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STUDENT LEARN AT REHEARSAL

Laboratory Methods of Studying Grand Opera—American Singers Will be Given a Chance to Rise From Minor Parts to Leading Roles.

BOSTON, Dec. 28.—"Ah, that was vocalized just the way we have been taught, but don't always do. He is going to sing again. Just listen! Isn't he perfectly splendid!"

The big basso once again expands his chest beneath the heaving fawn-colored waistcoat, his immaculate coat tails are visibly agitated, while his fingers clutch under pearl-grey gloves, and several hundred music students hold their breath while he emits his. When the prompter suddenly catches the Great One napping, and makes him sing the lines again, the audience is all but awestruck. This thing happens, of course, to the dufer who is being coached for an amateur performance, but who ever expected it in a rehearsal involving operatic stars with international reputations. However, even Homer nods—perhaps Mme. Louise Homer, at times—and the courtly Spanish nobleman who takes bass parts in the San Carlo performances may have now and then a moment of forgetfulness. One of the advantages of the laboratory method of studying grand opera is that besides attending finished performances you are in at all the rehearsals and see just how every body in the cast, great and small, is coached into perfection of form.

There are now new opportunities in this country for pursuing this laboratory study of the most dramatic kind of classical music. These furthermore are going to be greatly increased in the near future, say the wise ones. Grand opera is likely before long to be actually at home in this country. Up to now it has been only an exotic—that is, except in New Orleans. New York, of course, has seen a multitude of presentations of grand opera, under foreign auspices, ever since the performance of the "Begger's Opera" back in 1750.

A few others of the largest cities have had new and then a few days of the time of the opera troupes that spend most of their American seasons in the metropolis, where high society is willing to squander some of the proceeds of high finance upon high priced boxes. Most average Americans, even those who are interested in music, know grand opera mainly by reading about it. Only New Orleans which first introduced operas of the French and Italian school into America in 1791, has had to its credit a practically unbroken series of annual performances under local management. Comic opera, of course, has been Americanized long since.

Just now there is a likelihood that permanent grand opera on a broad democratic and non-sectional basis may be maintained in this country, Boston rather than New York serving as headquarters. For the idea of the San Carlo opera company which has just completed the first engagement of its second season in America with three weeks in Boston and which has now started on its tour among the leading centres of population, is to abolish the monopoly of grand opera hitherto held by the rich, cutting in two the usual prices for seats, as charged by the opera house in New York, and starting a scheme which will appeal to Americans in all cities, with discrimination against none.

If Boston is chosen as the centre from which this plan of grand opera for all Americans will work, a distinctly new element will be introduced into American music. For the Puritan capital, although in some respects, particularly as regards musical composition and musical education, it has long been the leading American centre, has always been weak in chances to become familiar with grand opera. New York deserves great credit among American cities for having first given encouragement to enterprises of this kind originating abroad. For more than a century Gotham has patronized successively a long line of famous operatic singers—to become familiar with Manuel Garcia and his daughter Mme. Malbran, Mme. Carvadori, Signorina Borghese, Senor Marty, to say nothing of "the galaxy of song birds"—to borrow a favorite phrase of the press agents whom Colonel Mapleson, Mr. Grau, and Mr. Conried have introduced in later years to the American public. And in all this time Bostonians, and New England folk generally, have mainly grumbled at the price of grand opera during

the brief engagements that have been played in the Hub.

Last spring a pleasant little surprise was sprung on those who would rather hear good music at a moderate price than pay five dollars for a seat to see a gorgeous display of the jewels of the Four Hundred. An opera company of whom nobody except the music critics seemed to know much, which had been touring in a wearisome series of brief stands across the continent, turned up for a few hurried performances in Boston as a wind-up to the season. The prices of the seats were reasonable. This feature appealed to the frugal New Englander. But it was soon discovered that because the performances were relatively cheap they were not inferior. Indeed an impression was very soon spread that this company was on which aimed rather to present a finished artistic performance than to display in connection with each opera three or four much advertised celebrities, fabled to receive thousands of dollars a night.

The novelty of the scheme proved attractive and good sized houses gladdened the management. The newspapers let it be known in a general way that this enterprise was in charge of Henry Russell, a son of Henry Russell, the celebrated song writer, who lived in New York for many years, and a half brother of William Clark Russell, the well known English novelist. It appeared that Mr. Russell had studied the art of singing in Italy, had taught with marked success in London, and feeling that honors awaited him as an impo-sario, he had organized the San Carlo company in London in 1904, and given the English capital a taste of democratic grand opera. Among his singers in the first season was Caruso, who has since gained distinction, not to say notoriety, in another connection. In 1906 Mr. Russell brought his company to America. Everything having unusual merit, comes here sooner or later.

The basic idea of the San Carlo opera company is to give good grand opera at prices within everybody's reach. The director found himself early face to face with the problem of getting good singers at salaries that did not make exaggerated prices a necessity. It had been impelled to secure, even at a sacrifice of some profits, a number of distinguished musicians. Encouraged by last season's reception in many American cities and particularly by that in Boston, Mr. Russell reappearance this year with such well known personages as Alice Neilson, Jane Noria, Florencio Constantino, Madame Claisens, Signorola, Blanchard, Mme. Desana, and Victor Maurel. It is interesting that Noria and Neilson, the two prima donnas, are

(Continued on page 2)

Good Cough medicine for Children.

The season for coughs and colds is now at hand and too much care cannot be used to protect the children. A cold is much more likely to contract diphtheria or scarlet fever when he has a cold. The quicker you cure his cold the less the risk. Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is the sole reliance of many mothers, and few of those who have tried it are willing to use any other. Mrs. F. F. Starcher, of Ripley, W. Va., says: "I have never used anything other than Chamberlain's Cough Remedy for my children and it has always given good satisfaction." This remedy contains no opium or other narcotic and may be given as confidently to a child as to an adult. For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.



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