

# Reaching the Masses via Vaudeville

People Are Ready for Good Music if One Will Give It to Them, Says Dorothy Jardon—Finds Listeners Sensitive to Textures, Colors and Lighting—Holding the Attention While Avoiding the Bizarre—Makes Opera Arias Intelligible Through Translation and Explanation

"MUSIC, not just opera, is what I wish to talk about," said Dorothy Jardon. Seated in the lounge of her hotel, the singer of operatic music disclosed none of the imperiousness which now and again attaches to the prima donna. "Music ought to be presented where it will be heard, and in such a way that it will be listened to." Exactly the same thing is alleged about religion, one thought! And in the earnestness with which Miss Jardon spoke of the aim of her art, one perceived that music may have a sort of gospel of its own.

"The first thing that is necessary in conveying a message is to gain the attention of the auditor. This can often be done by means of the eye, which is, after all, the keenest sense of the five. To say that the appeal to the eye is inferior to that of the ear, is to condemn a whole family of arts in order to vindicate one. And I have found audiences most sensitive to the sort of curtain, the color of the gown, used in a musical program. Doesn't this show that in

most people the aesthetic judgments are pretty wide-awake?

"For this reason I have used a curtain that suggests an old tapestry, and have so lighted it that it is gradually disclosed. I hope in this way to suggest an atmosphere quite different from that of my auditors' daily lives. I aim to transport these from the theater to the land of art. Last season I wore a gown of a very rare shade, blending geranium, tangerine and coral. Nothing holds the attention so well as something that is hard to classify, you know. Yet I always avoid the flagrantly bizarre, the 'queer.' The successful artist must be, first of all, human. That is the great condition of success with an audience made up of many kinds of persons."

### Humanizing Music

The sartorial was soon left behind, however, in Miss Jardon's discussion of melody and its adjuncts. "Humanity must be in the music, too," said she. "Surely none will be interested in just a succession of strange sounds. The reason why the majority of people say they do not like good opera, well given, is because



Campbell Studios

Dorothy Jardon, Soprano, Who Holds That the People Are Ready for Good Music

they do not know what it is all about. Their sympathies must be aroused in the characters, the emotions presented. For this reason I have used sensible translations in the excerpts presented in my vaudeville programs, and have at-

tempted to sing them with intelligible diction. Why have words, if they are not to be heard? Usually I have given one aria in the original tongue, for I find even the unappreciative dissatisfied if they are not subjected to the authentic sensation of 'grand opera.' In this case, however, I preface the number with a tactful explanation of the circumstances which prompt *Santuzza* to voice the Romanza, and I use all the pantomime accompanying the aria. Intelligence is a word often misused; I have never found an audience so lacking in it that they could not understand the feelings of the jilted girl."

### Publicity for Good Music

Not only are settings and melodies presented simply and directly, but they are presented to vast numbers of persons with a wide catholicity of tastes by Miss Jardon through the medium of the vaudeville theater. "The concert, or the operatic, stage has a very special class to which it appeals," the singer continued. "The thousand or five thousand persons who come to each of the fourteen weekly performances of the vaudeville theater are just so many persons willing to be presented with good music—or bad music, if nobody will be bothered to give them the better. They must be made to experience good music, else what is the good of writing and lecturing about it till all the pens and throats are dry? It does much more good to help persons to feel and live music than to give a hallful of specialists new musical material to quarrel about as an intellectual exercise. For this reason, I think that the presidents and executives of the vaudeville circuits are in a position to hasten or to retard the demand for municipal opera, which is looked forward to most eagerly by those in each city who happen already to be converted to the better music. The more often operatic excerpts are interestingly presented on programs that appeal to everybody in some way, the more will the people of the United States expect to find serious emotions, and not frivolous rhythms only, in music. The orchestras in the vaudeville houses might be improved, by the way; for in respect of completeness and skill they are inferior to the new motion picture theaters. These now have their musical programs of merit."

Last of all, the singer gave a sincere estimate of the demands made upon the character of the artist who would undertake to further music's cause. "The best interpreter of music of worth will be the one with the greatest soul," she said, or "the 'biggest heart,' if you prefer. The artist must be without conceit. Any snobbery will be detected by his audiences. Such a one must not think that the interest is in himself; no, it is in what he can do, what it is his duty to do. No one figure is big enough to be conceited about his worth. There are far too many curtains going up nightly all over the world in too many auditoriums. And, as for there being grades of auditoriums in which to sing, the only significant classification is according to the degree of service which each performs."

R. M. K.

## GIVE SPECIAL MUSIC AT WILLOW GROVE

Franko Concludes Opening Series at Philadelphia's Park Resort

PHILADELPHIA, PA., June 4.—Nahan Franko arranged special programs appropriate to Memorial Day for this week, which brings his Willow Grove engagement to an end. The principal soloist of the week was Betsy Lane Shepherd, a soprano of good voice who is already familiar to Willow Grove audiences. As a Memorial Day feature, Luigi Boccelli, a young Philadelphia baritone, pupil of David Bispham, sang several numbers with excellent results. Mr. Boccelli, who is twenty years old, has lived in this city for a large part of that time. Handicapped in other pursuits by blindness, he turned to music for solace, and so fine is his voice and understanding that it promises a future for him.

