

When the White Moon of "Salome" Bleached Berlin

Christine Langenhan Tells of the Oscar Wilde Vein Which Strauss's Opera Introduced Into Beer-Garden Chatter—Soprano Has Also Sung in "Elektra"—Suggests That America's Growth in Art Is a Turning from Morals to Manners

"THE moon is white to-night." That means that something terrible is going to happen. What? Perhaps that some of our American opera companies are going to put on Strauss's "Salome," and New York so be led into that Oscar Wilde dialect which spread like a plague through every German city on the introduction of the opera.

Christine Langenhan, who for the past six years has made her home and her career in America, heard the première of the work in Dresden during her student days. Later, in Berlin, where she sang at the New Royal Opera House during its summer season of four months, she took the part of one of the slaves. In Breslau too she sang in this opera, and finally in Hamburg came the chance to do the title rôle. In Berlin especially, that phrase about the white moon seemed the one thing to utter into the night as one came out from one's heart-straining work into a beer-garden or some other humanly convivial corner.

Mme. Langenhan's strongest interest and warmest personal ambition is for operatic work, and so it is natural, in meeting her, to talk with her of her conception of *Salome*, which interests her probably the most of all her rôles.

"In general," the soprano says, "the parts which attract me most are those which require rather specialized dramatic treatment. I had rather sing Wagner rôles than those of the melodic Italian operas. But I do not mean that I like the eccentric. In fact, just the point in which my *Salome* differs most from that of most singers whom I have seen do the part is in being more natural than theirs. *Salome* should not be thought of, it seems to me, as a degenerate, certainly not at the beginning. She is a wilful girl who has never been crossed and who has never yet felt love.

"She is a little ennuyée as she comes out into the courtyard of the palace and is followed by the too devoted *Narraboth*. Then she hears the voice of *Jokanaan* calling from the cistern, and it



Christine Langenhan, Dramatic Soprano

is to her as if a whole new world of experience were opened up to her. One must realize her as an unchecked stream of passion. It is just because her lightest whim has never before been denied that this sudden love sours as suddenly to hate when the prophet refuses her. Then, if you please, the shadow of degeneracy can be shown as falling on her. But it must be a shadow cast less by anything in the girl herself than by the sufficiently loathsome court in which she lives. Even the kiss of the dead lips comes from a simple and even normal motive. One should see as abnormal in her character only a too great warmth and softness and capacity for devotion. If she had not these sweetnesses too strong in her bit of a soul, her claws would not scratch so sharp.

"Another part which I have played abroad and taken pleasure in is that of *Clytemnestra* in Strauss's 'Elektra.' This opera is much keener-edged in its

neurotic ferment than 'Salome.' It presents the two classic contrasting types of womanhood; one, all maternal fondness, perhaps even dullness; the other, swift in the pursuit of romantic love. Musically, the Strauss operas are, as everyone knows, immensely difficult, and I am told that the expertness they require of the performers, both vocal and instrumental, and the cost of staging, are the real obstacle in the way of their presentation over here.

"But what America thus misses operatically, it makes up, as I often think, in the unique opportunities of its concert field. Nowhere else is the recital artist regarded with so sweeping a glance as a personality. It is as if this country, having no defined social aristocracy, looked to those who are to give it pleasure for something more than entertainment. Once having given up the Puritanical prejudice against the arts, Americans are even more discriminating, even more fastidious toward them, than the people of the countries where they have arisen. The American concert audience has the artist already on trial before he or she has sung a note. It is as if America were seeking to elaborate a more homogeneous and exacting standard of manners than any the world has known before, and for this purpose it is pressing the musical artist into service."

D. J. T.

PITTSBURGH MEETING HEARS NATIVE WORKS

Pennsylvania Clubs Convene for Biennial Sessions—Hold State Contest

PITTSBURGH, PA., April 30.—The third biennial convention of the Pennsylvania Federation of Music Clubs was held in the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall here April 18 and 19, under the auspices of the Tuesday Musical Club.

