

BITTER SWEET

The Story of the Play

The Marchioness of Shayne, a serene old lady who has seen and studied life in many of its aspects, inveighs against Jazz and its exponents as being, or thinking, of nothing but noise and speed, with dreams of romance mere nightmares. The opening then fades into the story of her life as recapitulated by the Marchioness. The old lady had, as Sarah Millick, a Belgrave Square heroine of the 'seventies, thrown over a decorous mid-Victorian prospective bridegroom, Hugh Devon, and eloped with her music master, Carl Linden, who had found her so apt a pupil. Next, at a Viennese cafe, in 1880, we find her and her husband employed as professional dancing partner and conductor of the band by a very complaisant Herr Schlick, quite ready to help make the now Sari Linden the victim of one of his regular customers, the dissolute Captain August Lutte. The latter insults Sari at the end of a dance and is attacked by the angry husband, speedily run through in a bout with swords, and slain, to the grief of his wife and of a French cabaret comedienne, Manon. Fifteen years later Mrs. Linden returns as a celebrated Hungarian prima donna, to London, where she meets with six of her former girl friends, now more or less unhappily married, and also with a devout lover, the elderly Marquis of Shayne, who finally persuades her to marry him, though she ever retains recollections of her lost Carlo. The final scene is that of the opening. Sarah has completed her story.

BITTER SWEET was produced at His Majesty's Theatre, London, on July 18th, 1929. Among the original cast were Peggy Wood as the Marchioness of Shayne (Soprano lead), George Metaxa as Carl Linden (Tenor lead), Ivy St. Helier as Manon, a French comedienne, and Austin Trevor as Captain August Lutte.