Rains Come But Ravinia Music Stays

BY SEYMOUR RAVEN

With chamber music still to come, the orchestral phase of the Ravinia festival ended yesterday afternoon with Georg Solti conducting and Jacob Lateiner as piano soloist. It was a handicapped concert, what with a saturation by recent chilling rain and a constant threat of more. Mr. Lateiner was a late substitute for illing Alexander Uninsky and adhered to the previous programming of Prokofiev's Third Concerto.

From other stories over the summer, you may have inferred that I believe in giving active criticism more or less of a day off when concert conditions are far less than ideal. So let me say that Mr. Solti, in Mozart's G Minor Symphony, took the Chicago Symphony thru a valid and graceful performance, and that Mr. Lateiner was more than a respectable workman in the Prokofiev music. I could not hear much tone from anybody, but then, as I said, it was that kind of a day.

Box office statistics for the season to date show a drop of about 10,500 listeners from last year's total for six weeks of symphony. Last year the total was 94,370; this time 83,809. [Figures are approximate.]

When 1954's Ballet theater week is added, the present total is swollen by more than 11,000, making the comparison seven weeks of 1954 against six in 1953.

The park record for a six week orchestral series was made in 1950, with an attendance of 101,607.

Geraldine Page

Actors in "Mid-Summer" at Drury Lane theater are showing the ensemble skill and professional glow that reflects the inspiring qualities of a leader. The leader is Geraldine Page, who these days is elevating a mediocre melodrama by Vina Delmar into seemingly vital theater.

Miss Page, who rode this vehicle to success on Broadway, can make a plain face happily pretty or sorrowfully beautiful. Her speaking voice has the sound of violin in the chamber music that started this column.

All this is without stage trickery, without a hint of mechanics in the movement of her face or the play of her voice. It brings out the best in such fellow players as Paul Crabtree, Bert Bertram, Jose Borcia and Catherine Payne, and they are a well integrated group.