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"GIOCONDA" RINGS UP THE CURTAIN AT METROPOLITAN

A Spirited Performance with Caruso in Good Form at Head of the Cast—Amato, Destinn and Toscanini at Their Best—Audience Plays Its Own Brilliant Part Brilliantly—Geraldine Farrar's Cold Gives Ponchielli a Distinction That Belonged to Massenet

WITH a spirited performance of "Gioconda" the Metropolitan Opera Company began its season last Monday night. The occasion was as brilliant as others that have gone before, and if it is not difficult to recall premières of greater artistic pith and moment it behooves the chronicler of the august event to record the generally diffused glamor as a matter of necessary convention. As usual there were as many crowded into the house as could conveniently or otherwise be fitted into it and, as usual, many were turned away for lack of accommodations. There was the usual tenseness of expectancy as the opera began and the usual superheated enthusiasm once it had gotten under way. There were noisy ovations after every important musical moment during the progress of the acts and there were more of them, heightened by horticultural tributes, as each curtain fell.

The audience also played its part well. Parquet and boxes were sartorially resplendent and admiration was mutual and protracted. Even the house itself looked better for some slight refurbishing. Curtain and decorations gave the impression of having undergone a needed cleaning and in the promenade was a brand new carpet pleasing to walk upon.

Although it is widely assumed that the first Metropolitan audience cares little which opera is set before it so long as plenty of vocal opportunities are provided for Mr. Caruso and three or four other favorites, it is not unlikely that some regretted the withdrawal of Massenet's "Manon," which had originally been scheduled for the occasion, owing to Geraldine Farrar's cold. And yet Caruso's most ardent admirers realize in their heart of hearts that his distinctive style is better adapted to Ponchielli's melodrama, fourth-rate music as it is, than to the subtler exactions of Massenet's Dresden china opera. Moreover, it provides opportunities not only for the first tenor and soprano, but permits two contraltos, a baritone and a bass to shine forth luminously. It is therefore useful, though for the greater part detestable musical drivel.

Monday's "Gioconda" was excellent, all told, as concerns the musical aspects of its interpretation. To be sure, we have heard many equally good in the past, but given under any other than first night auspices they have produced distinctly less of a sensation. No features of novelty distinguished the cast. Caruso was the *Enzo*, Amato the *Barnaba*, Destinn the *Gioconda*, Matzenauer the *Laura*, Duchène *La Cieca* and Seguro *Alvise*. Toscanini conducted and Toscanini can inform even Ponchielli's tawdry score with red blood and dramatic life that might to some extent command critical respect for the work if respect could be commanded by any mortal means.

Hubbub Over Caruso

Each of the principals was received with a volley of applause as he or she appeared on the stage for the first time, and Caruso made his entrance to an extraordinary hub-

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GIOVANNI MARTINELLI

—Photo by Mishkin

Who Gives Promise of Being by Far the Most Important Acquisition Among Italian Tenors That the Metropolitan Opera Company Has Made in Years. He Made His Début There Thursday Evening as "Rodolfo" in "Bohème." (See Page 37)

Safer to Mind and Morals To Study Music in America, Says Mr. Freund

"Conditions Surrounding Music Study Abroad, Especially as They Affect American Girls, Are of Nature That Makes White Slave Stories Sound Like Pretty Fairy Tales," Declares "Musical America's" Editor in Address at Peabody Institute in Baltimore—Not Necessary to Go Abroad for "Atmosphere"

[By telegram to MUSICAL AMERICA]

BALTIMORE, MD., Nov. 18.—That American music schools and American music teachers afford opportunities second to those offered in no other country in the world and that the musical schools in this country provide a safer and cleaner life for our young girls and young men who are studying music was the opinion set forth convincingly this afternoon by John C. Freund, editor of MUSICAL AMERICA, before an audience of nearly a thousand persons at the Peabody Institute of Music. Mr. Freund's address, made by invitation of Harold Randolph, director of the institution, was listened to by the most

prominent factors in Baltimore musical life and the frequent outbursts of applause indicated that he had struck a popular chord.

