

SINGING AND ITS MASTERS

MORE ABOUT THE OPERATIC DARLINGS.

Good Advice From a Teacher of the Early Days—The "Get Rich Quick" Mania in the World of Musical Art—Why Cultivate Fine Art When Big Sounds Arise So Much Easier?

Many estimable persons have expressed themselves as troubled by deep sorrow over the want of respect with which certain darlings of the operatic stage are treated in these columns. Some explanation is assumedly due these same estimable persons. It is all the result of a different point of view. THE SUN'S

disapproval of musical doings clings to certain standards which have without doubt become old-fashioned. He realizes this every time he sits in his long accustomed seat in the temple of operatic art in Broadway. He finds himself

grieved by the manner in which almost every one of the so-called "artists" manages the music entrusted to his care. He is patient and long suffering, because, on the other hand, all the people around the street with joy when they hear the phrases torn to tatters by robust singers whose vocal art consists chiefly in making as much noise as possible for as long a time as possible.

The SUN's chronicler confesses to a serious wish for genuine vocal art, and it is of vocal art simply to own a big voice and to follow. For example, on Wednesday evening Franchetti's "Germania" with Mr. Amato's first utterances, let us admit once and for all that this singer is at home in the rôle of Carlo

Warren. The music is planned in the style which suits him. It does not run this music to sing it as loudly as possible. Mr. Amato sang it with much dramatic power and at times with real passion. He phrased it broadly, and his declamation, where that was called for, was filled with vital accent. But was it necessary to sing it so loudly? The impression gained by this one hearing was that not for a single moment did the singer

use his voice forth with all the strength at his command. The continual effort did not seem to weary the singer, but it certainly wearied this one listener. On the other hand the majority of the audience appeared to take delight in this exhibition of mere brute force. The hearers apparently asked nothing else from the singer. So long as he made the rafters ring they were entirely satisfied. It brought back with sudden point the words of Zarathustra:

"Must they needs have their ears bored to pieces before they will learn to hear with their eyes? Last one rattle like a kettle drum of a fast day preacher?"

One long experienced listener to singing is convinced that it is much more beautiful when it is not continually so loud. The big tone habit is one of the worst that have ever invaded the realm of operatic art. Composers are in no small measure to blame for it, for they do not cease to encourage it. They pile up their orchestration till the voice can override it only by sheer size.

Yet even here the singer approaches the solution of the problem incorrectly. It is absolutely useless to try to sing forte with wrongly placed tones. And that is just what most of these singers are doing. Instead of forming their tones in such a way that they shall be round and pointed and truly sung, as the old masters always said they should be, these singers spread out the tone in a thin, flat blade and fail to accomplish their own wishes.

The round pointed tone is the tone that carries. The other will not carry at all and the more it is forced the less it travels. The reason for this is as simple as walking. The round pointed tone is focussed in the mouth against the roof just behind the teeth. When a singer goes his mouth full of such a tone he feels as if he could spit it. He can roll upon his tongue like a piece of candy. But the thin flat tone is in the back of the mouth and is breathy. The more it is pushed the stronger it becomes. It takes on the fatal whistling and it battles vainly for freedom against the stiffened muscles of the throat which are strangling it.

The more beautiful the tone the better it will carry. The harder and harsher the tone the less it will carry. If singers would devote all their attention to securing a round, mellow, beautiful tone they would have no difficulty whatever in acquiring all the power that nature intended those voices to have. When they try to acquire more power than nature intended them to have they shatter the natural beauty of their voices and in the course of a few years find themselves trying to sing on the remnants.

A certain soprano (her name was Nordine) once said to a young singer in the same company, "My dear, you give too much voice." "But you sing out in full voice yourself," responded the young soprano. "I do," answered the more experienced singer, "but I do not try to do more than I can."

In this wise remark of a serious student of the real art of singing there is a profound lesson for almost every singer to be heard at the opera house. One of the reasons why the present day singers do not show skill in this matter is that sufficient study is not undertaken before public appearances are made. Furthermore too many teachers are doing incalculable damage by yielding to the "get rich quick" demand which has invaded the world of vocal art.

