

GRAND OPERA SEASON AT ITS HEIGHT IN NEW YORK

RETURN OF MME. TETRAZZINI AND FIRST APPEARANCE OF MARY GARDEN, THE AMERICAN SOPRANO, AROUSE PUBLIC INTEREST



RENAUD AS MEPHISTOPHELES IN BERLIOZ'S DAMNATION OF FAUST AT THE MANHATTAN.



AMEDEO BASSI AS RADAMES IN AIDA AT THE MANHATTAN



MME. TETRAZZINI WHO APPEARS IN VERDI'S LA TRAVIATA AS VIOLETTA



MME. KIRBY LAVIN IN THE ROLE OF SINNER'S IN AIDA METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE



SCOTTI AS DON GIOVANNI TO BE GIVEN UNDER DIRECTION OF MAHIER



MAURICE RENAUD AS DON GIOVANNI ONE OF HIS MOST NOTABLE ROLES AT THE MANHATTAN OPERA HOUSE

NEW YORK, Jan. 12.—(Special correspondence.)—Much interest is manifested in the coming of Mme. Tetrazzini to the Manhattan Opera House. The prima donna arrived Saturday and will immediately prepare for her debut next Wednesday night as Violetta in Traviata. Mme. Tetrazzini, who is better known on the Pacific Coast than anywhere else in America, is one of the old school coloratura sopranos to whom pure singing represents the first consideration. Such opinions still have many followers and to them the old Italian operas are still sources of great delight, but to those who have come forward with the times which have brought about the need of more vigor, this form of opera is held as a sweetmeat of which a little will go a long way.

In old Italian opera Rossini has only figured at the Metropolitan in the Barber of Seville, which has been given a very interesting revival with Mme. Sembrich, Bonci, Campanari and Challapine in the principal roles. The opera has enough vitality to carry it, and of course, the cast has much, although not everything, to do with its success. Don Giovanni, although by Mozart, is clearly in the class of old Italian operas, although it is far beyond the caliber of the others in musical worth. A peculiar characteristic of both the foregoing works is that the orchestra is dropped through the recitatives, which are accompanied by a piano. As far as tradition is con-

cerned, it is interesting to continue so to give them, but they would be much improved for present day conditions if arranged for orchestra throughout. This sounds like heresy to those who prize about tradition, but after all, there are good reasons to believe that we are very far from the possibility of exactitude and if it cannot be exact throughout, which is a matter of impossibility, it may as well conform with present conditions throughout.

Other old Italian works which have had frequent hearing this season include Ernani, Il Trovatore, La Traviata, Rigoletto, The Masked Ball and Aida. This brings forward an interesting feature in the study of musical history, because all of these operas are the works of one man, who alone has both passed through and helped to create four distinct periods in Italian opera. Perhaps never again will Verdi be exploited in so thorough a manner as during the present season, and it is certain that historically he has never been heard in so interesting a manner.

In the first period belongs Ernani, which was written in Venice and produced there in 1824, only two years after the production of his first opera, Nabucco. It is today, not without interest for a certain class of opera-goers, as has been recently demonstrated by Mr. Hammerstein, who has used it several times to exploit the Italian forces in his company. Rigoletto, which belongs to Verdi's second period, first saw light in Venice in 1851. It shows not only a vast advance over the earlier works, but it is in many respects more virile than Il Trovatore, which followed, in Rome in 1853, and La Traviata, produced in Venice about three months later in the same year. Rigoletto has elements which will, no doubt, keep it fresh for many years, notwithstanding its antiquated form, the principal one being the wonderful part which the title role affords. In this Sammarco is at his best, and upon special occasions, Renaud, than whom there is no greater opera singer today visiting America, has sung the role with startling and brilliant effects.

"Il Trovatore" and "La Traviata" are closely related in the minds of frequenters of the opera. The reason for this is because they are much alike in characteristics, and they appeared, as just stated, about three months apart. If anything, "Il Trovatore," the plot of which is well-

known, is the stronger of the two, although "La Traviata" has some extremely beautiful music. The orchestral accompaniments are thin and unsatisfactory, and arias, duets and concerted music are strung together on slender threads of recitatives which nowadays seem to hang in the air without support.

"The Masked Ball," produced in Rome in 1853, was the practical culmination of this second period of Verdi. This has had frequent presentations this season at the Manhattan, as it contains one of the best roles of Zenoletto, who is one of the most distinguished Italian tenors of the day. Zenoletto brings much life into his production, and one frequently forgets the strenuousness of today's music in the delightful melodies in which this opera abounds.

The third period in Verdi's career stands forth, not only as an important era in his own life, but also as an era in the history of opera. "Aida" was the great creation of this time. Verdi received a commission from the Khedive of Egypt in 1870 requesting him to write a National Italian opera for that country. The great Italian composer went to Cairo, and there produced in 1871 one of the most beautiful operas of all time; not alone as a musical work of art, but from the dramatic side, the atmosphere of "Aida" has rarely, if ever, been surpassed. To this period also belong "La Forza del Destino," produced in St. Petersburg in 1862, and "Don Carlos" in Paris, 1867.

