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Mme. Kutscherra has opened an operatic school in the Hotel Claridge, New York. Mme. Kutscherra, after a brilliant career in the leading opera houses of Europe, is prepared to teach singers in all phases of the vocal art, including tone placement, interpretation and operatic routine and repertoire.

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RICHARD STRAUSS A "SMUGGLER"

Canny Composer Accepts Flour Instead of Laurel Wreaths from Amsterdam Admirers—An Appetite That Brooked No Interference from War's Embargos

By JACQUES MAYER

A FEW weeks ago a Parisian newspaper brought the startling intelligence that Dr. Richard Strauss had smuggled a big bag of flour from Holland into Germany.

The French journalist's story was in the main true, but it was left to the Berlin *Kladderadatsch* to furnish an expectant world with the details.

It appears that the composer of "Salomé" had conducted a concert in Amsterdam. Knowing that he would receive laurel wreaths in abundance he informed one of his admirers that a quarter of a ton of flour would be a more suitable as well as more useful tribute.

The flour was not seen on the concert platform but Richard II received it nevertheless.

He is known as a very hearty eater and the bread card distributed in Berlin among all classes long ago failed to satisfy his wants. Indeed, it is asserted that of late the members of the Royal Orchestra often miss the sandwiches which they bring along to rehearsals, and they have come to the conclusion that their famous leader, in some manner, contrives to "convey" to himself the combinations of bread and limburger or

bread and bologna which provide such excellent means of sustenance and refreshment when rehearsing "Ein Heldenleben," or the "Domestica."

After many difficulties the flour arrived in Berlin. Fifty pounds of it were used by Frau Strauss to bake hot cross Easter buns, breakfast rolls, etc. *En parenthèse*, those of my readers who heard the lady sing in New York some years ago, will probably hope that she bakes better than she sings. The basso of the opera, Paul Knüpfer, was presented with ten pounds of the flour, Colleague Felix Weingartner received fifteen pounds and the prima donnas, Erna Denera and Claire Dux, were given ten pounds. Then Dr. Strauss remembered the music critics, who naturally enough received much smaller quantities.

It is feared that this Amsterdam engagement may involve Holland in a serious complication with England. It appears that in some of the laurel wreaths Dutch cheeses as well as sausage were concealed, and Sir Edward Grey has therefore notified Holland that all German artists must be rewarded in a purely pecuniary way only. The bestowal of wreaths, cheeses or sausages will be regarded in future as an "unfriendly act."

Bispham Offers Beethoven Play and Novel Concert Afterpiece

DAVID BISPHAM is to be heard in a distinctive program next season, the first part introducing the famous baritone as *Beethoven* in the one-act play, "Adelaide," and the second being a succession of concert numbers with enough of a story connecting them to make the offering a logical entity. Mr. Bispham describes the genesis of this offering as follows:

"Years ago, when I was studying in Florence, I saw at the house of a friend a photograph of the celebrated Viennese actor, Jauner, in the character of *Beethoven*, in a one-act play called 'Adelaide,' a romantic episode in the life of the great composer. I at once realized—in a state of mind that is commonly called 'a hunch'—that I could look like *Beethoven*, and determined that I would play in that drama before I died. I was not yet upon the stage; but several years later, when I was singing in the Wagnerian operas at Covent Garden, in London, I set about finding this piece.

"I had told a German friend about it, and by a lucky chance he discovered the little faded pamphlet on a second-hand bookstall: for a penny he bought it and gave it to me. To brush up my German for the operas I translated and adapted 'Adelaide,' but still there never was opportunity to act in it. That did not come until I was singing in New York at the Metropolitan Opera, when I was engaged to give something out of the ordinary for a special occasion. The first performance was at the opening of the new ballroom at the Waldorf Astoria, when Anton Seidl conducted the orchestra and

Mme. Schumann-Heink sang before the rise of the curtain. Julie Opp supported me as the beautiful *Adelaide*, and among others in the cast were Yvonne de Tréville and the celebrated actresses, Mrs. Whiffen and Mrs. Walcott.

"After the play the apparently unemotional Seidl paid me the greatest compliment by coming on the stage, drying his eyes, which were filled with tears, and with a warm grasp of the hand, saying, 'You are ze first man vitch haff ever made me to weep.' Since that time I have frequently performed this affecting and effective little piece in New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington and also in London, where one season I took a theater for its production.

"I realize that our American public wants novelty now, and I propose during the coming season to give my play with a cast so chosen that the second part of the program will be a miscellaneous concert which will be given by the artists who support me in the drama. In the play *Beethoven's* dingy, untidy studio is shown. In the second part, however, a modern drawing room will be the setting for the concert, which I shall call 'The Rehearsal.' A hostess is awaiting the arrival of the artists whom she has engaged for her musicale, shortly to take place, and they have an hour or so of informal music in preparation for the occasion. This idea I have patented."

Mr. Bispham has returned from a short tour, on which he sang at the Spring festival at Ames, Iowa; at Charleston, Mo.; at St. Louis, Pittsburgh and Atlantic City, where he co-operated with the Barrère Ensemble. Since his return he has made two appearances in New York.



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