

Singers, Their Requirements and Faults

Standards and Demands of Opera and Concert Different—Public Demands More Finished Art of Singing at Latter.

By W. J. HENDERSON.

THAT artists need support and encouragement seems almost a truism. To be such a monstrosity of creative genius as Maugham's Charles Strickland is to be something practically inhuman. A man does not paint pictures without the wish that other men will see them and recognize the lineaments of a personality. One does not compose music to have it remain forever silent for all ears except one's own. The yearning for admiration, which is the moving impulse of much false art, may be disregarded; but the desire for human sympathy is something we all understand.

The labors of organizations whose professed objects are to discover and aid youthful talent command much respect when they are wisely conducted. When they result in the indiscriminate marshaling before the public eye of half-baked youngsters who have no claim to consideration, unless their wish to receive public notice can be so regarded, they are capable of doing incalculable harm.

Last Monday evening the writer of this department listened for a time to the singing of a young woman brought before the local public by one of those first aid organizations. The columns of this newspaper the following morning contained no comment on that singing. Some other journals described the recital with candor. The young woman had come a long distance to obtain what is grandiloquently called "metropolitan recognition." It seems unlikely that she enjoyed it.

Her case was similar to hundreds of others, except that she had perhaps a little more excuse than some of the other adventures into the White Light district. She came from a city which every year is aroused by a week's visit of the opera company from Broadway and Fortieth street. She and her fellow townsfolk therefore have some justification for believing that almost any singing is good enough for New York.

Those who form their standards of vocal art by what they hear at the Metropolitan are certain to have some painful experiences when they arrive in the concert field. The best singers in the opera company are not those most in the public mind. They are frequently unnoticed because they sing minor roles or because they figure chiefly as substitutes for those whom the impresario puts foremost in response to public demand.

Angelo Bada, for instance, would hardly be accorded an instant's consideration by the habitual operagoer, for the simple reason that he has an inferior voice and therefore has to sing small parts, yet Mr. Bada is one of the most thorough vocal artists in the entire company. On the other hand, Mme. Florence Easton, whose singing invariably excites the warmest admiration of connoisseurs, is heard only occasionally in the first roles of the most popular operas. Why? Because the public prefers singers who can produce a larger volume of tone.

Lately a minor singer of the Metropolitan, always ranked by critics as an artist of respectable merit entered the field of the song recital. Her conduct was doubtless thought her afflicted with timidity, but she proved that her judgment was correct. She is far more interesting in recital than in opera, chiefly because she can sing and in the song field is not so hampered, as she is in opera, by the limited volume of a light voice.

But the young aspirant for local fame who has revealed on Monday the operatic eagles in song recital and she may have thought that the imperfect, out of tune, crude and rude delivery of so many of them is the thing that makes their recital success in Gotham. Put in this she made a most important mistake.

The standards of singing in the opera and in the concert hall are different. The standards of persons who never go to any other form of musical entertainment attend the opera. Only the most cultivated music lovers pay their money to go to recitals. Unfortunately, the free riders, like J. C. Clarke's roll of Irish singers, extend "from despatch to the Golden Gate." But the fact remains that the public which the recital performer faces expects something entirely different from that which the opera goes desires.

When it comes to the field of the song recital, this concert public expects singing. It has no appetite for mere volume of tone. Leo Slezak in Aeolian Hall had the same effect as a brass band would have had. He made the ears ring, but he did not make the heart glad. All the other kinds of concert performance are foreign to operatic art. The playing of a symphonic orchestra is a specialty. People do not go to the opera to listen to the orchestra. A very large part of the recital does not hear it. The pianist and violinists, of course, appeal to people who love instrumental as well as vocal music.

It may be conceded that only a small percentage of all these patrons of concert music know what is good and what is not; but an essential difference between this small percentage and the best type of opera goers is that the cultivated concert goer is seeking for the finest quality in art, while the typical opera devotee asks for the most showy.

Now when young persons journey

to the city, they are met by a host of vocalists who make their living by the public which they take to them at first quickly turns its back upon them and they sink into oblivion. As for the pianist and violinists, their fate is equally gloomy; they make progress in their art. But no amount of technical skill will enable the instrumental player to rise to the top unless the essential qualities of an artist are behind it.

The most important gift of the musical interpreter is not what is commonly called "temperament." What people in general mean by that word is warmth of feeling. That is not what is meant, but the public forces that significance upon it. Many singers and

instrumentalists who are not so gifted with imagination the printed page has no secrets from him. He can enter into the shrine of the composer's creation and come forth with an interpretation. And this gift is for very few. The coaches can teach them nothing. They are the captains of their own souls.

Reinold Werrenrath, baritone, will sail for Europe May 22, to give two song recitals on June 3 and 19, at Queen's Hall, London.

After his tour of Europe as one of the two soloists with the New York Symphony Orchestra Albert Spalding, violinist, will make his first tour of South America next season. He left New York for Paris on April 22.

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Concerts of the Week.

SUNDAY—Abe Serfl, violinist, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M. Cantor Quartet, tenor, Hippodrome, 3 P. M. Oscar Hammerstein memorial concert, with Mme. Tetrazzini and John McCormack, Hippodrome, 8:15 P. M. Community Symphony Society, Y. M. H. A., Washington Heights, 8 P. M. Orchestral concert, with soloists, Music School Settlement, 55 East Third street, 4 P. M.

TUESDAY—Sasha Votichenko, tympanist; Russian Cathedral Quartet and other artists; Aeolian Hall, 8:30 P. M.

WEDNESDAY—William Henningens, baritone; Hotel Astor, 8:15 P. M. Polish benefit concert, New Symphony Orchestra and soloists; Carnegie Hall, 8:30 P. M.

THURSDAY—The Misses Hoyt, costume musical; Fulton Theatre, 8:30 P. M.

FRIDAY—Benefit concert of Triumvirate, French Air Force; Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

SATURDAY—Vocal and instrumental concert, Columbia, Harvard-Princeton, Aeolian Hall, 2:30 P. M.

PLAYERS have warmth of feeling, and it leads them to tumultuous poundings, savings and shoutings, which have the same relation to art as the howlings of a soap box agitator have to oratory. But when the musician has the price-

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Last night saw the reopening of Tappan's Hotel at Sheepshead Bay. For years Tappan's has been one of the leading places for shore dinners. It will be under the management of Stephen & Gaskin again this season.

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The Reisenweber revue, "Bits and Bits of 1920," continues to attract many patrons despite the advent of spring weather. Among the artists are "Pat" and "Gene" Valle, Inez, who sings plaintive melodies; Nat Moran in imitations of colored singers; Miss Kitty Flynn and the Four Janadas; Johnny Dale in new recitation to the cast and he is supported by a chorus of 24 girls.

The recent leasing of the studios above the Cafe des Beaux Arts will not in any way affect the continuation of the restaurant and grill, said Andre D. Buntanob yesterday. "As we have a separate lease which runs for many years," Kathryn McCormack and Pet. Table are hostesses and preside each evening, exclusive of Sunday, at the Beaux Arts Supper Club.

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