

AN OPERATIC CHILD WHOSE DREAMS CAME TRUE

Claudia Muzio's Paper Dolls Were "Neddas" and "Toscas," and To-day She Lives in the Air Castles She Built While Playing with Them Behind the Scenes—She Provides Her Interviewer with a Substantial Demonstration of Her Culinary Skill

SOME day some bright writer, having exhausted all other subjects for discourse, will publish an essay on the essential rôle which spaghetti plays in the operatic world.

How important these succulent strands are to the welfare and happiness of the Italian singer is well known to those who have made periodic excursions into such Bohemian haunts as Del Pezzo's, Giolito's, Gonfarone's, Maria's, Romano's or Guffanti's.

Spaghetti offers unlimited possibilities for discussion, because no two persons agree on the proper method of preparing it. For instance, there is Spaghetti Caruso, Spaghetti Scotti and Spaghetti de Luca. They are all wonderful, and they are all different.

But in New York last week there was discovered by a mere newspaperman a new variety known as Muzio Spaghetti, which is to be distinguished from all other brands by the fact that the raw product, as well as the steaming, fragrant outcome of culinary manipulation, all results from the ingenuity and skill of Claudia Muzio, leading Italian soprano of the Metropolitan Opera House.

"You can't get good ones now" (we forgot to explain that spaghetti, like hair, is plural in Italian) "on account of the war," Miss Muzio observed, as we used our fork, windlass-like, wrapping a skein of them ready for speedy consumption. We had visions of the clothes-line in the rear of the Muzio apartment groaning under the weight of raw spaghetti hanging down two or three flights, drying in the sun. But Mama Muzio—one of the dearest, sweetest operatic mothers in our acquaintance—spoiled the illusion by explaining that they were made like noodles, and never left the kitchen until their prostrate forms were placed upon the platter.

Having disposed of the local color and atmosphere so essential to the introduction of an interview, we shall now proceed to a matter of more import—Claudia Muzio.

Before the régime of Gatti-Casazza stage affairs were managed at the Metropolitan by the late Carlo Muzio, and the diminutive figure of his dark-eyed daughter playing behind the scenes of the great opera house is well remembered by many who haven't even the distinction of being old-timers. It was here that Claudia attended the operatic primary school. Her paper dolls were Neddas, Aidas and Santuzzas. She sang her way through life, dreaming of the days when she would—do exactly what she is doing to-day!

"Isn't it disconcerting to have had all your dreams come true?" we inquired.

"Ah, no; there is so much to be done. In operatic life one's real dreams are never quite realized. Outsiders do not know how much hard work each new success means. Sometimes I would like to forget it all and to live like other folks; go to the theater, to parties, out for drives and to have a good time generally.

"Nowadays when I make an exception to the rule and perhaps go to the theater all of my friendly advisers get excited and say to me, 'What! You at the theater! Suppose you should catch cold!' And when I stay home to avoid catching colds other friendly advisers scold me with 'Why don't you get out more? What you need is a change—more life, more air!' But I decide by staying home, here, with mama. It is serious business. One must always be ready for the telephone call that means rehearsals.

Mama Muzio agrees. Her's is the duty to see that Claudia shall not be subjected to the draughts that bring sore throats, or to more tangible perils that beckon



Photos by Press Illustrating Service

Results of a Photographer's Visit to the Home of Claudia Muzio. The Upper Right Hand Picture Shows the Prima Donna and Her Mother, Mrs. Carlo Muzio. Below She Is Revealed in the Rôle of Spaghetti Manufacturer



with insidious and subtle allurements to destruction.

"Where I go—mama goes," is Miss Muzio's dictum. "One day at the opera house mama went through one entrance and I through another. When the stage and office people saw me alone there was great excitement. 'Where is mama?' they shouted. Everyone pretended to look all around, in corners, to find mama. Soon she appeared, and they all pretended to heave great sighs of relief!"

Miss Muzio pays a warm tribute to the memory of her father who was her constant mentor in operatic matters. They studied together, each helping the other, so that to-day, at the age of twenty-four, the young soprano has an encyclopaedic knowledge of operatic technique and traditions.

At close range, and in her own home surroundings Miss Muzio has all the ebullient spirit of a college girl on vacation. Care-free and enthusiastic, she is keen to enjoy all the unimportant things of life. How, then, the question suggests itself naturally, can she throw herself with such realistic ardor into the character of a *Tosca* and portray the depths of worldly experience so convincingly.

