

"Star-Spangled Banner" Strains in "Butterfly" Set Enthusiasm of a Paris Audience Ablaze

Performance of Puccini's Opera by Scala Company at the Opéra Comique Interrupted for Five Minutes While Audience, on Its Feet and in a Veritable Frenzy, Cheers America's National Anthem—The First Paris Production in the Franco-Italian Musical "Entente"—Bruneau's "Messidor" Sung at the Opéra and Admired for Its Score and the Accompanying Ballet—Concerts for War Charities—The Opéra Comique's Tragic Roll of Honor

Bureau of Musical America,
27 Avenue Henri Martin,
Paris, Feb. 23, 1917.

"MADAMA BUTTERFLY," as given by the artists of the Scala, Milan, at the Opéra Comique, was the first official manifestation of the Franco-Italian entente for the diffusion and exchange of music in Allied countries. The performance took place in the afternoon and never was there a more brilliant audience or one more in sympathy with the singers.

"Butterfly" under such management comes to Paris at a moment when it begins to look as though America really intended to enter the great war, and when Pinkerton and Sharpless entered and the few bars of the "Star Spangled Banner" sounded, the noise and acclamations were such that for a full five minutes all music had to stop and everyone joined in the "scream." People had sprung to their feet at the first note of the American National Hymn and they stood waving arms and crying and whistling in a real frenzy. Order was finally restored when the assembly decided that it had come to listen to the opera. But the audience was on the *qui vive* thereafter to applaud the singers at every opportunity.

Rosina Storchio, who took the rôle of *Butterfly*, is one of the leading Italian sopranos of the day, and her voice, rich, mellow, sympathetic, swayed the audience as much as the dramatic power she put in the rôle. We have seen lukewarm *Butterflies* in Paris, but this Italian one has real red blood and showed how a woman of character may be influenced by force of circumstances. Garbin, who took the rôle of the American

naval officer, was an interpreter of great merit, his lyric qualities putting him among the best singers ever heard in Paris. And that is not faint praise, for while the women's voices may not always be up to the mark, the tenors, baritones and basses here compare most favorably with those of any other country. As *Sharpless*, Giraltoni was a perfect actor and singer.

Gino Marinuzzi, who conducted the orchestra, is a real master. Even without the vocal part, the representation with such an orchestra would have been exceptional, for there was never a moment when the score was without brilliant shading and execution.

The other rôles were taken by Anita Giacomucci, Paltrinieri and Berthaud.

The *Matinée Artistique* at the Trocadero Sunday, given to aid war orphans, was very patriotic and the big building was packed. Any *réformé* or soldier on furlough may attend these functions, and military hospitals send convalescents in vans. So the audience is always interesting and as the artists give their services, everyone is appreciative and everything gets an encore. The *matinée* is supposed to begin at two, but for an hour before that time the vast hall is filled and a great number turned away. A small admission fee is charged and programs are paid for and in the entrance there is a subscription for the charity. The program was long and some of the best professionals in Paris took part. They included M. Sergent, organist; Albert Lambert and Madeleine Roch, who sang the "Marseillaise"; MM. Villain, Lyon and Vary in a sonata, by Loeillet, for violin, 'cello and violin; Mlle. Brothier of the Opéra Comique, M. Winkopp and Lucy Arbelle of the Opéra, and M. Gills of the Opéra Comique.

An interesting *Matinée Musicale* was

that given this week by M. and Mme. Louis Gelis-Didot in their home in the Avenue d'Iena for the profit of mutilated soldiers. The basket was passed round and enough money realized to pay for artificial limbs for fifty soldiers. This fact was announced at the close of the program, and people were in such a good humor that some again contributed. The program was all that could be desired musically. Jane Bathori is a Paris favorite and certainly there is no more beautiful voice than hers off the stage to-day. Her husband, Emil Engel, has for years been singing in France, and the work of the two at this *matinée* was highly gratifying and entertaining. The *Princess de Polignac*, well known as composer, and Jeanne Dalties, with Jane Bathori and Louis Gelis-Didot, gave the *Requiem*, by Fauré, masterfully.

"*Messidor*," a lyric drama in four acts, the music by Alfred Bruneau and the story by Emile Zola, was presented at the Grand Opéra last evening to a crowded house. There are no longer librettos of the operas sold, and unless one knows a work or has some idea "what it's all about," the evening is apt to be a heavy one. It was so with "*Messidor*." The listeners sat hypnotized—for the music undoubtedly was good—but there was something lacking, and at the end of every act people chummed together to try and get some explanation, for no matter how perfect diction be, it is almost impossible to follow an opera intelligently unless one knows something of the plot.

The artists were Yvonne Gall, Lapeyrette; Franz, Delmas, Noté, Plamondon.

A fine array, and the singers did just credit to their rôles. Gall shone out in her powers as singer and actress. Delmas and Noté added new laurels to former triumphs. Rudolf Plamondon, who is one of the finest tenors of the day, sang his solos with his usual musicianly ability, yet over the big orchestra sometimes the golden quality of the timbre was drowned in the too loud accompaniment, which suggests that the orchestra at the Grand still leaves a little to be desired as to delicacy.

One of the most splendid ballets ever given was that presented with "*Messidor*," "*La Légende de l'Or*," danced by Zambelli, Aïda Bon, Delsaux, Barbier, Meuvier, Laugier, Schwartz, Daume, Milhet, and Maupoix. The stage setting was truly wonderful, the costumes rich and varied. The music (the name of the composer was not on the program) recalled Russian harmonies and dissonance. The orchestra handled the score skillfully.

When the roll of singers is called after the war, it will be found that the Opéra Comique has greatly suffered.

The following is the list of those who have fallen for their country: Maurice Cazeneuve, George Pujol, Capedeveille, Bailly, Landmesters, Rene Thomas, Richard, Ernest Michel, Malcouronne, Francis Bonnet. The badly wounded comprise Louis Vours, Paul Patier, Aristide Julliard, Emile Schmer, Marcel Migard, Lucien Bloch, Henri Delacroix, Gaston Petit, Lagge, Thauvin, Gauckler, Eugene Ramelet, Jean Cesar, Paul Pellerin, Gabriel Deschamp, Jean Thuair, Auguste L'Eclerg, Charles Franck, Andre Nicolas, Eugene Viron, Ovide Fournoy. Those who have been decorated with the Legion of Honor are Maurice Renaud, Prieur, and Gauckler. The men who have won the Military Medal are Charles Franck and Eugene Viron. Those who have been in the war since its commencement and are therefore eligible for the decoration "Croix de Guerre" are Malherbe, Wolff, Renaud, Prieur, Lefranc, Lagge, Masson, Palier, Stamovitz, Coudougnan, Massardo, Redortier, L'Eclerg, Ramelet, Chapuis, Charles Franck, Eugene Viron, Bonnet, Fourny, Gauckler, Delbos, and Peault.

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