

HUMAN SIDE OF GRAND OPERA STARS REVEALED WHEN CURTAIN FALLS

Emma Eames Is Fond of Children, Tetrazzini Loves Applause, Caruso Is a Cut-Up, While Madame Melba Preserves a Frigid Hauteur and Other Characteristics.



SIG SCOTTI



MADAM TETRAZZINI



MARY GARDEN



MADAM HOMER AT HOME

NEW YORK, March 12.—(Special.)—It is when the curtain falls that the real side of the king and queen of the operatic stage can be studied.

Then for a time the grand manner of the vocal monarch is laid aside, and the impersonator of the great role becomes for an instant just a plain human being, with all the virtues, faults and follies of the rest of us.

A well-known stage manager who has for years been associated with important grand ventures, and who has seen all the great singers at close range, talks entertainingly of their ways.

"It is all very different from what people think," he says. "For example, I have laughed while the great Italian tenor, Tamagno, now dead, was thrilling an audience with his wonderful performance of 'Otello.' As soon as the curtain fell and while the applause was yet thundering to bring him before the audience to bow his thanks Tamagno would streak to his dressing-room to grab a bottle of beer, and take a long drink.

"Emma Eames is the personification of grace behind the scenes, and everybody admires her very highly. She is fond of children, and when she sang in 'Otello' with Tamagno and Maurel, she won everybody by the gracious way she played with the children who figure in the second act of the opera.

"Caruso, the leading tenor of the Metropolitan for many years in this country, and one of the greatest of favorites, is a very democratic sort of man and I have seen him and Signor Scotti between the acts take each other by the shoulders and waltz around the stage singing the popular number 'Yama.'

"Mary Garden is a woman of most wonderful personality, and back of the scenes it was a never ending source of interest to me to watch her. She is gifted with most commanding intellect, and her strong, nervous habits of thought show all the time.

"No matter how great the amount of industry involved in perfecting some detail that will add to the realism of her performance, the ceaseless industry of the woman will carry her through. Her fingers would have been content to let a substituted dancer go through the gyrations that delight Herod, but as a true artist, Miss Garden thought it imperative to preserve the illusion by doing the dance herself, therefore she studied for months and actually became a dancer in order to do justice to this incident.

"Especially is she a wonder in the art of make-up, and so great is this skill that she does not simply restrict the illusion in front of the footlights, but back of her, and can see the volume of paint that has gone to help the effect, the illusion is not lost.

"During the performance, she never loses the character. If she is a queen, she retains her regal poise while waiting for cues. Never does she relax. If she is Joan, the poor little mountebank in the 'Jugler of Notre Dame,' she wanders aimlessly around the stage, throws herself down to rest on a pile of scenery, and never for an instant is anything but the ragamuffin youngster who becomes a saint through devotion to an ideal.

"The personality of Mme. Tetrazzini is a delight to all who have been privileged to get back of the scenes, and come into contact with her. She is the true Tuscan, sunny and emotional. She loves to sing, she has no vanity, and she is frank to

say that she hasn't the least idea how she manages to do it all.

"More than once I have known astounded auditors to ask her: 'How do you manage to sing those extraordinary high notes?'

"The answer is always the same. She looks hopelessly baffled, and with a laugh says in broken English: 'I don't know.'

"Like most prima donnas, in fact, more so than most of them, Tetrazzini loves applause, and when she comes dashing off the stage after some particular tumultuous outburst of admiration on the part of her audience, she is just as likely as not to throw her arms around the neck of whoever happens to be in the path and administer a hearty kiss.

"Like most prima donnas, she has a high proportion as her singing voice, and once to hear it is to know her ever afterwards, for there is probably no other speaking voice like it.

"There is none of the grand manner about Tetrazzini. She loves to receive and her dressing-room is ever open to those she likes.

"It was a frequent custom between the acts during the season in New York to have her room so crowded that there was no room for her to walk around, and nobody enjoyed it more than the prima donna.

"La Diva has a great liking for dogs, and always has a number.

"Madame Melba is the exact opposite to Tetrazzini. She is the empress back of the scenes. Never for one instant does she drop her hauteur. Melba has been the friend and admirer of Kings and Queens. For nearly two

decades her place as the reigning soprano of the world was undisputed and it is only lately that Tetrazzini has come to contest that superiority.

