

# RICHARD STRAUSS WRITING ANOTHER OPERA

Von Hofmannsthal Again His Librettist, Berlin Announces—A Three-Act Work with Scenes in Vienna—Puccini Denies Anti-German Sentiments Attributed to Him—Descendant of Wolfram von Eschenbach Passes Away—Walter Kirchoff's Berlin Concert Given Between Battles—Nikisch and Strauss in Beethoven Concerts

European Bureau of Musical America,  
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RICHARD STRAUSS is at work upon a new opera in three acts, for which the inevitable Hugo von Hofmannsthal has again written the book. As in the "Rosenkavalier," the scenes are laid in Vienna, but instead of the Rococo era, the time is that of the Vienna Congress, 1814-1815.

The other day, at the Dresden Court Opera, Strauss conducted his first Royal Symphony concert in a series for which he was engaged as "a guest" after the death of Ernst von Schuch. The program included Beethoven, Mozart and Strauss compositions, among the latter being "Tod und Verklärung," which was played in memory of von Schuch. Strauss was feted like the hero of a première.

Upon many private music teachers in Germany the war has had a disastrous effect, and this has led the Minister of Public Instruction to issue a manifesto calling upon all music teachers, who have regular employment of one kind or another, to refrain from accepting private pupils as long as the war lasts. By this means, it is hoped, the troubles of private music teachers may be offset to a certain extent, at least.

### A Letter from Puccini

In answer to a notice published by the German Theatrical Society in its periodical, *Deutsche Bühne*, to the effect that Puccini had joined the protestants against German barbarisms against art, the famous Italian maestro has written the following letter to the Secretary of the society, Arthur Wolff:

"Milano, December 21, 1914.

"Dear Mr. Wolff:

"I have just heard from my pub-

lisher, Mr. Ricordi, that you are counting me among those who have taken a stand against Germany. I am delighted to be able to tell you, on the contrary, that I have ever refrained from any manifestations whatsoever against your country. Respectfully yours,  
"PUCCINI."

You will already have been informed of the death of Carl Goldmark in Vienna, but you may not know that, prior to his death, he had just completed a new piano quintet in Gmunden, his Summer residence, which he left a few days before he died. He had also been sketching a new opera and had been working diligently for some time on his memoirs. There you have an activity in old age to shame many a young artist! The ever-active mind of Goldmark remained clear to the very last moment.

Wolfram von Eschenbach, a descendant of the famous German bard, has just died in Arad (Austria) at the age of eighty-nine. The namesake of the ancient poet, though very unpoetically employed as a railway official in Austria, frequently spoke with pride of his renowned ancestor. The family of von Eschenbach emigrated to Hungaria in the year 1786.

### A Musical Misunderstanding

The art world certainly is a world in itself, and, war or no war, is bound to have its own intrigues. Munich, so often the field of misunderstandings, has again had a conductors' crisis in miniature. When Otto Hesse was engaged as successor to Franz Fischer, people noted, or thought they did, a friction, collision or something of the sort, between the new conductor and Generalmusikdirektor Bruno Walter. It was remarked in professional and other circles that Generalmusikdirektor Walter enjoyed an exceptionally favored position, exempting him from the rules and regulations governing

all members at the Royal Opera. Now this news came to the ears of the Generalintendant, Baron von Frankenstein, who forthwith made it a point to shed the necessary light upon the complicated



Walter Kirchoff, Tenor, in His Uniform as Captain of Cavalry in the German Army

situation. Baron von Frankenstein has written for publication:

"It is not true that Generalmusikdirektor Bruno Walter has been endowed with dictatorial official authority at the Royal Opera of Munich. Mr. Walter's contract in no way authorizes him to decide any questions whatsoever without my sanction. This sanction he seeks in every single case, and if I assume the responsibility before the world at large for every official act of Walter, this must not be considered as a mere formality, but invariably the result of a careful and deliberate joint resolution. Nor is it true that, while all other members of the Royal Opera have been compelled to submit to a reduction of their salaries to one-half or even one-third, the Generalmusikdirektor is the only one who continues to enjoy his annual remuneration unimpaired. All court officials are exempt from this curtailing of salaries and, therefore, Hofkapellmeister Hess is also one of those who continue to draw their full salary."

Beethoven evenings everywhere! Nearly every concert one attends in Berlin is likely to be under the sign of the great German composer with the Dutch name. To this rule, the third symphony concert of the Blüthner Orchestra, under Siegmund von Hausegger, was no exception. The Fourth and Seventh Symphonies and the "Coriolanus" Overture constituted the program and were read with all the intelligence and individuality for which Herr von Hausegger is noted. Astonishingly large was the attendance, while the department of the public clearly manifested that Germans have not yet lost their musical nature.

### Kirchoff's Concert

Walter Kirchoff, the tenor of the Royal Opera, has returned from the front on a short furlough. As our readers will remember, Herr Kirchoff, who was a cavalry officer before he became a singer, joined his old regiment as lieutenant at the outbreak of the war. In the course of the military proceedings, he has been made a captain of cavalry. So last Monday, when he appeared on the platform of the Philharmonic, not in uniform but in stereotyped evening dress, merely decorated with the Iron Cross, the enthusiasm of the densely packed Philharmonie knew no bounds. Herr Kirchoff devoted himself exclusively to Wagner. "Meistersinger," "Rienzi," "Siegfried" and "Lohengrin" numbers constituted the program, the orchestral accompaniment being effectively conducted, if not always in accordance with time-honored tradition, by Camille Hildebrand. It remains to be mentioned that the war seems to have had a rejuvenating effect on the tenor, who appeared to be in splendid health. His voice, on the other hand, did not seem to have been influenced quite so favorably by the hardships of battle. In fact, if the frantic enthusiasm with which the public demanded one encore after another were not traceable to the prevalent patriotic atmosphere, I should be inclined to believe that Germans really did not understand so very much about singing. Still, Kirchoff reveals more really artistic style in his interpretations than the majority of his colleagues.

Another eminent pianist seems to have arrived. Thus, at least, to all appearances, the Berlin public thought on Saturday in Beethoven Hall, where Ignaz Friedman gave a Chopin evening. The artist again exhibited all his exceptional merits, although not entirely overcoming his tendency to create a compelling effect at the expense of the atmosphere of a work. Especially was this noticeable in the C Sharp Minor Scherzo, which might have been given a broader and more poetical interpretation. The tempi of the six Etudes were accelerated. However, Friedman is a veritable master of the key-board and fascinates his auditors, laymen and the critics alike. The B Minor Sonata was a revelation of the most consummate musical and technical art imaginable. And one has but to recall Friedman's powers of expression in the three initial Ballades to be convinced that here was a virtuoso of the blood—an artist able to compete successfully with the most exalted one of his profession. As before extasies—a demonstration that seemed justified.

### Nikisch's Beethoven Program

BERLIN, Dec. 30.—No more brilliant ante-Christmas celebration could have been arranged than the program of the last Philharmonic Concert, which was devoted exclusively to Beethoven. The "Leonore" Overture stood out in bold relief. Nikisch gave it a reading that in

[Continued on next page]

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