"The conditions surrounding music study abroad, especially as they affect American girls, are of a nature that makes the white slave stories sound like pretty fairy tales," declared Mr. Freund. "To illustrate this, let me quote exactly the words of a former director of the Metropolitan Opera House, who after a search for American singers in Europe said: 'They came to me hollow-eyed, these American girls who had been studying in Europe; they had been stripped of their money, stripped of their health, their jewels; stripped of their virtue, even of their belief in a God.'"

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"DON QUICHOTTE" HAS AMERICAN PREMIÈRE

Well Performed by Chicago Company in Philadelphia—Music in Massenet's Familiar Vein

Bureau of Musical America,
Sixteenth and Chestnut Sts.,
Philadelphia, November 17, 1913.

THE first real novelty of the local opera season was offered at the Metropolitan last Saturday afternoon, when Massenet's "Don Quichotte" had its American première, under the direction of Cleofonte Campanini, with Vanni Marcoux in the title rôle, which he had sung many times in Europe; Hector Dufranne as *Sancho Panza*, and Mary Garden as *La Belle Dulcinea*. The performance was a genuine success. The score is in Massenet's familiar vein. It offers a continuous flow of melody, light, sometimes almost inconsequential, and not often of dramatic significance, but at all times pleasing, of an elegance that appeals to the aesthetic sense, and in all its phases appropriate to the story, sketched rather briefly by Henri Cain from the voluminous romance of Miguel de Cervantes.

In the beautifully spectacular production that was disclosed at the local Metropolitan on Saturday is shown first a street in a Spanish town, before the house of *Dulcinea*, then a stretch of country landscape, with the revolving windmills, which *Don Quichotte* valorously attacks; the lair of the brigands, which the Don seeks in his determination to win *Dulcinea's* favor by recovering for her the stolen pearl necklace; the courtyard of *Dulcinea's* house, during a fête, and the forest, where, broken of heart, alone with his faithful *Sancho*, *Don Quichotte* yields up his still uncomplaining spirit. All of these scenes are beautifully staged, particularly that of the windmills, and the final tableau, showing through the forest trees the dim blue, snow-peaked Sierras in the distance.

In his impersonation of *Don Quichotte*, Mr. Marcoux, who had previously appeared here only as *Scarpia* in "Tosca," gave new and convincing evidence of his dramatic ability by offering a characterization quite as effective as, but in all respects in direct contrast to, that of the villainous *Chief of Police* in the Puccini opera. His *Don Quichotte* is essentially a comedy portrayal, but presents a keen analysis of character and is imbued with an underlying vein of tenderness and pathos that obviates the comic effect of the poor old knight-errant's unconscious grotesqueness. Marcoux's make-up might be called a cross between *Mephistopheles* and *Svengali*. Of a slender figure, which he accentuates, he looks tall, gaunt and ungainly; peaked of countenance, with parrot-like nose, and sunken of cheek; clad in a semblance of armor and carrying an exaggerated spear nearly twice as long as himself, the Don is not a person to win admiration, and yet, so skillfully does Marcoux suggest the man's innate gentleness and nobility of soul, that one bestows admiration, and forgets to ridicule. Even the Don's hopeless adoration of the fair *Dulcinea*, who laughs him to scorn, inspires a pitying smile, and in the end, realizing the futility of his hope, having been thrust aside even after he had fulfilled the lady's wish and recovered the stolen jewels, thinking that her hand was to be his reward, his death in the lonely forest, accomplished with realism and accompanied by music written in Massenet's most sympathetic style, is tearfully impressive.

Marcoux's costume and make-up have the authority of the illustrations of Cervantes's book in its early editions, and the scenes of the opera also in several instances suggest a reproduction of the sketches in the book. While one cannot give to the French baritone the same degree of praise for his singing that is freely granted his impersonation, as a character delineation, it may be said that vocally he ably fills the

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