy.

Rehearsals had presented many difficulties since the boys had to knock off every rehearsal night promptly at 10.00 P. M. in accordance with the Club's agreement with their commanding officers; illness played its part and many men were new at their jobs. The day for dress rehearsal seemed to arrive with great suddenness and that most able chairman of this year's Committee on Production, J. Ferguson Mohr, '17 W., was heard to remark as the boys departed for their "barracks" that night, "We could certainly use another week to advantage if this show is going to be what it should be." His predilections were put asunder, however, the next evening when "Red Points and Blue" appeared for the first time before any audience and it is safe to say that at no time in the history of the Club has a production ever "clicked" as well as did the current show. It would seem that these young gentlemen, many of whom had never even heard of Mask and Wig

before arriving on the campus, had themselves become veterans overnight and if in their brief passage through the highways and byways of Pennsylvania they have, through their association with the Wiggers, caught a real glimpse of the spirit and traditions of the University, the efforts of this year will indeed not have been in vain.

While perhaps not as elaborate as in days gone by, the production, by all accounts, did not suffer the reputation of the Club to fall. On the contrary the comments were highly favorable and none more so than those espoused by the press of Philadelphia whose dramatic critics united in a pean of praise, bringing joy to the hearts of all. Boland's score was outstanding and after discussing the matter with him we are inclined to the belief that he himself considers it his best of all time. In Philadelphia, on leave for the entire week of the show, Commander Boland was indispensable along with that elder statesman of the Mask and Wig, Edmund H. Rogers, '09 W., '12 L., in welding the show together. "As You Were," "How Do You Like Romance," "The Big Three Polka," "When You Return," and "Talkin' to Your Picture" will long remain in the memories of those who heard them; Dr. Boland's uncanny ability to produce a popular number almost overnight and according to order will always be a puzzle to his intimates.

And, to be sure, it was Ned Rogers who held things together during the many days when gloom pervaded the Wiggish atmosphere. His training of the cast in "Clem Ain't Here Now," a skit from the versatile pen of Darrell H. Smith, Sr., '11 C., now of Washington, D. C., evoked great applause. As the years go by it becomes increasingly clear that the mantle of Clayton Fotterall McMichael, the "father" of Mask and Wig, has quite definitely fallen on the broad shoulders of Ned Rogers and it can be clearly stated that today no one in the club is held in greater affection by boys and men than this enthusiastic gentleman who is the embodiment of the spirit of the Wiggers and of Pennsylvania itself.

There were numerous skits from the pens of Smith, Robert F. (Bo) Brown, '28 C.; Lieutenant John C. Parry, U. S. N., '41 C., and Robert J. Peter-



COMMITTEE ON PRODUCTION

Checking up on last minute details (left to right): Edmund Rogers, Jr., Richard M. Keator, Robert F. Brown, J. Ferguson Mohr, chairman, Louis D. Day, Jr., Lt. Comdr. Clay A. Boland, Thomas Hart, Edmund H. Rogers.

son, '45, who took part in the cast. Bo Brown also assisted most ably with the coaching of the cast.

Certainly no annual production would come up to acceptable standards without the effervescence of the famous dancing chorus. Here again the Wiggers were fortunate, for Pete Conlow, beloved by his cohorts and a comparative newcomer to Mask and Wig, entered into his second year with the Club as dancing coach with a vim and vigor that produced, for example, a Russian dance, "The Big Three Polka," that brought down the house. The phrase "from Morgan to Conlow" now has a real meaning and Pete, we sincerely hope, will be a fixture from now on.

Backstage was Louis deV. Day, Jr., '41 F.A., erudite in stage art and occupying the high office of stage director, ably assisted by Edmund Rogers, Jr.