It is only a girl desiring to study two years and then sing Tosca. In France she wishes to study two years and then sing Juliet. In Germany she wishes to study two years and then sing Isolde. And the last is the commonest, as it is worst of all. One should study two years for Juliet, for Isolde, a doublet, may appear in Juliet, but in Isolde never.

Now what happens when these eager aspirants begin to study? First the teacher hears all the tones of the voice from extreme top to extreme bottom and calculates how many of them can be used so as to become bigger. Then begins a series of exercises designed to increase the size of the tones. Instead of setting out to develop carrying power by drawing out every resource of fitness and beauty in the tone the teacher must devote his attention to getting rude force.

It would be interesting to know how many European teachers are to-day using complete sets of vocalises. It is not possible to use them, because when a teacher starts to teach on the system which requires their use he knows that his pupil will not be ready for appearance in four years.

The employment of extended technical exercises for the voice is the only means

by which the elasticity and flexibility of the voice can be developed.

The "get rich quick" method, designed to meet the wants of singers who are to go on the stage in two years and bellow "dramatic" rôles, must ignore all search after elasticity and flexibility and seek only for big tone.

When at the end of the two years the big tone and the "vigorous" declamation are acquired the quality of sound produced is precisely that which the vendors of strawberries in the streets produce. The common vocal method of the German stage to-day is based on the same mechanics of tone production as the shouters of "extra" employ. Any one can acquire this method of tone emission in a short time. It will be found that it enables one to produce a huge sound with moderate effort. With effort the sound can be made positively unbearable. Listen to the "extra" boys and then go to a German operatic festival.

And this is the sort of thing we are asked to accept as singing. It is not at all astonishing. The public wish to rush upon the stage and sing. The public wish the big tone and the bellowing with gratitude. Why should any one take the trouble to study? Why was waste four years of precious life in learning how to sing such things as "Luzignie pin caro" or "Voie che sapete"? Why imitate the dead and gone singers of the so-called "golden age" of song?

It is perfectly true that if the singers of to-day would imitate those artists the public would swiftly come to appreciate the beautiful art of bel canto and would discover in the popular operas of the time beauties which are justly permitted to escape. But this does not have to be done. The popular success can be obtained without it, and one can get rich quickly. That of course is the main purpose of this life.

And the people who go upon the stage and sing to us with a rude barbaric power instead of a finished and beautiful style call themselves "artists." That part of the world which does not come into daily contact with musical performers does not know that those persons seem to think that they have special rights in the term "artist."

Now that is a rather important word and it signifies a great deal. It may properly be applied to any one who is engaged in an artistic pursuit. A writer can be an artist as well as a "cells" player. A person is not necessarily an artist because he is engaged in an artistic pursuit. To become an artist requires long years of application backed by a profound love of art. It is a foolish illusion of the ignorant that artists are born. They are not. They are made and the process is slow and often painful. The talent is a gift, but the cultivation of it is a task. Temperament is a gift but the discipline of it is an education.

Too many students, as a wise teacher said to this writer a day or two ago, mistake temper or excitement for talent. But the mistake is by no means as common to students as it is to the public. Rushing about the stage and brandishing the arms and shouting at the top of the lungs do not constitute a great operatic impersonation. The first duty of a singer is to sing. It is more important and it is more difficult, and in an opera it is to use the most potent means of expression. Long years ago Pier Francesco Tosi said:

"I do not know if a perfect singer can at the same time be a perfect actor, for the mind being at once divided by two different operations he will probably incline more to one than to the other. In singing, however, much more difficult to sing well than to act well, the merit of the first is beyond the second. What a felicity would it be to possess both in a perfect degree!"

This same wise teacher of singers of the golden age also said this: "The best singer in the world continues to study and persists in it as much to maintain his reputation as he did to acquire it."

Undoubtedly he had in mind the great Farinelli, who was never entirely satisfied with himself, and who at a time when other singers would have been content to rest on their laurels, when he was famous and money was pouring in, devoted himself to acquiring a new and better style.