"As Melba, a singer of her fame, she travels with a whole retinue of attendants, a secretary, etc. Perhaps she needs some of these to take care of her jewels, for at one performance she wore gems worth a quarter of a million dollars, and many of them had an interest far beyond their financial worth.

"One night when Melba had passed from the stage on her way to the dressing-room, I made bold to bow and say: 'Madame, the opera is magnificent tonight.'

"She paused an instant to say: 'Is it not always magnificent when Melba sings?'

"Constantino and Dalmores, tenors, are both men who like and are liked by society.

"Both are men of good birth, splendid education and accomplishments, and have the saving grace of a modesty that is a never-fading charm when exhibited by one of the most lionized classes of artists.

"Both also have the skill of athletes. Dalmores is a boxer. Constantino is a wonderful fencer, and I have seen him when he was doing the opera of 'Faust' while waiting for his call, walk around the stage, and challenge anybody who carried a blade to a little test of skill. At such times he would risk his prowess against anybody, from great baritones to supernumerary, and it was rarely that anybody managed to make a point against him.

"Constantino has a wonderful ward-

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robe for the forty parts he has in his repertoire, and for roles which demand a sumptuous showing he has hats and belts studded with diamonds and pearls, and these he will show to friends with as much pride as a woman displaying her new Spring fashions.

"Zenatello, the young dramatic tenor, is a marked contrast to these two older artists. He is modest and retiring and

dodges any social adulation. He knows little English, but has a funny fad for mastering the words of slangy English songs of the kind George Cole writes, and it is funny to hear him while standing in the wings waiting for the cue that will take him into some tragic situation, humming over to himself the foolish words of some idiotic song.

"Renaud is a great student, and is profoundly silent back of the stage, giv-

ing his whole mind to his work, and talking little. Sammarco is somewhat similar, though a little more sociable than the French baritone, and he is a member of the capital meets. A group of officers of the imperial guards discuss their experiences at the gambling table. Herman, a dashing, but poor young officer, tells his comrades about his hopeless love. Prince Felietzky, one of the most prominent noblemen, informs his friend of his betrothal to the charming Countess Liza, granddaughter of the old Countess, nicknamed "Queen of Spades," who, in her youth, had sold herself to a famous magician who, in exchange, revealed to her three cards always sure to win.

repulses her she throws herself into the river. In the last act his madness develops and as the prince enters the fashionable gaming-parlor he becomes seized with remorse. The ghost of the old countess appears and he kills himself.

"ELECTRA" AS REPULSIVE AS "SALOME" AND FAR LESS TRUE HISTORICALLY

Production of Two Strauss Dramas Gives Opportunity for Comparison and Shows That Composer Has Degenerated to a Certain Extent.

BY EMILIE FRANCIS BAUER.

NEW YORK, March 7.—(Special.)—The ripples have not yet subsided. Oscar Hammerstein brought forward "Salome" on Saturday afternoon following what he announced as the last performance of this season of "Elektra." Brought into such close relationship it was not easy to refrain from comparing the two works from Strauss as they came side by side. The genius of the composer is the one and only thing which never admits of a question, but this genius proclaimed itself loudly in the exquisite songs of the early Strauss, such as "Alceste," "Cacilie," "Traum Durch die Dämmerung," "Sanderchen," "Morgan" and many other less familiar to singers and concert-goers. The early Strauss was more highly spiritualized, his music reflected the highest expression of which the human being is capable. We may not follow the inner development of any human being, except as we unconsciously judge him by results, and the Strauss of these exquisitely soulful expressions must have passed down through many phases before he arrived at the possibility of creating such works as "Salome," "Elektra" and the other work, "Feuersnot," which America has not yet heard, although it came chronologically before those mentioned.

Strauss degenerated noticeably after his devotion to Nietzsche, as demonstrated in his later work, "Thus Spake Zarathustra." Beauty had ceased to be his ideal and the ugly side of life seemed as important as the juster, in philosophy this is more than true. The only side which is of absorbing interest to one dealing with life problems is the hard path, the seamy road, the other negative side.

