

ART

Stables and Mobiles

"I get ideas for them everywhere, except when driving a car. I try and think of something slithering around and the next thing I know I'm in the ditch."

Thus last week greying, hulking Alexander ("Sandy") Calder tried to explain to the press the collection of mysterious objects made of bits of wire, scraps of bright tin, cardboard, wood and strips of felt which, with a grinding of toy gears and hum of little electric motors, bounced



International


SANDY CALDER & CREATIONS

He used to work for the light company.

and joggled, slithered and woggled in the Manhattan Gallery of Pierre Matisse. Artist Calder called them his "Mobiles." Other abstractions in bent wire and wood that did not move were called "Stables." Gallery-goers found them strangely exciting.

Sandy Calder's ability with his fingers is explained by the fact that he is the son of famed Sculptor Stirling Calder, grandson of another sculptor. His ability with wire and pliers is not attributable to the fact that he worked for a while with a light company. He played with wire from childhood, is a graduate mechanical engineer of Stevens Institute, once earned his living designing mechanical toys. In Paris eleven years ago Sandy Calder found himself in great demand at parties because of his circus of bent-wire figures which could gallop round a ring, jump through hoops, dance. This success made him give up his none too successful painting. Harvard University sponsors were surprised some years ago when they arranged an exhibition of Sandy Calder's work, sent a truck to carry the statues to the exhibition hall and found no one at the station but Sculptor Calder with a pair of pliers in his pocket, a roll of wire over his shoulder.

The circus figures were skillfully animated toys, but there is an ancient artistic problem back of Calder's Mobiles: the attempt to capture the flash and beauty



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of bright metals and bits of color actually in motion. Ten years ago the same problem greatly troubled such an arch-conservative as the late Bashford Dean, curator of arms & armor at the Metropolitan Museum, who begged the museum trustees to allow him to put real men at arms stalking about the corridors in the belief that his beloved harnesses were empty shells unless worn by living models.

In that same belief Wireworker Calder wants to make enormous enlargements of his bobbling Mobiles to be the background for a modern ballet.

THEATRE

New Plays in Manhattan

Marching Song (by John Howard Lawson; presented by the Theatre Union).

Item: on the vague promise of a job, a horde of unwitting men are assembled, loaded into trucks, locked in. When they arrive at their destination, they discover that they have been taken into a strike town as strikebreakers.

Item: a wayfaring crusader for the Cause is branded by the orange growers of California, whipped and fired on elsewhere during his eastward trek.

Item: a happy-go-lucky Negro (Rex Ingram) gets so tired of being kicked around that he reads the Constitution to learn his rights.

Item: after a cruel compromise has crushed an automobile workmen's union, a union lieutenant (Grover Burgess), fired, blacklisted and evicted from his home, is so demoralized that he takes to drinking, abusing his baby, patronizing 25¢ brothels.

Item: a crowd of strike sympathizers is gassed and machine-gunned by hired thugs.

Item: an old Italian woman who passes food to sit-down strikers is threatened with deportation as an alien—although there is no charge of illegal entry into the U. S.

Item: a reptilian professional strike-breaker (Manart Kippen) tortures a union leader with hot irons.

Item: a foul-mouthed police inspector (Stanley G. Wood) laughs heartily at every fresh evidence of human distress.

Thus does *Marching Song* deal with a sit-down strike in an automobile town called Brimmerton. As will be evident from the partial inventory above of its dramatic materials, it is not a hastily concocted case history of the General Motors strike in Flint (TIME, Jan. 11 et seq.). It is a proletarian fairy tale in unrelieved black & white. Viewed from within its own wonderland it is vivid enough to enlist sympathy for the good fairies in their struggles against the hobgoblins. The play's nightmarish atmosphere is enhanced by Howard Bay's vast, sombre setting which represents the interior of an abandoned factory, dominated by the gutted carcass of a huge dynamo.

Having Wonderful Time (by Arthur Kober; Marc Connelly, producer), the season's pleasantest institutional drama, is laid in one of the numerous cheap summer