

GROWING DEMAND FOR OPERA SIGNIFICANT FEATURE OF SEASON'S MUSICAL FORECAST

Schedules of Various Cities Show Remarkable Advance in Both Quantity and Quality of Operatic Fare—Business Now on Substantial Basis—Rabinoff and Gallo Companies Strong Factors—Paving the Way for Creation of Municipal Opera Houses

By KENNETH S. CLARK

READERS of the Special Fall Issue may readily surmise that it is no easy task to "read copy" on all this mass of material—that is, to prepare it for the printer. However, the handling of the correspondence is in one respect a real privilege, for it gives one an even closer perspective of musical conditions in the country than is afforded, perhaps, to MUSICAL AMERICA's readers by a perusal of the printed copy of the paper. In the present Fall Issue one particular tendency in musical affairs dominates the whole volume. It is the remarkable growth of the popular taste for grand opera.

If you wish confirmation of the above statement, simply take your copy of the paper and scan the headlines attached to the season's forecasts from the various cities. Each of these "heads," by the way, is designed to reflect a significant phase of that community's development. In running through the pages what do we find? We find, more than in any previous Fall Issue, that a surprisingly large number of cities are to have to a certain degree "their own" opera seasons.

Telltale Headlines

Let us enumerate some of the headlines: "Cincinnati to Have Eventful Season of Opera," "St. Louis Starts Nucleus of Its Own Opera," "Annual Opera Season in View for Houston," "Grand Opera and Ballet for New Orleans," "San Antonio May Have an Opera Season," "Salt Lake May Have Permanent Opera," "Three Opera Companies to Visit Toledo," and so it goes! Besides, in ever so many cities where the opera plans did not happen to receive mention in the headline, these communities have brief but interesting seasons of opera—in many cases by more than one company.

This is a far cry from the conditions in the old days when the country subsisted operatically upon the meager fare provided by some itinerant "fly-by-night" troupe, save in those few cities which were honored by the visits of the Metropolitan Company. Later when the Metropolitan limited its out-of-town appearances chiefly to Atlanta, the Chicago Company filed in the breach as far as the Middle West and the Far West were concerned. To-day that side of the operatic business is on a much more practical basis in that the opera seasons in the various cities are supplied by companies organized for the express purpose of touring, and the venture is no longer that of organizations resident in one city which go on tour in the springtime to make a little "easy money." The seasons of these touring companies are planned along substantial financial lines, a marked contrast to the methods of a few years ago, when the exploiters of the Montreal Company's tour left the singers pitifully stranded in Denver.

For the present systematizing of opera giving throughout the country there are two organizations which deserve credit, not only because they have devised a practical method of promoting their campaigns, but because they have proved by actual results that it is possible to give opera successfully on tour in America. These organizations are the Boston-National Grand Opera Company, of which Max Rabinoff is the managing director, and the San Carlo Grand Opera Company, directed by Fortune Gallo.

Max Rabinoff's company has approached the problem with the assumption that it is possible to present opera on tour of the same high grade and with virtually the same high prices as the big resident companies, provided that the financial co-operation of the various



Max Rabinoff, Managing Director of Boston-National Grand Opera Company

cities be secured. Mr. Rabinoff, in his present nationalizing of his company, has profited by his lessons of last year, chief of which was that his most productive field is not the big operatic centers of the country, but the other cities, which have had virtually nothing with which to satisfy their hunger for opera. Upon this basis he has secured guarantees from various cities, with the result that he has been able to go ahead on the plans for his season with confidence that he is not embarking upon an insecure venture.

On other pages of this issue is given the list of the operas that Mr. Rabinoff is presenting, also of his principal singers. Suffice it to say here that a unique feature of the Boston-National repertoire will be the offering of Russian operas in the original language and with most of the principal roles sung by Russian artists. Another will be the presenting of the Japanese prima donna Tamaki Miura, in two operas on Japanese subjects, "Butterfly" and "Iris."