In the orchestra pit was the familiar face of Joseph F. Follmann, Jr., '30 W., who, in addition to directing the orchestra, coached the Glee, and therein hangs a story for, never before, it can now truly be said, has the Glee in any other Mask and Wig show shown forth as it did this year. In addition to the so-called Mask and Wig Glee, there appeared on the Irvine stage the V-12 chorus, brought there through the bright idea of Chairman Mohr, who, upon learning of its existence within the campus training unit, immediately arranged for its inclusion in the program with happy results. Under the group leadership of William G. Lister, who incidentally made a cracker-jack speech at the Saturday night performance, it was apparent that here was a group of men of near professional talents and it resulted that they, thirty-five in number, proved to be one of the top hits of the show. Joe Follmann can be proud of each and every one of the Glee numbers in "Red Points and Blue," and so, too, we think should happy thoughts arise in the minds of the well-known duo of Mask and Wig fame, S. Bickley Reichner and Moe Jaffe, '23 W., the two men responsible for as clever a set of lyrics as we have hearkened unto in many a day.

Incidentally, we should like to take off our Mask and Wig Club hat to several gentlemen of parts; for example, Henry Sullivan, who was outstanding in the cast; McWilliams, Morris, and Rogers, the veterans in the dancing chorus; Roy W. Levin, whose glee solo in "As You Were" was of the highest caliber, and Tom Collins, with his accordion. But, as usual, it was the entire assemblage of willing, enthusiastic, young gentlemen to whom we owe our



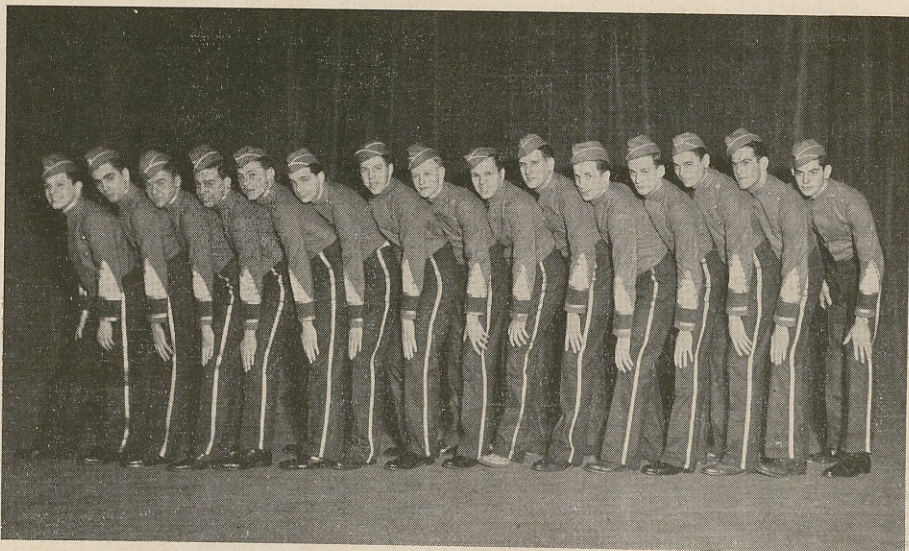
THE DANCING CHORUS

The boys and "girls" strike a pose for "Manāna," the Cuban finale of the first act.



"WHEN YOU RETURN"

The dancing chorus dons colonial costumes and wigs for Clay Boland's rhythmic waltz.



GLEE CHORUS OF "RED POINTS AND BLUE"

Wiggers appear in their costumes for the title song of this year's production.

thanks—never did a group of men work together in better fashion. The names of John H. Caputi, with his wondrous voice, in "How Do You Like Your Romance"; Harold Shaffer in the cast, Elliot Broza with his sparkle, and Eugene Jennings at the piano come to mind and again we should not depart hence from this theme of individual performance without mention of the adagio number by Joseph E. Sands and James R. Stewart. And, we had almost forgotten, the vote for the best looking "girl" went by a large majority to Stanley A. Welsh. Almost all of these boys are members of V-12.

As for plot, there was none—only skits.

And there you have it—a really successful production in spite of all. In the "front of the house" matters need attention and plenty of it, too; if Mask and Wig had no audiences it would be but a short time before there would be no Mask and Wig and here, also, there were large problems to be solved. The budget this year gave much food for thought, and many a long evening was spent upon it by the Committee on Production under the guidance of "Fergie" Mohr himself who, in addition to his job as Committee Chairman, is likewise Treasurer of the Club and Richard M. Keator, '30 C., the Club's efficient Business Manager. As a result of sound financial planning it can now be stated that the season will end "in the black" and no attention need be paid to "Old Man Deficit." The matters of ticket applications and production contracts, while least glamorous of all Mask and Wig details, are no whit less important than planning of the production itself.