This, alas, is precisely the opposite of the plan followed by most of the present darlings of the opera stage. When they have obtained sufficient reputation to enable them to make long contracts at high salaries they not only cease to study but also to try to sing well. Most of them fall into bad habits and their voices deteriorate.

Let any person who has gone to the opera habitually during the last ten years examine his memories of singers who have been with it that long, or even one-half the time. Let him ask himself to name those who have improved. Then let him name those who have deteriorated. After that let him strike a balance and see what a deficit in art he will find.

The assertion continually made in Europe that singers deteriorate in this country is far from being untrue, but the deterioration is caused by easy success, not by the country. It is not true of all of them, and there was a time when it could not be said at all. Lilli Lehmann, Alvary, Fischer and several others reached their greatness in New York.

But in recent years singers have on the whole fallen into bad habits here. The "get rich quick" mania has ousted art from their souls. They all wish to sing as often as possible, no matter in what condition their voices are. When they are not shouting from the stage to glad thousands they spend hours and hours of their days in preparing imperishable "records" for future generations yet unborn. The royalties are very large.

When in the face of all these conditions we discover any singer who is trying to rise not merely in public favor but in artistic excellence, what honor do we not owe that true artist! It is a comfort to know that there are some such singers, but not all of them occupy such large places in the public mind as those who fill the auditorium with loud sounds.

To study much and preserve the voice in its full beauty are two things almost incompatible. There is between them such a sort of anty as cannot last long without being prejudicial to one or the other. However, if one reflects that perfection in a voice is a gift of nature and not a painful acquisition it will indeed be allowed that this latter excels in merit and more deserves our praise.

There was no one to tell poor Tosi that there was more money in loud shouting than in polished delivery. There was no one to tell him that the time was at hand when singers would not injure their voices from too much private practice, but rather from too much public singing and operating of vocal organs for the rapid accumulation of wealth.

And in the end it is as certain as any thing

can be that if all singers would devote themselves to the attainment of a perfect art the public would recompense them just as liberally as it does now.

The public knows nothing. It learns from the performer. Its opinion of piano playing is based on the playing of the pianists whom it hears. Its opinion of singing is based on the singing which it hears. If it hears only the finest art in singing it would soon learn to reject everything else.

Perhaps all the singers know this. W. J. HENDERSON.

NOTES OF MUSIC EVENTS.

"Germania" with last week's cast, including Mmes. Destina, Groll, Matfield, Spier, and M. H. Spier, will be given at the Metropolitan on Thursday evening, February 3. The cast will include Miss Mary Garden as M. H. Spier and the new French tenor, M. H. Spier, who will give his only performance in New York this season on Tuesday evening. The cast will include Miss Mary Garden as M. H. Spier and the new French tenor, M. H. Spier, who will give his only performance in New York this season on Tuesday evening.

Terzio in B-flat, the Italian piece, will be a feature of the night concert at the Metropolitan. He will play an other number, the Liszt 3rd concerto. The operatic artists who will take part in the program are Mmes. Destina, Groll, Spier, and M. H. Spier. The entire Metropolitan orchestra will participate under the direction of Mr. Hertz and Mr. Pasternak.

Impassato Moderato, a young Italian violinist, will have his debut at Mendelssohn Hall on Saturday evening, February 4, at 8 P. M.

Alexander Heineemann, the renowned French singer, will be the soloist at the third subscription concert of the Vocal Symphony Society, Arnold Volpe, conductor, at Carnegie Hall on Sunday afternoon, February 5, at 2 P. M.

The third and last concert this season by the Barre Ensemble will be given at the Belasco Theatre on Monday afternoon, February 6, at 2:30. In founding this organization of ten players of chamber music for wind instruments, George Barre the founder, has given the public an opportunity to hear a literature of music that remains for the greater part unknown in this country.

The fourth concert of the regular series of subscription concerts by the Knebel Quartet will be given at Mendelssohn Hall on Thursday evening, February 9, at 8 P. M.