The opening of the tour in Springfield, described on Page 5, is to be followed by:

"Madama Butterfly" in Syracuse, N. Y., with Mme. Tamaki Miura, Riccardo Martin, Thomas Chalmers and Elvira Leveroni; "Tosca" in Youngstown, O., with Luisa Villani, Giovanni Zenatello, George Baklanoff, and "Faust," including the Walpurgis Night ballet, at Fort Wayne, Ind., with Maggie Teyte, Riccardo Martin, José Mardones and August Bouilleux, the latter's debut in America as *Valentine*.

"Our purpose," as Mr. Rabinoff explained it in MUSICAL AMERICA the other day, "is to serve each community—in other words, it is a national institution. The different cities have all the worry taken off their shoulders. Instead of their having to engage a lot of artists

(it couldn't be for less than ten weeks) we provide them with singers, orchestra, scenery—everything! The cities simply raise the guarantee and we give them their own opera."

"Our tour will last thirty-five weeks," continued Mr. Rabinoff, "and we will give approximately 300 performances, in 89 cities. We will travel over 12,000 miles in our special train, which will carry a company of 262 persons. Our scale of prices is from \$5 down."

On a less pretentious scale, but serving the purpose of popularizing opera quite as surely, is the San Carlo Company. Mr. Gallo's aim is not so much the exploitation of noted artists as the building up of an artistic ensemble which shall give adequate performances of the standard operas and shall familiarize the public with these works. Further, Mr. Gallo plays at regular theater prices and books his organization in three ways, as follows: Either directly through the theaters, through a local manager or through some lodge or other society. Mr. Gallo's company includes the following artists:

Edvige Vaccari, Mary Kaestner, Louise Darcle, Sophie Charlebois, Maddalena Carreno, Stella de Mette, Pietro Corallo, Manuel Salazar, Salvatore Sciarretti, Angelo Antola, Davide Silva, Luigi Damolle, Pietro di Biais, Natale Cervi, with Carlo Peroni, conductor.

At the opening of October, Mr. Gallo's company was in Canada, playing at Quebec and Toronto. Oct. 2 to 4 the San Carlo forces were in Rochester, and on Monday and Tuesday of this week they played in Utica. The route for the next two weeks is: Geneva, N. Y., Oct. 11; Syracuse, Oct. 12-14; Cleveland, Oct. 16-21; Detroit, Oct. 23-28.

A noteworthy venture in the operatic business is the sending of the Ellis Opera Company on a brief tour in two operas of great popularity and with casts of great drawing power, the operas being "Carmen" and "Trovatore." The



Fortune Gallo, Managing Director of San Carlo Grand Opera Company

organization carried on tour by C. A. Ellis of Boston is to all intents and purposes the Chicago Opera Association, with Cleofonte Campanini as conductor, with many of the Chicago artists, and

with the ensemble of the latter company. Among the stars are these:

Geraldine Farrar, Lucien Muratore, Clarence Whitehill, Helen Stanley, Leon Rothier, Louise Homer, Marie Rappold and Morgan Kingston.

The route of the three weeks' tour is as follows:

Toledo, O., Oct. 16-17; Milwaukee, Oct. 18-19; St. Paul, Oct. 20-21; Omaha, Oct. 23-24; Kansas City, Oct. 25-26; Ft. Worth, Tex., Oct. 27-28; Tulsa, Okla., Oct. 30-31; St. Louis, Nov. 1-2; Cincinnati, Nov. 3-4.

In giving credit for the spread of popular interest in grand opera, one must by no means overlook the Aborn brothers, Milton and Sargent, who have been real pioneers in the work of presenting opera in English throughout the country. This season one company is being sent out by the Messrs. Aborn which devotes its time to presenting "The Bohemian Girl." Another company, the Aborn English Grand Opera Company, with a varied repertoire, has started its season, among the offerings being "The Jewels of the Madonna," "Rigoletto," "Bohème," "Lohengrin," "Madama Butterfly," and other works.

