

"We Want It"

—by the NAPOLEON of the "SHOW GAME"
(Self-professed)

OFTEN I am met with the questions: "Do you think it worth while to attempt to produce a musical comedy every year? Don't you think it foolish, and work that wears out the group long before the show time? Why a musical comedy, at all? What good of it all? Is it because the public wants it? . . . and many questions of the like.

To which I reply: "There is but one answer, we want it."

"But I can't see the value of producing this kind of a show. Now if it were serious—!"

"Seriousness would not affect it, in fact, I wonder how many of you would want *The Taming of the Shrew*."

"And what have you done in *Lilaine*?"

"We have conceived and produced a whole musical comedy."

"Yes I understand, but—"

"I wonder if you really do understand. Early in May, last year, just after the election of the Executive Committee for the 1928 Show, scenarios were called for the new show. Students from practically every college on the campus turn in scripts. They are gone over by the Committee to determine if it is possible to attempt the production, by the director to see which will form the nucleus of the best show, and by the faculty advisory committee to see that it is a proper play for our university.

"When the successful scenario has been chosen, it is studied carefully by those in charge of the separate committees, which will form the synthesis. So with the acceptance of '*Lilaine*' our work became concrete. Music, lyrics, lines, plot, light, color, form, scenery, costumes, and dancing now must be attempted.

"June finds director and committee digging in. The plot has become workable now. Musical numbers appear and take their places. The Show is being built. When we have decided on the musical layout, we must then spot the choruses to be used in each number. The schedule must have balance and form. Next comes a tentative layout of characters . . . and so through July author, committee, and director visualize and clarify in their mind's eye, our *Lilaine*.

"Comes August and the costume layout. When in Boca Ciega, our Isle of Fancy, we dress and do as Spaniards, hence we picture our cast and choruses accordingly. The committee goes to Chicago and confers with the costumer and after two weeks have the show dressed. The costumes are naturally executed by professionals, as we have not the facilities on the campus, but each costume is carefully selected by the group.

"The music must express and give the sensation of lovely old Spain, it can not be written in a day. The Music Committee starts its work, after considerable study, and much is accomplished that determines if the show is to be a 'wow.' The musical score is not one of mere piece work and patch work, but aims to be a musical operetta. Certain thematic motifs recur from time to time, giving a unity to the music and relating it closely to the development of the story. Each musical number, jazz or operatic, aims to be a part of this show and not any show.

"With the opening of college comes the try-outs for leads, then chorus and finally orchestra. Now comes the unique characteristic of our Fresh Painters, for we are all alone in the fact that feminine members of the company are genuine members of their sex, and are not massive football players masquerading as dainty debutantes and sportive coryphees. About five hundred students compete for positions. People are tentatively selected after strenuous tryouts, and then eligibility is determined by the faculty. Good scholarship is essential.

"During October, November and December, the scenery is designed, put into construction, miniatures are built with which effects are tried out. Here again all is the work of students, but the actual physical construction, in which we are handicapped by lack of space.

"Lyrics and dialogue are made ready and numbers are given the dressing up. Then comes the second Semester and the faculty permits active rehearsing. As the university has no theatre the choruses take possession of the Commons, and often mid the rattle of drying dishes do their rehearsing, while the leads take to the quiet of a large classroom in McMicken Hall, and the orchestra reverts to the Women's Building.

"Rehearsals are on—cast, chorus, orchestra, scenery, costumes, one by one mark their entrance before the footlights until at last we are ready to give you our sixth annual coat of paint, '*Lilaine*.' Seriously, we hope it meets with your approval and surpasses the high standards of our former offerings, as this is the biggest show as yet we have attempted. Tonight, rehearsals are forgotten, the show is ready. I've just called the orchestra in . . . quiet . . . It's show time.

"Is it all worth while? Perhaps not to you. But we who have worked with the production have learned something about dramatic art that we can never learn from any college course on drama or from acting in ten productions of 'serious' plays."