After two concerts of unusual and varied character the program of the fourth Symphony Concert for Young People on Saturday afternoon, February 18, will revert to the general plan of the season, the illustration of the musical character of the various instruments of the orchestra.

The Adele Margules Trio will give its third concert at Mendelssohn Hall on Thursday evening at 8:15 o'clock. The programme is: Trio, op. 9, No. 3, Major, first movement; Barre, op. 2, No. 1, Major, first movement; Chevallier, op. 2, No. 1, Major, first movement.

Modest Alshuler has arranged a programme with a belief of special interest for the fifth and last concert of the New York subscription series of the Russian Symphony Orchestra to take place in Carnegie Hall on Thursday evening, February 16. The music to be given is: "Hockey March" and "Dance of the Soldiers" from Berlioz' "Damnation of Faust." At the fifth concert, March 11, the soloist will be Miss Katherine Parson.

The Adelphi Quartet will give its third concert at Mendelssohn Hall on Thursday evening at 8:15 o'clock. The programme is: Trio, op. 9, No. 3, Major, first movement; Barre, op. 2, No. 1, Major, first movement; Chevallier, op. 2, No. 1, Major, first movement.

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Haven, a Boston pianist. In the last movement of Rachmaninoff's fantasia the Russian composer will be featured. The first appearance of the concert of recently discovered tenor, N. Oster, will bring another newcomer whom Mr. Alshuler believes to be a singer genuinely deserving the important rôle for the orchestra will be Giuseppe's "The Middle Ages."

Cello solos. Berceuse, op. 10, No. 5, Schumann; Divertissement, op. 29, No. 1, Mendelssohn; Nocturne, op. 9, No. 3, Chopin; Rhapsody, op. 10, No. 1, Liszt.

Piano solos. Au Matin, op. 10, No. 1, Debussy; Nocturne, op. 9, No. 3, Chopin; Rhapsody, op. 10, No. 1, Liszt.

The fourth pair of concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra will be given in Carnegie Hall on Thursday evening, February 23, and Saturday afternoon, February 25. At both concerts the soloist will be Terzio in B-flat, on Thursday evening he will play Berlioz's concerto in C minor, No. 3, and on Saturday afternoon Liszt's piano concerto in E-flat major, No. 1.

Mischa Elman will give a second recital in Carnegie Hall which will take place on Monday afternoon, February 27. In order to accommodate the large number of auditors who were unable to gain admission at the first recital.

Clarence Whitehill, baritone, will give a song recital in Mendelssohn Hall on Thursday afternoon, February 16.

Miss Ada Rossini, the Italian harpist, at her recital in Mendelssohn Hall on February 21 will have the assistance of Miss Sarah Corbitt, pianist, and Albert Quastel, tenor. An important feature of the programme will be a sonata by Chopin for harp and cello which is a novelty here.

Madame Groll will give a second song recital in Carnegie Hall on Tuesday afternoon, February 7.

The last of the series of three Beethoven quartet recitals will be given in Mendelssohn Hall on Tuesday evening, February 15. Miss Lieber and M. H. Spier will be the soloists. A short but highly successful tour of the music week.

On Friday afternoon, March 3, Miss Frances Alda will give a song recital in Mendelssohn Hall.

Several songs in English will be included in the programme when Mme. Johanna Gadski will give a first New York recital in Carnegie Hall on Tuesday afternoon, February 14. Among them are: "The Churchyard," Franz, "The Little Grey Dove," L. V. Skaal, "One Grave More a Rose," Edwin Schröder, and "The Love Song," Johannes Brahms. Other features of the programme will be: "The Churchyard," Franz, "The Little Grey Dove," L. V. Skaal, "One Grave More a Rose," Edwin Schröder, and "The Love Song," Johannes Brahms.

The concluding concert of the Bonaventura Quartet's Mendelssohn Hall series is scheduled for Tuesday evening, February 14. The programme will include quartets of Beethoven, Jean Marie Leclair and Haydn.