It may be of interest to Pennsylvania alumni to know that every effort is being made by the Wiggers to maintain the usual club functions such as Founders' Night, Open House, and a smoker or two for the boys now and then. It is thought of the Board of Governors that, in fact, they are the Trustees of a Pennsylvania tradition that must be perpetuated. This year without the understanding, sympathetic cooperation of Captain Stevens, that perpetuation would have been well nigh impossible; there is no record of any request made by the Club during the last three months that remained ungranted and the Club is most appreciative of all that his V-Twelveers have made possible. The liaison officer between the academic side of the picture and the Navy was none other than the popular professor, Dr. Matthew H. Black, a Mask and Wig fan if there ever was one. In truth Mask and Wig carries on.

A PROFESSOR'S WANDERINGS

By CORNELL M. DOWLIN

A short while back the writer of this column came close to being a minor war casualty. He was passing the front entrance of the Phi Kappa Sigma House at 36th and Locust Streets when a formation of Army enlisted personnel came down the steps on the double-quick and nearly ran into him. A quick sidestep, however, and an accident was averted.

The formation was made up of some thirty-five pretty husky members of the A. S. T. P. They were on their way to mess, not at the Palestra, where some 2600 other members of the armed forces get their rations, but in Sergeant Hall. The mess hall is explained by the fact that they are all WACs. It is not generally known that the young women are a part of the A. S. T. P., but they are, in fact so much a part that before they arrived it was planned to have them eat in the Palestra. At the last moment, however, tactical considerations persuaded the authorities to choose Sergeant Hall, far from the masculine crowd.

Most of the WACs are technical sergeants, and they are here to learn very specific technical jobs. The majority will become experts in "ballistic computations"; others are learning certain laboratory procedures; and all, when they have completed their training which is being carried on for the Army Ordnance Department under the supervision of the Moore School, will do a very important bit to improve the speed, accuracy, and general effectiveness of U. S. artillery fire. The training lasts eight months, with a month at Pennsylvania being followed by a month of practical work at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. While at the University they spend forty hours a week in the classroom, completing in four months what approximates a college major in mathematics and also learning to operate complicated computing machines such as the 60-ton "Calculating Annie," the much publicized mechanical analyzer that can solve the most complex differential equations in as little as two hours. Actually, there are two detachments of WACs, each numbering thirty-five; while one is at the University, the other is at Aberdeen. Those now on the campus are in their last month here, during which they

will absorb the gist of calculus. Naturally both instructors and instructees are pretty well fagged out just now.

Even so, it is reliably reported that the WACs find life in Philadelphia agreeable. According to Lieutenant Mildred Fleming, a graduate of the University of Maryland, who is the commanding officer, they are greatly impressed with their fraternity house, its leather cushions and rich oak paneling and the mounted heads of elk and moose on the walls. A favorite pastime is inserting cigarettes and paper buck teeth into the mouths of the specimens, all of which are promptly removed by Serena Jones, the treasured housekeeper whom they have inherited from the Phi Kaps. Lieutenant Fleming says that Serena really is a treasure. She adds that from time to time a brother drops in to see how things are going. On such visits, she says, little concern is shown for the house but rather for Serena, whom the brothers hope to have back sound in wind and limb and morale when the fraternity resumes its normal life.

Philadelphia seems also to have taken to the WACs. "You may report that their social life is adequately taken care of," Lieutenant Fleming said at the end of a fifteen-minute chat. And that seems an understatement, for twice during the chat the telephone rang, and each time the lieutenant's response was, "She's in school now; you'll have to call after 4.30." It is also reported that a certain doctor with offices nearby is disturbed by the similarity between his phone number and that of the WACs. But his secretary has got used to it. When a male voice on the wire inquires for sergeant so-and-so, she cheerfully replies, "You want the WACs at Baring 6505" (which, by the way, is not the real number).

All of which seems to support this column's conviction that the WAC uniform, if not quite so glamorous as the regulation outfits of the WAVES and Women Marines, has a certain effectiveness. This is especially true in winter, when the well-tailored overcoat is worn. In summer the stiff khaki skirt (or perhaps something underneath) gives the impression that the wearer has been armor-plated for the duration.