A further opera-in-English organization, newly projected, is the Chicago English Opera Company, of which Basil Horsfall is conductor and director. This company will sing a number of standard works and it also promises an opera by Mr. Horsfall, "Cleopatra," and Joseph Holbrooke's much-discussed "Dylan." Several weeks at the Play House in Chicago will be followed by a road tour starting Oct. 23 in Ottawa, Ill.

One of the most interesting schemes of opera giving is that devised by Mrs. Cora Stetson Butler for her Inter-State Opera Company, which is announced to begin a six weeks' season at Cleveland, O., on Nov. 27. The idea of Mrs. Butler is to give certain days of each week to appearances in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Detroit, in the order named. The artists named by the company in its first authorized announcement are of sufficient stellar effulgence and the operas listed have sufficient power to draw audiences as to make the company's proposition attractive to the various cities on an artistic basis alone. The important consideration in all operatic ventures, however, is the financial one, and the musical world will reserve judgment on this particular enterprise until it is found whether or not the four cities chosen are to meet the company's proctors half-way in the matter of financial co-operation.

One of the stipulated purposes of this projected company is such that, if it should be carried out, the results would be of benefit to an operatic cause which is advocated by many musicians—that of municipal opera in our American cities. The idea thus announced is this: That each of the four cities named shall eventually organize its own ensemble, and that only the principal singers shall make the weekly trip around the circuit. Such a consummation would indeed be a forerunner of the municipal opera house plan.

One city which has taken a step in this direction is St. Louis. Its recently formed opera chorus is to collaborate with the San Carlo Company in some of its St. Louis performances. Also the city has gone so far as to select the site for its own opera house. Other movements which foreshadow the coming of opera houses in every city are such campaigns as are being carried on by Seattle, with its resident opera company, Philadelphia with its Operatic Society, and Baltimore, Lincoln, Neb., Portland, Ore., Salt Lake, and other cities with their local productions of opera. Summertime opera, such as that at Ravinia Park, is also a strong factor.

New Orleans will have a season by the Silingardi Company, which has had much success in South America. It appears at the French Opera House for two weeks, beginning Oct. 31. The star of the company is Meta Reddish, the American soprano. There is an effort being made to have Jules Lavoie bring over a troupe of French artists for a winter season. Max Rabinoff's company will occupy the historic theater for a week, starting March 5.

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brought his touring Boston Opera Company and the Pavlova Ballet to the Manhattan Opera House for a fortnight, and succeeded in attracting considerable attention. This year his organization, more expansively entitled the "Boston-National Grand Opera," minus Pavlova (though equipped with a Russian ballet),

but in other respects improved, will occupy Hammerstein's Lexington Avenue Opera House (which, though built for opera, has never housed it) for the week preceding the Metropolitan's opening. Their repertoire includes Puccini's "Bohème" and "Butterfly," Montemezzi's "L'Amore dei Tre Re" and Donizetti's "Lucia," as well as several other familiar works. But they will offer such

novelties or little-known operas as Rubinstein's "Demon"—to be sung in Russian—Gordano's "Andrea Chénier," Mascagni's "Iris" (for the incomparable Tamaki Miura), and Rachmaninoff's "Aleko."

The personnel of the Rabinoff company includes such recognized artists as Maggie Teyte, Tamaki Miura, Mabel Rieglmann, Luisa Villani, Maria Gay,

Fely Clement, Elvira Leveroni, Enrico Aresen, Riccardo Martin, Giovanni Zenatello, George Baklanoff, Thomas Chalmers and José Mardones, as well as others, unfamiliar to New York, but reputedly capable. Roberto Moranzoni is chief conductor and his assistants are Fulgenzio Guerrieri, Adolf Schmid and Alexander Smallens. The orchestra numbers sixty. H. F. P.