

'BLACKOUTS OF 1942' DIVERTING STAGE FARE

BY EDWIN SCHALLERT

"Blackouts of 1942," new vaudeville revue at El Capitan Theater, has the merit, above all others, that it is different from "Show Time," its predecessor in the downtown district of Los Angeles.

This production, with Ken Murray and Billy Gilbert as impresarios, and Sid Grauman and Matt Allen as sponsors, is blithesomely contrived and drew an audience warmly responsive to the premiere.

Mae West was in the theater, as were Al Jolson, Rudy Vallee and others prominent in the entertainment sphere. In general the house was representative of first-nighters from the filmland area.

VARIED FARE

Murray is the master of ceremonies, though once in a while Marie Wilson, whose duties are diversified, does a dumb Dora introduction as a variation.

Gilbert is on and off in various routines, several being of the blackout type.

Presentation boasts a line of girls who are really adorning. They open the show with "A Few Minutes With the Ladies"—with apologies to Clare Boothe's "The Women." Vivian Marshall sings and the Romer Twins dance.

Climax of the first part is attained with Gene Austin singing and Candy and Coco furnishing instrumental and comedy interludes, particularly Coco with the glistening eyes and deadpan. Nicholas Brothers are the tops in fast stepping, which rises to athletic high points.

The Helene Gardner Foursome are adagio dancers who adagio

thrillingly. College Days with Betty Atkinson twirling batons—one a giant affair—has plenty of zip and the slinging of Ken Stevens is a pleasing addition.

Vivian Marshall does an inebriated take-off on the operatic "Caro Nome" from "Rigoletto," and Roy Davis impersonates Jerry Colonna, Cyril Smith and others in pantomime, while their records play. These acts all brought abundant applause.

CLASSY SINGER

Very much class is evidenced by Connie Russell in her singing, which is exceptionally expressive. She, too, is an attractive stage personality.

Miss Wilson's specialties, of which there are several, are decidedly cute and her take-off (no pun intended) on a strip-tease is amusing. She augments the appeal of the presentation considerably.

Of the blackouts the best is the poker game with Austin, Murray, Gilbert and (on the opening night) Arthur Lake. On the program he was designated by a series of question marks, so it may be assumed that this particular personage will be altered.

Unfortunately the show ends rather flatly and tamely after this act. It is also to be said that the sketches relying on humor need more vitality than they disclosed last evening and there is a tendency toward lagging at other times.

INDUSTRIOUS IN WORK

The efforts of Murray as a master of ceremonies are excellent and the way he takes part in such an act as the remarkable balancing one, and also with Aus-

tin, markedly increases the entertainment.

Murray called in Grauman from the audience to take a bow at the close.

"Blackouts of 1942" is diverting enough, but needs revisions and strengthening.