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Extra

Vienna, November 11, 1935.

No. 597

SUBJECT: PRODUCTION OF MAXWELL ANDERSON'S DRAMA
"ELIZABETH AND ESSEX" BY THE BURGTHEATER
IN VIENNA.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department, as
I believe of interest to it, that on Friday evening,
November 8, Maxwell Anderson's historical drama
ELIZABETH AND ESSEX, had its premiere at the Burg-
theater in Vienna.

The Direction

The Direction of the Burgtheater is giving a cycle of foreign plays in which a representative play of a number of countries is being produced. In the spring of this year, as the work of a representative modern British playwright, Drinkwater's historical drama ABRAHAM LINCOLN was produced. The choice of the Direction of the theater for an American play fell on Anderson's ELIZABETH AND ESSEX.

In view of the fact that the Burgtheater in Vienna, which is a state subventioned institution, is probably one of the leading theaters in the world today and has endeavored in difficult times to maintain its high traditions, it is interesting that this American production should have been included in this cycle of foreign plays. The production given the play was in keeping with the high traditions of this theater and was in every way fitting of the author's work which is fairly recognized here as one of unusual literary merit. The wife of President Miklas, the Foreign Minister and his wife, the Secretary of State for education, and other leading members of the Government were present at the premiere.

After the premiere I invited some fifty or more members of the Government, of the Direction of the Theater, of the cast of the play, and the representatives of the American press to the Legation for supper.

The Department

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The Department will remember that in the spring of this year I was able to encourage the production by the Volksopera in Vienna of Hageman's opera CAPONSACCHI. This was the first production of an American opera in Vienna and proved to be as interesting as it was successful. I have been able to direct the attention of those interested in the theater in Vienna to various American plays which might be of interest to the Viennese public and there are at present running at two of the principal Vienna theaters plays by American authors. Eugene Lavery's play THE FIRST LEGION, is being given at the Josefstadt Theater and promises to be the most successful play of the season here. It is probable that it will be produced by this theater continuously throughout all of this season, which is an extraordinary performance for any play in Vienna. At the Deutsche Volkstheater a translation of Elmer Rice's play, COUNSELLOR-AT-LAW, is being produced under the title JURISTEN and is having a very successful run. The Volkstheater has already made its preparations for producing THE CASE OF MARY DUGGAN during the season.

It is interesting to note that such a predominance and production of American plays in Vienna is quite unusual here. I have endeavored in all proper ways to direct attention to worthy American plays and these efforts have met with very encouraging success.

Respectfully yours,

George B. Messersmith.

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