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John C. Freund

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OPERA HOUSE SALE MAY 'WRECK' MUSIC IN PHILADELPHIA

Metropolitan, Built by Oscar Hammerstein, Is Sold for a Small Sum, Thus Eliminating Theater as Home for Gatti's Opera and Orchestra Forces—Metropolitan Season May Be Held in Academy if This Building Is Not Also Sold to Movie or Theatrical Interests—Stokowski Declares Situation "A Calamity" and Calls for \$1,500,000 Fund—Propose a Temple of Music on Parkway

PHILADELPHIA, May 1.—Philadelphia has its orchestra and its opera season but it looks now as if they would have nowhere to go next season. The Metropolitan Opera House, built by Oscar Hammerstein for its present purposes, was sold in the middle of the week in satisfaction of a mortgage for \$400,000 held by Edward T. Stotesbury, the purchaser being Fred G. Nixon-Nirdlinger, son of the late Samuel F. Nixon, the "Syndicate" theatrical magnate, identified with Klaw, Erlanger, Frohman, et al. The historic old Academy of Music, built in 1857, still the city's standard house for musical attractions and up to the past ten years also the local home of opera, has excited the interest of theatrical managers and movie people, and the week end is rife with rumors of its accomplished or potential sale.

The local opera season of sixteen weekly performances by the Gatti-Casazza forces is housed in the Metropolitan Opera House. The Philadelphia Orchestra makes its home, both for concerts and rehearsals, in the Academy of Music. The big recitalists divide their appearances between the two auditoriums, McCormack, Elman and other stars rather favoring the Metropolitan, and Kreisler and some of the vocalists going to the Academy. The latter is also used by the Symphony Society of New York, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and other important visiting organizations, the Choral Society, and other local bodies.

The sale of the Metropolitan netted only \$655,000, merely a few thousand dollars above the municipal taxation assessment. Mr. Hammerstein paid \$150,000 for the site alone and the cost of the structure, including the site, was authoritatively stated at the time of dedication to be \$900,000. At present prices of materials and labor the Metropolitan is conservatively worth \$1,500,000. Mr. Nixon-Nirdlinger is himself a theatrical magnate, already owning or controlling several movie and vaudeville houses in various parts of the city. The Metropolitan would give his firm a big up-town house in a thickly populated residential section. This is taking the view that the house will be turned over to moviedom. It is generally assumed that the Metropolitan, on account of Mr. Nixon-Nirdlinger's association with the



GINO MARINUZZI

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New Artistic Director of the Chicago Opera Association, Whose Genius as Conductor and Composer Has Secured Him Instant Recognition in America

Nixon estate, will be used as one replacement unit for booking the attractions of A. L. Erlanger, Flo Ziegfeld, George R. Tyler and Charles B. Dillingham, the factors of the new theatrical alignment.

The bidding for the house started at \$450,000 and was jumped by a representative of Mr. Stotesbury and by the realty broker for Mr. Nixon-Nirdlinger by sums of \$25,000 and \$50,000 till the sale price was reached. Mr. Nixon-Nirdlinger was "dark" in the proceedings at the auction but was revealed later as the purchaser. His broker also said that the Metropolitan would in all probability be added to the chain of theaters consisting of the Broad, Garrick and Forrest. He further stated that

Mr. Nirdlinger was anxious for opera to be continued at the Metropolitan if feasible arrangements could be devised.

"As I see it," Mr. Nirdlinger's representative said, "there will be much more chance of opera being held in its accustomed place if the directors of the opera season can arrange to have a series of consecutive performances. The present arrangement of one performance a week for sixteen weeks would seriously interfere with the booking of the plays for next season. But I do not go so far as to say that the present arrangement could not be carried out."

In some informed quarters this statement was interpreted to mean the doom

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HERBERT M. JOHNSON IS EXECUTIVE HEAD OF CHICAGO OPERA

Act of Board of Directors Places American Business Man at Helm of the Association—Gino Marinuzzi's Appointment as Artistic Director, Forecast by "Musical America" Last Week, Is Officially Announced—"Jacquerie" by New Impresario, Will Probably Be Initial Offering Next November

CHICAGO, May 1.—Herbert M. Johnson, business comptroller of the Chicago Opera Association since 1916, was appointed executive director of the Chicago Opera Association at the board of directors' meeting held yesterday. He will have general charge and direction of the company's business and operations.

Mr. Johnson has been connected with the opera company since 1913 as auditor; from 1916 to 1920 as business comptroller and now his new position as executive director makes him the first American to be at the head of one of the great opera organizations of the world.

Gino Marinuzzi, as announced in MUSICAL AMERICA last week, will be the artistic director of the company under Mr. Johnson, will have charge of the conductors, and also be responsible for the standard of the performances. He will have charge and direction of the production and will assist Mr. Johnson in the selection of artists and co-operate with him in the choice of repertory and casts.

Though not officially announced, the season of 1920-1921 will open in Chicago, Nov. 17, 1920, with Gino Marinuzzi's "Jacquerie," which, while in the repertory last year, was held over on account of lack of time for rehearsals.

The interest in the coming season is already great and the advance sale of seats and boxes has exceeded that of former years for this time of the season.

M. R.

Gatti May Produce "Sadko," "Don Carlos" and Lalo's "Roi d'Ys" Next Season

The most recent prophecies regarding next season's novelties at the Metropolitan include the possibility of Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Sadko," which has been given here only in a garbled ballet version, and Verdi's "Don Carlos." It seems more than probable that Lalo's "Le Roi d'Ys" will at last have a hearing in New York, with Alda as Rozenn and Matzenauer as Margared, which latter part was one of the most popular of Emma Calvé's characterizations both on the continent and at Covent Garden.

Gabrilowitsch Halted at Pier by News of Wife's Illness

(By Telegraph to MUSICAL AMERICA)

DETROIT, MICH., May 3.—Ossip Gabrilowitsch, noted pianist and conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, received a telegram just as he was about to leave for Europe, informing him that his wife, Mme. Clara Clemens Gabrilowitsch, had been taken ill here. Mr. Gabrilowitsch at once canceled his passage to hurry to his wife's side. Mme. Gabrilowitsch is reported as "suffering from cold, but improving steadily."

M. McD.