The State contest for young professional musicians was held during the convention. The winners were Arthur Kraekman, baritone, of Pittsburgh; Helena Himes, soprano, of Leechburg; Cecelia Bonawitz, violinist of Philadelphia, and Evelyn Tyson, also of Philadelphia, who was awarded the Stokowski piano medal. In addition to receiving \$50 prizes, presented by Mrs. Russell H. Boggs, of Sewickley, the four winners are entitled to compete in the national contest this summer.

A feature of the convention was a program of music by American composers given by the Tuesday Musical Club chorus, assisted by the Ensemble String Players, under the bâton of Charles N. Boyd, with piano accompaniments by Mrs. Elsie Breese Mitchell. Composers represented were Harvey B. Gaul, of Pittsburgh, and Charles Wakefield Cadman, formerly of Pittsburgh; A. Walter Kramer, Edward MacDowell,

R. Huntington Woodman, Arthur Foote, Carl Busch, Harvey Worthington Loomis, H. T. Burleigh, James P. Dunn, and Mrs. H. H. A. Beach. Soloists appearing were Mrs. A. C. Aufhammer, soprano; Mrs. Grace K. Jennings, soprano, and Mrs. Will Earhart, contralto.

Officers of the Federation elected were: Mrs. Elizabeth Latta of Philadelphia, president; Robert Braun of Pottstown, Myrtle June McAteer of Pittsburgh, and Mrs. Josephine Tinker of Sharon, vice-presidents; Mrs. G. H. W. Sherman of Oil City, secretary; Mrs. E. Russell Williams of Clearfield, treasurer; Mrs. Joseph Mitchell of Lewiston, historian, and Mrs. J. T. Taylor of State College, auditor.

Myrtle June McAteer of Pittsburgh, former president, and Mrs. Fred W. Abbott of Philadelphia, former vice-president, presided at the business session on the first day. A program was presented by Edith Latimer Dornberger, contralto, and Mrs. Anna Laura Cree, soprano, accompanied by Edward C. Harris, and Mrs. Henrietta Bodycombe, pianist.

At the Monday night session Will Earhart, director of music in the Pittsburgh public schools, Elizabeth Gest of Philadelphia, State chairman of Junior clubs, and Mrs. Fred W. Abbott of Philadelphia, chairman of the extension work of the National Federation, delivered addresses.

R. E. W.

Jacobinoff
Violin

In perpetuation not only of the music of Charles T. Griffes but of his essentially American aims and ideals. All programs include at least one Griffes composition.

THE GRIFFES GROUP

Transcontinental Tour Booking for January, February, March, 1922

Olga Steeb, quite recently rose from the audience in which she was seated to step upon the stage and play, without a moment's preparation, the Saint-Saëns Concerto with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, replacing Levitski, who was indisposed.

(I do not believe any soloist this season has received such an ovation as was accorded her. If anything the impression she created was more brilliant than at her presentation some weeks ago of the Liszt concerto.—Los Angeles Times.)

Edna Thomas adds to the gaiety of nations her Creole songs from the plantations of Louisiana, a research work of real musical value. So popular have these become that they are now demanded on all her programs. Garbed in the quaintest of inherited Crinolines, Edna Thomas sings these songs in their original patois.

(This Louisiana singer has a winsome personality and an individual contribution of real value to make to the concert stage, in the form of Creole Songs in a patois of French and Spanish which she sings in costume and explains alluringly.—Philadelphia Ledger.)

Jacobinoff is a great violinist—and more. A string of re-engagements attest to the popularity achieved both as soloist and as conductor of The Little Symphony, replacing George Barrere, on a recent tour.

(In the absence of Barrere the Little Symphony was conducted by Sascha Jacobinoff and it was his violin solo that first acquainted the audience with the fact that they were listening to a violinist of first rank as well as to a splendidly conducted orchestra.—Dallas Journal.)

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Edna
Thomas
Mezzo



Olga
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Piano