

MIRTH AND MELODY IN NEW MUSICAL PLAY

Messenger's Music Charming in "The Little Michus."

SINGING MIGHT BE BETTER

But English Comedian George Graves
Makes a Pronounced Hit in an
Eccentric Character Role.

Marie-Blanche	Miss Alice Judson
Blanche-Marie	Miss Ruth Julian
Mme. Michu.....	Miss Elita Proctor Otis
Mlle. Herpin.....	Miss May Tunison
Mlle. Julie.....	Miss Ruth Balne
Gaston Rigaud.....	William C. Weedon
Pierre Michu.....	George Fortesque
Bagnolet	Ernest Lambart
Aristide Veri.....	Harold Crane
Sebastion	Sarony Lambart
Madame Du Tertre.....	Miss Flavia Arcaro
Madame Roussellin.....	Miss May Griffiths
Madame De Saint-Phar.....	Miss Lillian Grey
Madame D'Albret	Miss Mabel Cox
Ernestine	Miss Ethel Mostyn
Lole	Miss Violet Zell
Irma	Miss Frances Du Barry
Pamela	Miss Emily Wellington
Palmyra	Miss Zelda Saunders
Ida	Miss Lotta Parker
Francine	Miss Harriet Du Barry
Estelle	Miss Ethel Dudley
General Des Ifs.....	George Graves

Very dainty and charming, with a score that is bright, and fresh, and melodious, not particularly well sung in the solo parts, but pretty enough to stand on its own merits, and with a comedian who is indescribably funny, "The Little Michus," if it does not exactly duplicate its two years' successful London run, ought still to prove a popular entertainment for some time to come.

The temperature was low in the Garden Theatre last night until the second act, but with George Graves's entrance and a succession of as amusing a series of legitimate grotesqueries as one could well imagine appreciation rose perceptibly. And the combination of agreeable airs and wholesome fun finally proved irresistible.

Mr. Graves is the sort of funny man one takes to his heart instinctively. As the fussy, little French General with a wooden leg and fierce, bristling mustachios, at which his fingers are always clutching nervously, he resembles nothing so much as a very beautifully ugly Jack-in-the-Box, but no child ever got so much pure, unadulterated joy out of a toy as the grown-ups did from Mr. Graves last night. The best of it is that his fun is not all antics. He develops an eccentric character and the humor grows out of it quite naturally.

It was funny to see General Des Ifs nursing his wooden leg and trying to make it behave properly and in accord with correct social usage when the rest of him was carefully disposed on a bit of fragile gilt furniture. It was funnier still to see his state of mystification in the presence of two supposed grown-up daughters of his own, when memory assuredly informed him that in the days when he was only a poor Marquis he had only one child to leave to the tender care of Papa and Mamma Michu. And small wonder at his consternation.

For unlucky Papa Michu, bathing the babies at two months' old, had unfortunately removed their clothes, the only means of identification between the little Michu baby and its blue-blooded replica. To Papa Michu's attempts at explanation and suggestion, "Suppose you and I, General, were to be put in a bath together," this reply, "What, Sir? Egad! I never split a bath with anybody," with a string of indignant comment, and the final remark, "Oh, yes, I can see myself floating around on a nail brush singing, 'All on the ocean wave.'"

Mr. Graves's lines and his way of saying them are not things that can be reproduced with much effect. He said last night in a speech before the curtain that he hoped to discover what American audiences like, and would try to give it to them. And he tried a sample later on in allusion to a little weazened wreck of an old French farmer, who he fancied might have a "saucy pink flat up in the Bronx." If Mr. Graves is wise enough to know when he is well off he will stick to his own kind of fun, which is quite original and readily intelligible. American audiences are not always such dunces as they sometimes look.

One rather inclines to speak of Mr. Graves first, for he is a stranger here, and the Messenger music is not. Its charm of melodic rhythm was disclosed in "Veronique," and the score of "The Little Michus" has much the same quality with a number of beautiful solos and duos, a capital concerted number or two, and several ringing, rollicking choruses. The choruses after the first act, in which they were a little uncertain, were given with spirited effect, and Harold Crane's number, "The Donkey and the Hay," disclosed a rich and pleasing baritone. But the singing of the other principals is hardly to be commended.

One of the hits of the evening was made by Elita Proctor Otis in a number describing what happens when the cat's away, but it was recitative, rather than song, for Miss Otis probably lays no claims to vocal accomplishment. Alice Judson and Ruth Julian, very pretty girls, recruited hurriedly to take the places of the two young women who were originally cast for the changelings, did rather better than might have been expected under the circumstances, and Nora Sarony enlivened otherwise tedious moments with a very graceful dance. Ernest Lambert was amusing in the rôle of the General's servant, and George Fortescue and Sarony Lambert were competent enough to take every advantage of slender opportunities.

More spirit in the orchestra and its direction will undoubtedly benefit the general performance. The chorus is handsome, and there are some charming effects of color blending, though both cos-