Miss Edna Duhum, soprano, who has met with considerable success abroad, will make her first New York appearance in recital in Mendelssohn Hall on Thursday afternoon, February 23.

At the Carnegie Hall concert of the Philharmonic Society this afternoon Ernest Hutcheson, pianist, will be featured, playing the Max Baer's concerto No. 2, in D minor. Hutcheson has had successful appearances this season with the Boston Symphony and the Thomas Orchestra of Chicago, where his recent performance of Beethoven's third concerto won him favorable comment. He has also been heard twice in New York this season in recital. The Max Baer's concerto is dedicated to Max Baer, who for a time was Hutcheson's pianoforte teacher, and it has been played by her repeatedly at symphony concerts in Europe. The remainder of today's programme includes Schubert's unfinished symphony, Liszt's concerto "Le Roi d'Ys" and a Wagner group, the overture of "Flying Dutchman," "Waldweben" (sounds of the forest from "Siegfried") and "The Mastersingers" (March from "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg").

Tomorrow evening at 8:15 Werner Alberti, royal chamber singer of the Hungarian court, and his company under the direction of Theodor Bruch will begin a season of operatic recitals at the Irving Place Theatre at popular prices. The season will start off with "Adriana Lecouvreur," a three act comic opera which had a great success many years ago and which is still as fresh and delightful as when last produced in New York. Werner Alberti will assume the double rôle of Chappuis, the postilion, and St. Phare, the stage name of the postilion after he becomes a popular tenor at the Paris Opéra.

St. Christopher, One Favorite Design Comic Figures of Many Kinds. LONDON, Jan. 28.—Automobile mascots are growing in popularity and in variety. Already a form of etiquette has grown up as to the carrying of an automobile mascot. It must be attached to the cap of the radiator and the material must be solid brass or aluminum picked out with enamel.

Many English automobilists have adopted the Continental patron saint, St. Christopher, who is represented bearing a lamb in his arms and picking his way across a stream. But there are countless other badges of a less dignified character.

Two Automobile Mascots. London "bobby" ranks as the most popular of amulets among automobilists, closely followed by a weird specimen of a yelping dog.

Then there is the black cat, the proverbial bringer of good luck, the gollwing, the weird jabbawock, a zoological monster which was on land or sea, a horned fawn, borrowed from classical mythology; a crowing cock, which came into fashion when Rodand's "Chanteclor" was monopolizing theatrical talk, and a spread eagle. The toddy bear has fallen into disfavor. Some of these mascots have been also dropped by airman.

MISS ST. DENIS'S NEW DANCES.

Her Home Acquired Atmosphere as Contrasting as Ever.

Miss Ruth St. Denis makes no secret of the fact that the atmosphere that she manages to produce in her Oriental dances as well as the dances themselves were acquired not by years of study in those far off lands but right in New York and London. She brushes aside the question if she has ever been in India, Japan or Egypt with a laughing negative, as if such questions were irrelevant.

This year she has added to the Coty, Vogt, Nantel, and Temple dances in which she made her first New York appearances and the Japanese shrinô dance of last year some interesting Nile dances. She has been at work a long time on these dances. From the delicate lotus flower to the procession commemorative of the Nile rising there is embodied in these evolutions the spirit of a country whose mystery no tourist has been able to escape. As some humorist long ago described Boston not as a place but as a condition, so these Oriental places are to Miss St. Denis apparently not actual lands to be voyaged to and from, but places in her consciousness, peopled with fancies.

The school of Western occultism says that just as soon as you are ready to take a step forward toward any goal, your mind will be provided and Miss St. Denis gravely admits the truth of this teaching in her case. Strange people come to her with their secret lore, letters and information to show her where to obtain some interesting article that may add to her stage settings.

"I feel sometimes," she says, "as if I really got nearer to the Nile I portray in these dances than if I had learned them in India, Japan, Egypt, as the country for I have managed to retain a personality which I am sure I should lose if I were right at the heart of the life there."

