

Hammerstein Imports Opera Singers

Great European Artists Will Appear at Manhattan Opera-House This Season.



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COUNTESS LABIA

ditions against which every manager of the Metropolitan had fought vainly for years. So Mr. Hammerstein decided to give them stars. But he had another card up his sleeve. He had discovered in his first season that there were many good voices in Europe unknown to the American public. He had "discovered" Bondi, one of the greatest lyric tenors of modern times. He had brought him to America—and Mr. Conried had bought him away from the Manhattan at the end of the first season. Mr. Hammerstein went to Europe and hunted the operahouses on the search for other voices. He found them. He brought to New York the best French tenor New York had ever heard—Charles Dalmores. The Metropolitan tried to get him away last season and failed. He discovered Mary Garden, the darling of the Opera Comique in Paris. He discovered Tetrazzini the "second Patti" over whom London was going wild. And he discovered new operas—"Louise," "Thais," "Les Brangane" in "Tristan und Isolde." Dalmores sang the part of "Tristan." Mme. Doris will sing "Amneris" and other leading contraltos from Europe. "The Labia," who also comes to join Oscar Hammerstein's forces is a real "Contessa." She is unmarried and the youngest of four daughters of the Count Labia. Her oldest sister is a successful singer; the other two are a pianist and a violinist, respectively. Labia's mother accompanies her wherever she goes. She has made a great reputation in Stockholm and at the Opera Comique, in Berlin. One of her favorite roles is "Zerlina" and as Hammerstein has procured the rights to all the Puccini operas this year, she opened in that opera.

F. di Segurida is one of the new bass singers. He is from Barcelona and has sung with success in South America. Charles Dalmores blew a cornet before he discovered that he had a fine tenor voice. He was one of Hammerstein's discoveries. He has sung both seasons at the Manhattan and helped Mary Garden last year to make a success of "Louise" and "Thais."

Benefit Concert for St. Agnes Baby Home

A PROGRAMME which appealed because of its diversified beauty was the reward of the large audience that crowded the Hellig Theater Friday night on the occasion of a concert toward the funds of the St. Agnes Baby Home, and the event was in every way a pleasant success.

Never did the Hellig stage look more daintily pretty. The scenery was exceedingly well selected, the background being a woodland view with a hill, a fountain, rugs and flowers helped out the artistic picture, and the four lady singers and the accompanist were gowned in white. To help the cause Mr. Hellig gave the use of the theater, only charging the net cost of operating. Other friends were equally kind.

The Lakme quartet, composed of Mrs. May Dearborn-Schwab, Mrs. Ethel Lytle-Boothe, Miss Petronella G. Connelly and Mrs. A. T. Bushong, gave the concert, assisted by Miss Cornelia Barker, violinist, Miss Della Bradley, reader, Stuart McGuire, baritone, and Mrs. Arvilla McGuire Stoltz, accompanist. I found the programme just of sufficient length, the last number concluding exactly at 9:50 o'clock P. M. This is a good hint for future occasions.

The Lakme quartet is making marked advances in art, and is a real credit to musical Portland. Its work is serious and dignified, and the ensemble work of the singers has now that finish and ease which marks the first-class musical organization. If there is a better ladies' quartet than this anywhere around this part of the country, I want to hear it.

The three opening numbers sung by the quartet were distinguished by delicacy and fine blending of tone, but the real triumph won, from a musician's point of view, was the singing of the quartet "West Wind," written by Father Dominic of Mount Angel College. All the well

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G. DALMORES



F. DE SEGUROLA

NEW YORK, Nov. 15.—(Special Correspondence.)—These are the smiling faces of some of his singers which greeted Oscar Hammerstein when he met "La Lorraine" recently. Do the singers love Mr. Hammerstein? They certainly do. They all kissed him on one cheek or the other, and voiced their affection for him in unmistakable terms. Why do the singers love Oscar Hammerstein so? Because he has revolutionized opera in New York and made it possible for so many of them to obtain contracts to appear in this country at top salaries, because he has shaken the musical world out of the rut into which it had fallen and caused a complete reorganization of the older opera-houses. Because he is Oscar, and Oscar stands for enterprise and daring and taste and judgment.

To understand why the singers love Oscar one must go back a little in the history of opera. When the Manhattan Opera-House was planned, the Metropolitan was under the management of Heinrich Couriel. Mr. Couriel was a narrow-minded man, whose chief ambition was to force the expenses of the Metropolitan Opera-House down and its receipts up. He had a splendid subscription list, whose permanency was almost assured by the social prestige attaching to the ownership of season tickets to "the opera." So he had little to fear from his patrons. So he set about dealing with the songbirds on a cold business basis. He announced to each that his or her pay would be reduced so much—if not the amount paid for each appearance, at least the number of appearances during a season. "In this way he proposed to keep before his subscribers the same long



list of renowned singers, but to give them about half as many appearances of each.

The singers objected strenuously. Some of them quarreled with Couriel, and went on concert tour, refusing to appear in New York opera at all. Others fought as hard as they could up to the last minute, and succumbed to the new conditions, still protesting. When Oscar Hammerstein announced his plans for the Manhattan operahouse, Mr. Couriel had his establishment on an economic basis unknown to recent years of operatic management. He did not take Mr. Hammerstein very seriously, especially when he found that the new impresario was planning to rely on perfection of ensemble rather than great individual singers for his success.

Mr. Hammerstein tried good ensemble opera and learned that he had misjudged the taste of the American people. They wanted stars—the old con-

and sweep of the tempest are in the lines and Mrs. Schwab deserves credit for the clarity of tone with which she sang the high C in altissimo. The last quartet, "Lat the Cherubic Host," from Gault's "Holy City," with Mr. McGuire as baritone soloist, and Miss Barker as solo obligato violin accompanist, was rendered with necessary dramatic intensity.

It was a pleasure to hear Mrs. Schwab so delightfully sing these children's songs, and so thoroughly enter into the delicate humor of them. Her encore was "The Swing," fully suited to her high soprano of flute-like sweetness. Mrs. Boothe never sang better, her encore being "His Lullaby" by Carrie Jacobs Bond. Miss Connelly sang with fine taste, and her encore was "You and Love," D. Harder's. Miss Bradley, a Marion County girl who has received her artistic training as a reader in Chicago, vastly pleased by the genuine fun with which she invested her numbers. She has a very good speaking voice and marked talent as an entertainer.

Miss Barker artistically played "The Swan" by Saint-Saens, and for an encore she chose Jocelyn's "Beuceaux," the latter receiving delightful shading and wealth of tone. Mr. McGuire should sing oftener in public, possessing as he does such a mellow, well-cultivated baritone voice, as was an admirable accompanist.

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