

FIRST NIGHT By SETH ADAGALA

## Another opening is a riot of fun

THE Nairobi City Players' December gift to its audience is an aptly hilarious musical variety package of wit, colourful dances and a sheer musical "joy of life" celebration that goes under the title of *Another Oooppennng*, currently on stage at the National Theatre.

Benny Goodman and the company have created an unbeatable combination of music, dance and humour — and the lively music comes in all colours, periods and forms. From the burlesque of the music halls (*Cocktails For Two, I Want To Be Happy*) to the blues (*Mainly Blues* — Carmen Bourros, Marlene Docherty

Lorris Valles) to the beautifully moody music rendered by Belinda Boulton and an Aria (*Barber of Seville*) is thrown in, belched against all obstacles by Carmen Barros as she is stripped to the bare minimum by Benny Goodman, the tailor.

Of the humour, much credit is due to the formidable team of Bryan Epsom, Phip Swatman, Vic Francis, Nick Domare, Ken Latham, Fullie Dixon and Steve O'Connor who, with the help of the Company, take a completely straight scene and turn it with a twist of wit into a sparkling gem of laughter.

*TV or Not TV*, (the other side of the news), *Swedish Lessons* (to help the English understand the bedroom scene), *Doctor at Large* (keep on taking those pills till I return), *Return of the Warrior* (a father after two years

away in the service), *Lengths* and *Today, Tomorrow* won the evening for their non-stop laughter punch-lines.

The evening was climaxed by the dance in all colours, fashions and styles.

Benny Goodman who, throughout the programme pops on stage to steal the show with a solo *By Special Request*, was best in the duet *Brush Up Your Shakespear* with Vic Francis.

The finale was a re-rendering in full costume, thanks to Mary Epsom's colourful designs, songs (nearly 10 in all) from all the past City Players musicals. This piece alone was worth the entrance fee. A perfect ending to a most enjoyable evening.



● Carmen Barros, who sings an operatic aria with a difference. Her lovely voice is also heard to advantage in a number of other musical numbers in the show.

## LIGHT-HEARTED SHOW WITH A DIFFERENCE

THERE'S no business like show business — if only for the sheer variety of entertainment that can transform an ordinary evening into a memorable occasion.

"Another Opening", the glittering "grand variety revue" at the National Theatre, seems like another musical success for the untiring Nairobi City Players.

### HILARIOUS

But be warned. While almost all of the 24 "episodes" on the programme are good, light-hearted entertainment, with the occasional tendency to be uproariously hilarious, there are some gags which one can only deem to be an exclusively English "tribal" ritualistic manifestation.

The most noticeable example of this is the otherwise very good idea of having the (incidentally, Kenya's first "colour") TV ghanieck on stage. But the scene revolves

around British politics and takes familiar swipes at Britain's political leaders, and the humour only appeals to a limited group with a full understanding of the whole issue.

But, to be fair, one is also ironically aware why one cannot take such lighthearted swipes nearer home!

On the whole, "Another Opening" hits the right note to the festive season. It cannot fail to entertain. The music is mellow and moody, switching from soulful "Blues" to rocking beats to bouncy Latin American numbers — finger-clicking good, that.

The costumes are quite outstanding individual performances, but perhaps the best thing about the whole show is the lasting impression of team work that is left in the mind long after the joking stops and the final curtain falls.

— Mugambi Karanja



**TWO** of the gorgeous girls appearing in "Another Opening" now running at Kenya National Theatre. Pictured are Angela Donald and Maureen Turner in a Latin number



# Songs are lovely, girls are gorgeous

AS the present Nairobi City Players presentation is a REVIEW, there seems to be little sense in writing a review of a REVIEW! So, assuming that this is not a review, let us begin with saying that this GRAND Variety Review has got a variety of 24 scenes, a good number of which most people, I dare say, will find thoroughly entertaining.

By the reaction of the audience that attended the opening night, which was Wednesday last, the revue was a lot of fun to a lot of them. There were some fine performances from the more experienced members of the cast, and some lovely singing, especially from Carmen Barros and Marlene Docberty. Perhaps you have seen advertisements in the daily Press saying that the girls are gorgeous. They are! The songs are lovely too.

Inevitably, some scenes were a lot better than others. The Television News scenes will make you laugh, especially if you have or understand the English sense of humour. The Swedish Lesson was very clever while some of the mimes like *Cocktail For Two*, *By Special Request*, *Lengths* and *Brush up your Shakespeare* were excellent fun. "Rough Justice" was a flop while *A Desert Island* just managed.

But "Braziliana" was spirited and vibrant, not forgetting "Mainly Blues" when, led by Carmen, Marlene and Loris, the company sore in song and dance.

I find that I am getting deeper and deeper into reviewing this GRAND REVUE, something I had vowed not to do! So, if you are reading this and if by any chance you are looking for light entertainment that will make you forget the blues, why don't you book your ticket now! You are bound to pick your kind of fun! Another opening will be on again next Wednesday. 10th December at