Proceeding for season of matinees Miss St. Denis has made several appearances at private houses. One of these occasions was at the house of Mrs. Philip Taylor, another at the residence of Jacob Schiff, popular on such occasions than the more formal Nantel dance seems to be more spiritual and symbolic dances.

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A good many devotees of the car believe in carrying live mascots. One woman never leaves a pet monkey at home when out in her car, while others have heriboned pet animals of different sorts seated between themselves and the



RUTH ST. DENIS AS AN EGYPTIAN DANCER.



RUTH ST. DENIS IN HER NEW NILE DANCE.

PICTURESQUE WEDDING RITES.

A Paris Marriage Ceremony a Strange and Brilliant Affair.

"During a visit to India," writes a correspondent to the Queen, "I was my good fortune to witness a Paris wedding, which is a ceremony of unusual picturesqueness and beauty. A marriage among the Parisians is always arranged by a matron-maître, who is generally a priest. If his choice of a bride is pleasing to the bridegroom's family they send a response to the bride's family for her response, and this, with the young man's horoscope, is submitted to an astrologer. If the stars are not propitious the match is abandoned.

The marriage ceremony usually takes place just about sunset, and great preparations are made for it. The bride whose nuptials I saw was the daughter of a dastur, or chief priest, and the rite was performed at the fire temple. The entrance was decorated with garlands and flags. Later in the evening thousands of tiny oil lamps outlined the buildings.

The bridegroom and his family, together with the male members of the bride's family, arrived first, and the opening ceremony was the exchange of some handsome silk shawls between the two fathers. A band heralded the approach of the bride and her party, whereupon the priests and the bridegroom took their places on a raised dais, over which a lovely canopy of flowers was suspended.

Two handsome chairs facing each other were placed immediately under the canopy and on these the bridal pair took their seats, a piece of cloth being held between them as a curtain to screen them from each other's sight. But before this the bride's mother entered, bearing a silver tray containing seven nuts and rice, which she passed three times round the bridegroom's head, while some maidens, charmingly attired in soft silks of delicate hue, sang some verses in his praise.

When the bridal pair were seated they were made to hold each other's hands under the curtain and another piece of cloth was placed round both chairs and held by a double knot, after which a skein of raw wool was wound round the pair's hands by the officiating priest, prayers being repeated during the process, and finally the twist was tied seven times round the joined hands of the

couple and round the double knot of the encircling cloth. Incense was then placed on a small brazier and lighted, to the further intensification of prayers.

The dividing curtain was then loosened suddenly and the bride and bridegroom, who had each been provided with a few grains of rice, hastened to throw them at each other. The one who succeeds in getting the first throw is supposed to have the stronger affection, while the attendant maidens clapped their hands gaily. The bridal pair were then seated side by side and the chief priests took up a position facing them and pronounced a long recital of blessings in the ancient language of Persia, emphasizing each sentence by throwing a few grains of rice from trays placed a hand at the devoted pair in a manner that struck Western ideas as most disconcerting.

The whole ceremony lasted nearly an hour and was conducted by the senior chief priest pronouncing the following blessing: "May the omniscient Lord bless you with many sons and grandsons, with good livelihood, heart, friendship, friend-ship, long life and an existence of 150 years."

The parents of the happy pair were then asked by the priests if the marriage had their full consent and the bridegroom and bride were also asked if they were agreed to live together in harmony to the end of their lives, after which followed a short homily and some prayers and blessings in the Sanskrit language and the signing of the marriage certificate by the latter, by their parents and the two officiating priests.

It is difficult to convey in words the brilliant picture such a scene presents. Light and color seem to waft in the East. But a scene composed of white robes, women and children arrayed in silks of every color and the costly, able, gold and silver embroidered and sparkling with a wealth of jewels, flowers and lights forms a picture that would tax the pen of a practised word painter.

MUSICAL. SERGEI KLIBANSKY. Formerly leading singing teacher in the Stern Conservatory, Berlin. Voice Production, Operatic Repertoire, German Lieder, Coach for Concert Artists. Recently engaged by the American Institute of Applied Music. Private Studio, 212 West 50th St.

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