

Centennial Moment #9

From Frances' ongoing research into the Examiner archives, comes this unusual item:

Rotary Luncheon June 5, 1922:

President Crane congratulated Rotarian Asa Huycke upon the splendid success of his musical work, an opera titled "The Legend of the Bluebird," and the members indicated their appreciation by hearty applause.

(Bruce's note: A Charter Member of our club was County Court Judge E.C.H. Huycke. (Even at our founding, we had a Judge as member!) Rotarian Asa Huycke was the Judge's cousin. Asa was a renowned keyboardist who owned the Peterborough Music Company. Originally, he could not write music! He had a stenographer write his compositions. His opera took him three years to create. A neighbour of ours is Gary Huycke, who is directly related to both Rotarian Huyckes.)

From *The Evening Examiner*, Peterborough, Saturday, May 20, 1922:

ON STAGE: THE MESSAGE OF THE BLUEBIRD

Original Light Operatic Production Here — By Mr. Asa Huycke.

The presentation of Mr. Asa Huycke's original light operatic production, "The Message of the Bluebird" at the Grand Opera House on the last two days of this month, will offer local theatre-goers something unique in the wave of entertainment, in an opportunity of witnessing a performance that is, from first to last, the creation of a local musician. The result of three years' work will be presented on that occasion, in a charming musical offering filled with life and color. The solos, choruses, orchestration and dialogue are all the work of Mr. Huycke, who has already composed several pieces of popular music.

The plot is unusual and humorous, opening with an engagement and the proposed ringing of "wedding bells," and relating the efforts of a wilful maiden to capture the swain with whose voice she has fallen in love. Originality marks the piece from beginning to end, in the action and the dainty musical effects. There is a chorus of gaily-garbed Swiss maidens, a nip of jolly tars, and a fashion show that provides one of the most colorful moments in the production. There is the "Prince of Pots and Pans with His Little Daughter", the "Peppermint Tea Song," the "Blind Man's Bluff" number, to mention only three of the catchy selections. Principals and chorus together are working hard and with enthusiasm to make this one of the principal musical events of a season that has abounded in excellent amateur performances.

The sixteen-piece orchestra is under the direction of Mr. W. F. Leader.

From *The Evening Examiner*, Peterborough Tuesday, May 30, 1922:

LOCAL INTEREST IN "BLUEBIRD"

A Treat for Music Lovers

This Evening and Tomorrow.

A good deal of local interest has been manifested during the last two weeks in the production of "The Message of the Bluebird", Mr. Asa Huycke's composition. This is the first ambitious attempt of Peterborough's composer, who has already gained considerable attention with his musical numbers and vocal abilities, and music-lovers of the city are guaranteed a treat tonight and tomorrow night in the lively action, the sustained interest, and the lovely lyrical measure of "The Message of the Bluebird". Home-town vocalists of outstanding ability have been gathered together in a principal cast and a chorus that are excellent from all standpoints. A colorful background is provided by the bright choristers; there are solos, duets, and a really splendid septet of singers to make attractive intervals, with a pretty love-story running through the production, and several distinct novelties introduced during the action of the piece. As an example of what can be done right in our own city with local talent, gathered together by a local composer, whose operetta and its music have all a local beginning, "The Message of the Bluebird" will provide humour, sentiment and romance for its audiences on the two nights.

(Bruce's note: Both performances played to sold out houses.)

Coming soon (as soon as Frances locates it): At the June 5/22 club meeting, President Crane announced that the challenge of the Kiwanis club to a game of baseball has been accepted. The game will take place on Thursday evening at Nicholls Oval. (Remember my Centennial Moment of June 10/20 about the hockey & broomball battle between the two clubs, at which a Rotarian reverend was arrested? Wonder who'll be arrested this time....)