

MR-A Play Charming, Intriguing, Challenging

Ford Auditorium
Full for Opening

By Jack Pickering

Detroit got its first look last night at "The Vanishing Island," a frankly revolutionary musical play presented by Moral Re-Armament in the new Henry and Edsel Ford Auditorium.

Whatever the charms of its music, which are considerable, and however adroit the dialogue and the lyrics, there is no particular point in trying to review the show as one would review entertainment.

It is entertaining, and it is intriguing, but what it is, basically, is challenging. That is its whole purpose.

Written by Peter Howard and Cecil Broadhurst, it is wholly dedicated to presenting the ideology of MR-A, which is that the ills of the world are not going to cure themselves; that you can't prevent war by building up hate for the enemy; that if the patterns of the world are going to change, the change must start in the hearts of men, and men must change.

PLOT OF STORY

The plot of the story involves the nations of Eiluph'mei (which sounds like "I Love Me" if you say it fast) and Weiheit'tiu, or "We Hate You."

The nation of Eliuph'mei is clearly a composite of the free nations, and Weiheit'tiu is just as clearly a composite of the communist nations, at the moment. In another age they might represent any nations equally at odds.

There is enough needling to make anybody mad if he chooses to get mad: Busy business men, pompous statesmen, addle-pated politicians, newspapers, women who are good at organizing charities—all get a brisk treatment of being rubbed the wrong way for their self-satisfied efforts to solve world disagreement by "sending a delegation" and telling themselves that Eiluph'mei is never going to change, and that it deserves always to remain as it is.

Weheit'tiu gets its going-over, for its utter belief in its rightness in depending on toughness and hate.

The dictator of that nation, Odioso, kicks the visiting delegation out and announces that he is going to make Eiluph'mei disappear.

ISLAND VANISHES

The island does vanish before your eyes on the stage, a baffling bit of staging, as the bewildered people of Eiluph'mei look on aghast.

Then starts the witch-hunt, as the whole nation searches for somebody on whom to lay the blame.

Presently King Capricorn (who in an earlier scene has voted himself off the throne after the public had twice voted on the matter and come to a dead tie both times) suggests that maybe what the country needs isn't a scapegoat, but an ideology.

Odioso's legions are about to invade and conquer.

Capricorn explains what he means by an ideology: That you can't stop wars by hating people; that you can't make others like you by being selfish; that if you want to change the world, you have to start changing the people in it—that, in short, what is needed is "a new kind of man."

REVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT

That is the revolutionary thought of the play, and of Moral Re-Armament. And just as in any other stage drama, everything comes out all right at the last minute. E-King Capricorn, having persuaded the people that their ideology is strong enough to unite the world in friendship, asks why Eiluph'mei doesn't "open up the gates and let them in."

Precisely how this works out doesn't belong in this review of the play—if, indeed, anyone can call this a review. Anyway, why give away the final scenes?

THE DETROIT TIMES
U.S.A.

20TH DECEMBER 1956

'IT WORKS'

"Communist and non-Communist have one fundamental weakness in common. They are not creating a new type of man. Consequently both lack the one essential for creating a new world. But there is a superior ideology which is giving men new motives, new character. It works!

"It is a new thinking forged by living absolute standards, absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness, love. With this ideology nations will begin to think.

"This is the new statesmanship. For everyone everywhere this is the future. This is normal living."

That is the message of the play, just as it is the message to which MR-A is utterly devoted.

Tonight the play "Freedom," dealing with the turmoil of Africa, will be given in the same auditorium.

Thereafter, for the rest of the month, "The Vanishing Island" and "Freedom" will alternate.

Tickets are available, without charge, at the auditorium's box office. The only stipulation is that, although all seats are reserved, the reservation ends at curtain-time, 8:30, and any seats not taken by then may be taken by anyone.