While there is no reason to accuse Verdi of being influenced by Berlioz and Wagner, two powerful forces at this time, it was but natural that, with or without his knowledge, he should assimilate some of their methods, and the new Italian school had its birth, not with Mascagni, Leoncavallo or Puccini, but with Verdi, who in his fourth period represents the renaissance of Italian opera. During this time "Othello," produced in 1887, and "Falstaff," in 1893, stand as a new gospel which found willing disciples among all the Italians who followed, "Othello," rarely seen in America, will be given yet this season at the Manhattan.

While on the subject of the older opera, "Don Giovanni" should come in for more than a passing notice, especially as it offers one of the most superb roles for Renaud, and far beyond its relation to present-day conditions and artists, it is regarded as one of the greatest achievements in opera. Taking into consideration that it had its first production in 1787, it is nothing short of remarkable, and were the piano accompaniment eliminated, and a well-written orchestral one substituted, "Don Giovanni" would not show years as far as the musical part of the work is concerned. Byron has told his version of the Spanish nobleman whose sole pursuit in life is women of all classes and of varying degrees of attractiveness. His different escapades are set forth with no small amount of humor, and while Don Giovanni is the central figure, the opera requires great artists in every part. This work has been given several times at the Manhattan, each time presenting Renaud in the title role. Nothing more exquisitely polished or fascinating can be conceived than his performance, and keen interest will be aroused when "Don Giovanni" will be produced at the Metropolitan with Scotti in the title role and Mahier conducting.

Renaud has been one of the most valuable assets at the Manhattan this season, as he is one of the most versatile artists on any stage. To say nothing of his work in Offenbach's Contes d'Hoffmann, where he plays three parts as diametrically opposed to each other as it is possible to realize, his Mephistopheles in The Damnation of Faust, by Berlioz, is one of the most powerful characterizations ever offered. Renaud is a familiar figure in Paris, where he has been the leading baritone

for the last few years, and his presence in America puts art upon a higher plane, particularly when he is surrounded by such artists as Dalmores and Mary Garden, as he usually is since these belong to the French section of the Manhattan forces.

The production of Louise was far in excess of all anticipation, and the public seems to have taken the work with all the eagerness which it deserved. The story already told in these columns shows that as the laws of France forbid marriage without the consent of parents, there was no alternative for the young pair except to follow the course which they did. In telling the story, Carpentier sets forth the street life of Paris, the homely life of the laboring man and the workroom of the dressmaking establishment where Louise is employed.

Not only are these pictures faithfully painted, but the characters who people them are well drawn and show an analytical mind both unusual and unexpected. The music reveals the hand of a master; it is neither claying nor aggressively dissonant, and the orchestration shows tremendous mastery of technique, as also a wider understanding of the mission of each instrument in the color scheme which is related to sound and emotion. There is not one moment when interest lags; the music carries the action with a grip and the action flows smoothly and logically, eliminating the unreal and superficial effects which frequently mar opera. Mary Garden was superb and impressive in the role of Louise, and she had much for which to be thankful in the admirable support received from three of the most sterling artists in the Manhattan company. These were Dalmores, who not only impersonated, but actually seemed to live the part of Julien; Mme. Bressler-Cianoff as the mother, and Gilbert as the father of Louise. Of these, the most poignant, the most vital was Gilbert, who is one of the greatest artists on the operatic stage. Mme. Bressler-Cianoff, too, gave a picture as telling in effect as it was remarkable in its drawing, and vocally she maintained her established position as a great artist. Dalmores, the impetuous lover, in whom tenderness is the dominant note, sang with great beauty and opulence of tone. Enough cannot be said of his work, either as singer or as actor, because to give him mere credit for what he does would be to drop into extravagances of expression. Miss Garden fully demonstrates her beautiful art, an art which stood for all that the world implies in Paris, where the spirit stands for almost everything. She showed traces of her recent illness on the first night, but later she came into her own and sang with great beauty of tone and with great dramatic power. There is no doubt that Louise will be one of the great successes of the season if not a lasting favorite in New York. No one can fail to realize the superiority of the production which in stage setting is one of the most splendid achievements of the Manhattan opera stage managers.

EMILIE FRANCES BAUER.

Capture 1000 Motorists.

LONDON, Jan. 11.—Superintendent W. J. Marks of the Surrey constabulary has been promoted to take charge of the new petty sessions division at Woking.

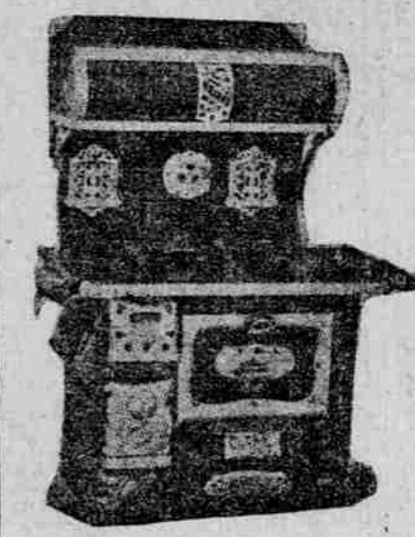
During the four and a half years he has had charge of the Kingston district he has captured about 1000 motorists for exceeding the speed limit and driving in the public danger, and in the majority of cases fines were imposed. He took up his new duties at Woking at the beginning of the new year.

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