But to one whose mission lies in bringing forth the beauty in art, in developing an art which shall represent as well as mirror the spiritual element in man, the ugly philosophies of life should have no part unless through them and beyond them lies an incontrovertible result for the general uplifting of mankind.

"Salome" as an ethical proposition is perhaps as repulsive as "Elektra," but it is more repulsive because it is more logical. It is a better and a truer piece of drawing, both historically and, indeed, musically. "Elektra" has by no means the inspiration in it which actuated Strauss in the creation of "Salome" in which there are true flights of spirituality, and the musician lies in more of a revolutionary way, as in the case of all revolutionaries, we of the present generation are at too close a range to be able to judge with any calm, critical pose. We must, therefore, base comparisons on something more tangible than Strauss' privilege of departing from accepted, or what we hold as reasonable, forms.

The first criticism to be made against "Elektra" is the wide departure from any sense of the Greek spirit. There is absolutely no point upon which the

student of Greek drama and the creator of the book or of the music of "Elektra" can come together. It is as untrue psychologically as it is historically, and it must be said again, as was said in the column of the Greek tragedy, it is pre-eminently the stater of the present day, and Mme. Mazarin is peculiarly adapted to heighten the dramatic effect.

The keynote of "Elektra" as conceived by Strauss is revenge and based upon this, both he and his interpreter run the same, because in the end the readiness is the creed which throws upon the woman the duty of avenging the wrong done her father. The avenger is a much greater character than the revenger. He or she lives on a higher plane and the emotions involved are of a totally different nature, because in the end there is no difference of intensity. The last moments of the work, the great climax might, under given circumstances, be the same, because in the end the readiness would no doubt have come about through an obsession for revenge just as it would from obsession for revenge.

Whether regarded from the historical side or from the psychological "Salome" is absolutely consistent and belongs in the era into which it is set. True, throughout it is a study of passion, from that of religion exemplified by Jokanaan to that of the utmost degeneracy of Herold and especially of Salome, but it is the passion inherent to each type and the psychology of the character is of the period and type which in itself rises far beyond the level of the later work.

Again Mary Garden revealed the extraordinary qualities which have made of her a singing actress second to none in the world, unique in most of the elements which make for the greatest possible art. She brings into her characterization a tremendous intelligence, which she never ceases to dominate. Her drawing of Salome is perhaps the most extraordinary thing that she has done, because she succeeds in keeping out of it the sensual element.

Tschalkowsky was heard for the first time as composer of opera Saturday afternoon at the Metropolitan when his "Pique Dame" or "Queen of Spades" was given for the first time in America. The opera suffers in comparison with the modern works from the fact that although it is only now presented here, it was written a great many years ago, and while it is more modern than many others of that period, it still has not the elements which even he would have put into it had it been written today. Tschalkowsky, of all modern composers, had within himself the qualities to make great successes in opera, and we can but regret that he did not live in the period which would have made him the most valuable to the present day. There is

much beauty throughout the score, and a picture of Russia and its life we have never had a similar opportunity to behold it. The scene is laid in a famous summer garden in St. Petersburg, where crowds of children play and where the elegant society of the capital meets. A group of officers of the imperial guards discuss their experiences at the gambling table. Herman, a dashing, but poor young officer, tells his comrades about his hopeless love. Prince Felietzky, one of the most prominent noblemen, informs his friend of his betrothal to the charming Countess Liza, granddaughter of the old Countess, nicknamed "Queen of Spades," who, in her youth, had sold herself to a famous magician who, in exchange, revealed to her three cards always sure to win.

The young Countess happens to be that one whom Herman loves and he sees only his poverty, which makes the union impossible. His friends, in fun, urge him to make the old Countess give up her secret, Herman, who decides to commit suicide, still desires to see Liza once again, and after her he leaves her. He is shocked, and sees only his poverty, which makes the union impossible. His friends, in fun, urge him to make the old Countess give up her secret, Herman, who decides to commit suicide, still desires to see Liza once again, and after her he leaves her. He is shocked, and sees only his poverty, which makes the union impossible. His friends, in fun, urge him to make the old Countess give up her secret, Herman, who decides to commit suicide, still desires to see Liza once again, and after her he leaves her. He is shocked, and sees only his poverty, which makes the union impossible. 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