

"MUSIC A NECESSITY IN MOVING PICTURES"

Frieda Hempel, Star of the Metropolitan Opera, Declares That the Highest Art of Motion Pictures Will Not Be Attained Until All Companies Synchronize Their Musical Accompaniment of a Play With Its Action—In an Interview the Great German Soprano Chooses Music For the Screen.



Photo Ira Hill Studios.
Frieda Hempel, Star of the Metropolitan Opera.

Illuminated on the white screen of a moving picture house, the man whose motive was revenge pushed open the French windows and entered from the balcony; approaching the beautiful sleeping girl, he was seen to uncork a bottle of vitriol. The audience, thrilled with the situation, breathlessly waited, until—

"Run-tan-tiddle!" The house piano player had chosen a musical selection for the scene.

When Frieda Hempel, the popular and beautiful prima donna of the Metropolitan Opera, was told that the Paramount Pictures Corporation, realizing the enormous importance of having proper musical selections played with every scene of their releases, were sending out complete scores with every play they released, she said in her positive way:

"Music is a prime necessity for the future success of moving pictures. In these stories of silence music must take the place of the spoken word. It plays the feelings of the drama straight to the heart. What we miss in the moving picture theatre is the voices of

the actors, but now you tell me these are supplied by the great literature of music. In Richard Wagner's music there is everything adaptable to any drama ever conceived. And I can imagine nothing so suitable for a scene in a Pullman Sleeper than some of Bach's music. Take the music of 'Die Walküre'; it applies itself wonderfully to the interpretation of cowboy pictures. And if you want music for love scenes, why don't you take the love motif from 'Tristan and Isolde'? I think that eventually you will develop certain chief motifs taken from great composers that will become recognizable in course of time by motion picture audiences."

Frieda Hempel, star of the Metropolitan Opera House, had spared enough time from her favorite game, Mouschel, to tell the interviewer what she thought of the very latest step forward in the motion picture industry. The Fraulein's fuzzy little dog yelping around suggested an ideal musical synonym for "The Call of the Wild," but a few pats from the diva and his majesty ceased growling.

"You see, Fraulein Hempel," explained the interviewer, "The Paramount Pictures Corporation has taken one of the most important steps forward in the industry. They have arranged with Schirmer, the music publisher, to select scores for their pictures, each film on their program to be accompanied by a complete bound book. In other words, in more than 2,000 moving picture theatres of America the audiences are going to hear night after night selections from Mendelssohn, Strauss, Wagner, Delibes, Saint Saens, Victor Herbert—all the great composers, dead and living. These selections will absolutely match the mood of the screen. