

THE CRITIC

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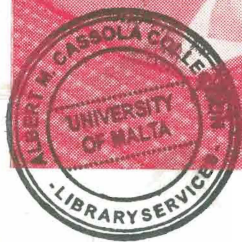
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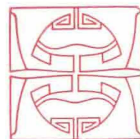
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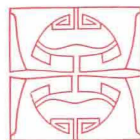
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PROFILE OF AN ACTOR – Nestor Cachia

By ALBERT M. CASSOLA, F.I.L.

If Nestor Cachia, who comes from a family of actors, continues his assiduity in the theatrical profession, he will very soon fill the foremost rank. My prophecy may be wrong only inasmuch as Nestor may have already reached that rank at the age of fortythree years. In fact, T. C. Parker, an excellent actor himself, an expert producer and a fair critic, wrote of Nestor Cachia that he "showed himself a wit in every line of his body in a hilarious piece of mime and scored one of the biggest hits of the evening." That was about Cachia's successful burlesques in "Cameos" which was much to the taste of the audience.

Nestor Cachia began his career, like so many other Maltese actors, with religious philodramatic companies, in Vittoriosa, his native town. In 1935 he made his first hit as a comedian in "Captain Reece of the Mantlepiece" produced by M. A. Borg of the famous company "L-Indipendenza". A year later he scored another big success in "Brejbes" ('Fa Diavolo') and in 1939 he again went on the boards of the Royal Opera House with the operetta "Il-Prinçipessa tal-Kżarda." The part he took in the Dockyard Staff Sports Club pre-war Gala Concert at the Theatre Royal should not be ignored.

In 1945 he joined the "San Girgor" company and his interpretation in "L-Akbar Imhabba" was as full of force as that in the old farce "Zwieg fil-Mandraġg" was full of humour.

The "Maleth" company made its first appearance at the Radio City Opera House with "Ir-Raba' Hajt", a one-act play which won the Company the first prize in Nikol Biancardi's splendid Drama Festival. Here again, Nestor Cachia, with A. (Nosi) Ghirlando and other fine players, was instrumental in earning for the Company such a high honour. It was a novel play really worthy of the perfect organisation of the "Bajda u Hamra" dramatic society. N. Cachia was also admired in "Dar ix-Xjuh", "Liema?", "Il-Ghageb," "L-Affari Kubinsky", "Ghandek Raġun", "It-Tliet Grazzji" and, especially, in "Buk-kett Ward Ahmar" a comedy in three acts with only three characters, which proved a masterpiece. Along with Aida Frendo-Azopardi and A. (Nosi) Ghirlando, N. Cachia made a great impression on the public and on newspaper critics.

Even in the small part he had in "Is-Sinjurina Marija", N. Cachia showed that he is really one of the best actors of the vernacular stage. In the second "Bajda u Hamra" contest, the Hungarian play, "Karolina", was classified third by the adjudicating board; but the opinion of the general public was that it should have fared better. At any rate, Cachia was awarded first prize for his effort as a translator.

"The Princess and the Pea", which gained first prize in the Children's Drama Festival among seventeen entries, was produced by N. Cachia.

In 1948 Cachia again took part in "Captain Reece of the Mantlepiece" and in 1949 he acted as compère in a variety show in aid of the Burma Missions. In 1950 he produced his own version of "Trenta secondi d'amore" and played the role of the debonair, cynical and imperturbable Piero Guarandi. In 1951 he partnered A. (Nosi) Ghirlando in "Id-Dittatura", playing the molly – caddled son of *Id-Dittatrici* (Nosi Ghirlando). He also featured in the well-known comic duet "Lezione di musica e canto". Also in "L-Awwista" he showed good acting but he was particularly happy in "Kavallerija", the two-act parody of Mascagni's masterpiece. He was outstanding also in "Id-Dell tad-Destin", Fr. Born's sterling histrionic work and in "Iffissat, Miskina!" which was translated and produced by Cachia himself. He played with verve both in "Gherf ta' Mara" and "Lady Hamilton". Among his radio performances, he lately produced his adaptation of Merimée's classic novel "Carmen".

All in all, Nestor Cachia is a wonderful actor, and possesses more natural genius for the stage and radio than some other actors we see in the theatre or listen to on the Rediffusion.

The Editor, "The Critic".

Sir,

It is now over thirtyfive years ago that I first acted on the stage and never during this time have I appeared before such a numerous audience. It was also the first time that the public could hear me speak clearly and distinctly whilst I was not speaking.

I well recall the day when there were no microphones or loudspeakers and acoustics in general were lacking and certain occasion when the actor had to lower his voice as required by his part and all of a sudden to hear a voice from the back of the theatre shouting out: "Speak up, we cannot hear you".

The pageant "Is-Sultan ta' l-Imhabba" was a new experience for me. I felt like a balloon in a child's hands. I admit that during the general dress rehearsal I was a flop. My acting was very poor and flavoured of the beginning of the century. I confess that after the rehearsal was over I felt very humiliated and ashamed of myself.

I am glad however to be able to say that during the night of the performance I redeemed myself and gave a good account of myself, as many of the spectators can vouch.

I earnestly hope that in the future, with new techniques I shall be better and never shall I hear again the phrase "Speak up, we cannot hear you".

Yours sincerely,

PAWLU BUGEJA.