At virtually every concert Mr. Franko contributed at least one solo feature. His playing evoked much enthusiasm.

The Palestrina Choir, consisting of seventy-five picked singers under the diligent leadership of Nicola A. Montani, provided a unique event for the closing free Sunday afternoon concert at the Academy of the Fine Arts. The program included rich examples of polyphonic music.

The soloists were Catherine Sherwood Montani, soprano, and Helen Bock, pianist. Mrs. Montani's brilliant voice and her technical efficiency were admirably displayed. Miss Bock gave pleasure with her skilled interpretations.

At the spring concert of the New Century Club Chorus, H. Alexander Matthews conducted an admirable program of eight-part numbers. The soloists were Bessie Philips, contralto; Helen Bonner, soprano; Mrs. Livia Ward, harpist, and Gurney Mattox, violinist.

One of the now rare presentations of Haydn's "Creation" was given at the First Baptist Church, by an augmented choir under the direction of Frederick Maxon, the soloists being Mary Merkle, Phillip Hipple and Horace R. Hood.

A delightful reception was given by the Art Alliance in their gardens on Rittenhouse Square on Tuesday. The new president, John F. Braun and Mrs. Braun, together with other officers and directors, met the new members.

A concert for the benefit of Italian War Orphans gave Philadelphians an-

other chance to hear that unique organization, the Philadelphia Plectrum Orchestra, led by Joseph La Monaca. Mina Dolores, soprano, sang in charming fashion.

Kathryn Burroughs Spencer gave a recital for the benefit of St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Joseph's Auditorium. Julia Z. Robinson, soprano, assisted.

Hugo Boccelli, at his annual recital, showed the resonant quality of his voice. Mrs. Russell King Miller, contralto, was the assisting artist, and Mary Miller Mount played notable accompaniments.

W. R. M.

## Maine Singers Devote a Concert-Program to Gilberté Works



C. Leroy Lyon, Bangor Teacher, and Hallett Gilberté, Composer

BANGOR, ME., June 4.—An evening devoted to the compositions of Hallett Gilberté, with the composer at the piano, was enjoyed by a large audience on May 22, when the vocal pupils of C. Leroy Lyon gave the first of three recitals to be given in the Memorial Parlors.

It was some seven years ago that Mr. Gilberté, who is a native of Maine, was last here.

Mr. Gilberté accompanied Henrietta Blackwell, who sang with clear enunciation his "Two Roses" and "Singing of You"; Florence Kimball, in "The Rain Drop" and "A Rose and a Dream"; Mrs. Wilbur Park, in a well-contrasted group consisting of "Come Out in the Sweet Spring Night," "Minuet La Phillis" and

"Ah, Love but a Day"; Almond Hart, in "Forever and a Day" and "Star of Love" and Ellice Drew, in "Land of Nod" and "An Evening Song."

Mr. Gilberté's accompaniments were of an unusually high order.

The program opened with a trio composed of Mrs. C. Leroy Lyon, C. Leroy Lyon and Mrs. Drew, who sang "There, Little Girl Don't Cry" and "A Mother's Cradle Song." The program closed with a group sung by the Lyric Male Quartet composed of Cyrus McCreedy, C. Leroy Lyon, Fred Clifford and Walter Mills, who sang "A Dusky Lullaby" and "You Is Jes' as Sweet," accompanied by Dorothy Doe at the piano.

Mr. Gilberté also appeared as soloist in a group composed of his Nocturne and Barcarolle and played with much poetic feeling. After his playing of Barcarolle, he received three recalls. Much credit is due to Mr. Lyon, by whose foresight Mr. Gilberté's present visit to this city was made possible.

J. L. B.

## MACBETH AIDS FUND

Soprano Heard with Fritz Renk in Chicago Benefit Recital

CHICAGO, June 7.—Florence Macbeth, coloratura soprano of the Chicago Opera Association, and Fritz Renk, violinist, were the artists at the benefit recital given for the Frances E. Willard Hospital Thursday evening, June 2, in Medinah Temple. Miss Macbeth was heard in a group of French, Russian and Norwegian songs. The Norwegian song, "Kom Kyra," by Thrane, an "echo" song, was particularly well received. The Polonaise from Thomas' "Mignon" was sung with grace and surpassing skill and lovely quality of voice. At the close of the concert, Miss Macbeth sang four descriptive songs in convincing fashion. She was in splendid voice throughout the entire program.

Fritz Renk, young violinist, who made so pronounced a success at his debut in Chicago a year ago, played numerous short pieces with good style and fine technique. Mr. Renk was admirably assisted at the piano by Otto Beyer, and George Roberts played sympathetic accompaniments for Miss Macbeth.

M. A. M.

## Miss Beebe Giving Concert Series

Two series of afternoon musicales are being given by Carolyn Beebe, solo pianist and founder of the New York Chamber Music Society, Inc., in Connecticut, one in Greenwich and the other in New Canaan and Stamford. At these concerts Miss Beebe is having the assistance of Lillian Ring, soprano; Charles Vaughan Holly, tenor, and Ralph Leopold, pianist.

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