"That's simple," she relates. "You don't have to be a worldly woman to know how a worldly woman would act in certain situations. Then one has all the literature of the ages to draw upon for precedent! When I am on the stage I am, indeed, a different sort of Muzio than I am in my own home."

For the thousands of "young girls out West" who entertain a curiosity as to the daily routine of an opera singer here is Miss Muzio's program for one day, the accuracy of which is vouched for by Blanche Freedman, who sees that the newspapers are supplied with the vital statistics of the prima donna's career:

7.30 A. M.—Arises. Bath. Light breakfast.

8.30 A. M.—Telephone call from the opera house: "How is our prima donna to-day?" (This happens every day and shows that large corporations do have a conscience.)

8.35 A. M.—At the piano, rehearsing new rôles and brushing up on the old ones until

11 A. M.—In the kitchen; planning the day's meals and helping to prepare them.

1 P. M.—Luncheon at home with one or more fortunate fellow artists, who

never refuse an invitation to a Muzio luncheon.

2.30 P. M.—By taxi to the opera house for an afternoon of rehearsing.

4.30 P. M.—Home again. Coffee.

5 P. M.—More work at the piano with Maestro Papi until dinner.

Then dinner and an evening of study and reading until 10 P. M. To bed.

It was suggested to Miss Muzio that she would screen well; that she ought to be in the "movies."

"Yes, I would like that. You know, I love to act. Perhaps I shall next summer, if I can't get back to Italy. You know, I am so anxious to see my poor, dear brother, who has been wounded twice while doing service in the army.

CAMPANINI'S BOSTON OPENING

Brilliant Success Marks "Aïda" Performance—Raisa a Sensation

(By Telegraph to MUSICAL AMERICA)

BOSTON, Feb. 18.—The Chicago Opera Company inaugurated its local season tonight with a brilliantly successful performance of "Aïda." Rosa Raisa in the title rôle, Cyrena Van Gordon as *Amneris*, Forrest Lamont as *Rhadames* and Giacomo Rimini as *Amonasro* were enthusiastically applauded. Miss Raisa won a genuine triumph, especially after the Nile scene, when she received a sensational ovation. Mr. Rimini was a close second in the audience's favor. Boston is evidently enthusiastic over the season by Campanini's company. W. H. LUCE.

A Wedding and a Divorce in the Haensel & Jones Flock

Not without its touch of humor was the incident of the two telegrams which recently came to the Haensel & Jones offices practically simultaneously—the one reading, "Was married this afternoon," Christine Miller; and the other, "Received my divorce this afternoon," Ethel Leginska.

American Singer Gets German Passport

Blanche Slocum of Chicago, a singer, who has been practically a prisoner in Germany, has succeeded in obtaining her

But Mr. Gatti tells me I must not go."

Miss Muzio has had but limited opportunities to sing in concerts because of the rigors of operatic routine. But where she has sung there has invariably been an enthusiastic public response. In Detroit last October she sang before 3900 persons and was immediately re-engaged. Her concert in Washington was attended by the President and Mrs. Wilson.

Then she has sung at the morning musicales conducted by Arthur Judson in Philadelphia, with the New York Symphony orchestra at Carnegie and Æolian Hall and at the Bagby Musicales. On March 6 she sings in Baltimore and in May at the Ann Arbor Festival. P. K.

passports, permitting her to leave that country. At the outbreak of war Miss Slocum was a vocal student in Berlin and shortly after was offered an engagement at the Munich Opera House. On arriving in Munich to assume her duties Miss Slocum was notified by the authorities that she would not be permitted to sing and at the same time her passport was revoked. Through the American consul-general at Zurich, Miss Slocum's father endeavored to find the reason for the action of the Bavarian authorities, but was simply notified that his daughter was under suspicion. Miss Slocum will return shortly to the United States.

Witherspoon to Give Postponed Recital

Herbert Witherspoon and Florence Hinkle-Witherspoon, who were unable to give their joint recital on Feb. 14 on account of illness, will be heard at Æolian Hall on the afternoon of Feb. 28. Their program, which has been made with great care, is almost exclusively of novelties, although many of the numbers are old as regards date of composition. The singers will be heard in duets and solos from operas and in groups of songs.

It was erroneously announced in last week's issue of MUSICAL AMERICA that the New York recital of Martha Atwood-Baker would take place in Æolian Hall on March 1. The correct date is March 21.