

Echoes from Screen and Stage

By SPOTLIGHT

CLIFFORD Higgin was one of these children whose early years were spent with a tense longing for a piano in the home. Early revealing a soul for music, he used to go to a neighbor's house and play—before he had any music lessons. He was 14 years old when a piano came into their house near Manchester in England. Three years later, a famous organist, Dr. Wm. Sparks stayed at the Higgin home when in town to give a recital. Young Clifford was up early next morning playing the music from sheets brought by the visitor. This so impressed Dr. Sparks he offered to take him to Leipzig as an articulated pupil, but his parents refused.

Urge to compose came early and he has been writing since 20 years of age. Wrote "Tarantella in C Minor" and sold the rights to the publishers for half a crown (\$2.50). The publisher sold 50,000 copies. Then an oratorio, "Calvary" in 1908, which his choir performed at Queen's Hall in London with Sir Henry Wood's orchestra. Became organist of a Blackpool church and the choir won, among some honors, a contest in Paris and other European awards. During one of these contests met Dr. A. S. Vogt, conductor of Toronto Mendelssohn Choir who suggested he go to Canada. Came to Brantford and then to Calgary in 1920.

The active musical life spent by Clifford Higgin in Calgary this past quarter of a century is well known. Filling many parts, Clifford Higgin's warmest admirers are among the young generation to whom he has been counsellor and friend, proffering aid and advice generously. His work among youth is also expressed in music. He composed two children's musical plays. Also a symphony which has never been performed, scores of orchestral suites and numerous songs both grave and gay. The musical comedy heard this week, "The Queen of Romance," is his latest work, completed last fall.

After an active musical life as church organist, choir leader and teacher, Mr. Higgin now devotes much of his time to musical composition. However, he is still organist of three Masonic lodges; member of the advisory board of music at the University of Alberta; adjudicator of the Eastern Star Festival and an executive of the musical festival.

Closing performance tonight of Clifford Higgin's musical comedy "Queen of Romance" gives Calgarians an opportunity to hear a new composition by a musician among us. Home-made the music, the libretto, the players and singers of the lilting tunes. A performance that gives the public a chance to share in and pay tribute to the musical gift of a fellow citizen.