

DR.DOERMANN AND THE UNIVERSITY THEATER

Dr. Doermann's interests were so wide, so varied, and he put so much vitality, so much vigor into each that one is inclined toward hesitancy in saying of any one of them: "This was his greatest interest." So, I should hesitate to say that of any of his interests were it not that Dr. Doermann repeated so often the fact that his first love would always be the theater.

His first work as a young man just out of college was as a professional actor. All through the years, after he returned to the academic life, he still retained that unique fondness that one reserves only for the stage. When he came here, to Toledo, and began to lay plans for our new buildings he was insistent in his desire that the university should at last have a theater—a theater that would be both beautiful to look at and well enough equipped to serve thoroughly the best artistic needs and purposes of a theater.

This theater was built. Dr. Doermann did not stop there. Now that we had the theater it was necessary to use it for things worthy of it. So Dr. Doermann let it be known to the Dramatic association that if they desired his full cooperation they must turn their backs on plays of stock company caliber. He believed that a university drama group should have the same classic standards as that university's literature department.

The Dramatic association responded well, I think. And Dr. Doermann, after seeing Liliom and St. Joan last year was so satisfied with the seriousness of the association that he

offered to direct Hamlet for them. Anyone who knows the great amount of time and energy that is necessary to direct a play, and especially a Shakesperian play, will realize the interest in and fondness for the stage that must have been Dr. Doermann's/ And, incidentally, anyone who saw that production, which was given in three hours exactly, saw the Edwin Booth version of Hamlet given by an amateur cast in its entirety in the same length of time to the minute that the version requires of professionals. And that is no small tribute to Dr. Doermann as a sheer stage technician as well as a director.

Last spring saw another evidence of Dr. Doermann's keenness for the stage, an evidence which we hope will prove to be most lasting of all. That was the appearance of a pamphlet which he had written and published entitled "A Proposal for a Community Theater". You have probably all seen it. It represented Dr. Doermann's supreme civic dream. In it he outlined very definitely his proposal of a civic theater, to be housed in and supervised by the university, but in which all Toledo was to participate in every field from acting to selling tickets. The plan called for a high grade director, who would be a member of the faculty teaching a complete course in dramatic production.

The proposal was to have been launched this week. Dr. Doermann was to have issued a city wide call this week for its supporters. He wanted to launch the plan early this fall, but too many things were pressing him. He couldn't get to it. One day I was in his office when he was particularly

weighed with work. He was planning the faculty lecture series, he had just started the Opportunity college, the financial problems of the university were requiring a great deal of his attention. I asked him when, in view of all that pressing work, he thought he would be able to get the civic theater started. He looked up and smiled and said: "Oh, one of these days soon I'll get a lot of this tuff cleaned up and then we'll get at some reall fun-work."

And fun-work is just what the theater was to Dr. Doermann. It was fun, but it was fun to be taken seriously enough to put forth a great deal of hard work ~~in its cause~~ for its benifit.

Arthur J. Gould