

Hometown Talent Polishes Show for Debut Next Week

Variety Revue to Offer Fresh, New Addition To Entertainment

By Bill Darden

There is a new, fresh addition to Sioux City's entertainment scene being shaped up these days by a group of talented and ambitious hometown youngsters.

Perhaps you've walked by Rustin Avenue Methodist church in Morningside of an afternoon and heard the infectious rhythm of a vocal trio or the unmistakable sounds of a dancer's flying feet.

And probably a church hall is the last place you'd look for rehearsals of a variety show, but that's just what has been taking place at the Morningside church for the last several months.

This new production is The Forty-Niners, a song and variety act revue featuring Don Kelsey, well-know lyric tenor here, as singing master-of-ceremonies. Almost daily rehearsals are being held just now in preparation for several performances next week at a movie theater.

An All-Star Cast

The name of Don Kelsey is a familiar one to most Sioux City music lovers; his reputation as a talented young tenor is well established here. But while Kelsey's name alone appears on the billing, the cast of this show is an all-star one if ability and popular appeal is any criterion.

The cast now whipping the show into shape is made up of 18 youngsters ranging in age from 12 to 20. They are the winners of a talent show and several months of auditions during which Kelsey and Helen Hansen, coproducer of the show, sifted out the best of nearly 600 young Sioux Cityans with musical, dancing or other entertainment ability.

By way of a sneak word-view of the show, let's look at some of the acts. Right out front, both as a solo group and in accompaniment to singers and dancers, is the six-piece swing band of Zean Zurcher. For our money, it's a professional group, and if successful shows are built around an orchestra The Forty-Niners is a sure hit.

Already Previewed

Nancy Lee is a talented teenager who appeared with U.S.O. camp shows during the war and now is featured as one of the attractions of our town's newest production. She presents tap and



Don Kelsey

comedy dances and tops her act with a hilarious deadpan contralto solo.

The Melody Maids and the Reveliers are girls and boys trios which combine sweetness, in the former case, and comedy, in the latter case, with unique vocal arrangements. Junior Miss and Mister are cute and quite capable 12-year olds in a song and accordion solo act.

So many more could be enumerated here, like Carlton Hill, acrobatic dancer, and Ramona Copple, the Betty Hutton of Sioux City who does a thoroughly enjoyable imitation of the bouncing Hollywood star. But only seeing is believing that these youngsters, from homes in all parts of the city, are all entertainers of professional possibilities.

The Forty-Niners first played to an audience this spring when the Morningside community celebrated Morningside day. Since that appearance a bigger and better show has been in rehearsal in preparation for the professional performances next week. And the plan of this group is an exciting one. Already bookings are being sought in towns in the surrounding three-state area, and if plans materialize, the show will take to the road this summer for some one-night stands.

The thing that impresses an onlooker at rehearsals of the show is the serious spirit shown by the entire troupe. Their master-of ceremonies reports that virtually all the young performers have ambitions for professional careers in the entertainment field. And one can see that their hearts are in this important show as well as their respective talents.

Sioux City will have a chance to receive The Forty-Niners next week. If the coming performances and some out-of-town engagements are as successful as they promise to be, we may see this variety show more often around Sioux City.