## Epic Drama of Father Kino's Missionary Work Springs to Life on U. of A. Stage

## Kermit Hunter's Play Has World Premiere As Festival Event

By REX KING

After nearly two years of planning, writing and preparation, the Kermit Hunter script of the life of Father Kino called "The Bell and the Plow" came to life last evening on the University of Arizona stage.

The whole production was a colossal undertaking requiring the efforts of a small army of people most of whom never stepped before a footlight until last evening. Literally hundreds of people labored to produce the show the audience saw last night.

In presenting the Kino epic the Tucson Festival society hopes to have a script that can be revived in succeeding seasons as a part of the festival.

Director's Chore

Actually the three-hour play has several integral parts which Peter Marroney as director had to bring together into a smooth working whole. These were the chorus under the direction of Harold Porter, the orchestra directed by Sam Fain playing original music by Jack Frederick Kilpatrick, the cast of principal actors, the mob scenes, and the various technical crews.

Bringing them all together was a task of the first magnitude and if the play creaked at the seams on occasion last evening it was the fault of no lack of ability on any one's part, but because of not quite enough rehearsal with groups that were slow in responding and a casting jinx that hounded the show until two days pefore opening at which time a najor cast change had to be made.

Gerrish Triumphs

First to the acting on main stage and first honors to Martin Gerrish as Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, the Jesuit priest whose name is so closely linked with the history of the southwest

in the very early days. Gerrish is a newcomer (compared to some) to the Tucson stage. His abilities as an actor have already been proven in other roles that he played on the Herring hall stage, but last evening he played a part that would was reverent and humble yet rish well in the part of Father shot through with the fire of the Goni, and Louis Venturini came zeal that the Padre on Horseback | through with not only a convincmust have had. We found that ing portrayal of the Indian Euse-Gerrish supplied the sustaining quality so badly needed when the script became tediously wordy as it did on occasion. A most notable and excellent performance.

Second Honors

For sheer subtle delivery of line and excellent characterization, second acting honors must go to George Morency as Father Pardo. He was outstanding in this role.

Guy Greene offered a rich full voice to the role of Atondo, the admiral of the fleet as well as a convincing arrogance and ruth-

lessness. A duo from Herring hall brought their sterling talents to the second act of the play. Both playing priests it might have been | Added to these actors were difficult to recognize William Haf- priests, acolytes, pages, standard



Father Kino, at left with the Indian children Francisca and Eusebio, is shown as sketched by artist Ross Stefan. To the right is Stefan's impression of Isidro de Atondo y Antillon, an admiral of the Spanish fleet.

indispensible in the theatre-but | dancers). these two will leave a space hard to fill when they leave the local production and the orchestra did drama scene.

Convincing Part

Playing a straight role very tax the ability of the best pro- convincingly was Ross Cope as their talents to the show is much west. fessional and Gerrish was equal the Viceroy of Mexico, Michael to the challenge. His portrayal Rosenberger complimented Gerbio, but looked the part as well.

There are only four speaking roles for women in the play and all played their brief moments well. Only Francisca, the Indian girl appears in more than one scene. Played by Norma Stevenson it was a fine job of acting in a difficult role.

Other principal players were Paula Mayer, Richard Bruce, David Henderson, William Reese, Paul Emerson, Richard Meecham, Howard Ennis, John Barton, Isa Stableford, Peggy Kellner (these two offered most of the little humor in the play), Arnold Wake Susan Sanford and Ronald Kalish.

Supporting Roles

ford in a red wig playing Father bearers, guests, soldiers, Indians

him in Stalag?) as the Father Training school), townspeople, a few will speak for them all. Polici. They say that no one is and dancers (the Wisdom | Robert Burroughs for the sets,

The singers added much to the color to many of the scenes.

Mora or Ray Merritt (remember | (students from the Tucson Indian | too long to be included here but

Gene Lafferty for the lights, Fairfax Walkup for her costumes.

"The Bell and the Plow" will much to tie the show together play for two more nights at the from scene to scene as well as add auditorium and no Tucsonan should miss this easy way to bone The list of people who added up on the history of the south



## The Bell and The Plow

and The Tars

Two hundred and sixty-two years ago much of our land was a valley of parched earth, raw men and dusty dreams.

Into that valley of lost hopes rode the first white man, wearing a black robe and carrying a bright cross.

With him he brought a bell, a plow . . . and the stars.

The man was Father Kino, founder of San Xavier Mission. The bell was the Bell of Faith that rings in every man's heart . . . once it has been heard.

The plow was the plow of work. Work to build the land; homes for the people and a Holy House for their Father, who came to live with them.

The stars were our future. The future of Tucson, which today proudly looks up at the stars and sees a land grown enchanting, endowed with faith and enriched by God's lovely light and blessed with such fine people.

To Father Kino, our eternal thanks for his Bell, his Plow and his Stars.

Steinbeld's

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Steinfeld's, which has pioneered in the cultural advancement of the southwest for the past 100 years, is proud to salute Tucson's Tohono Festival and the world premiere of "The Bell and the Plow," epic drama by Kermit Hunter... to be presented at the University of Arizona Auditorium, April 28, 29, 30th. Don't miss it!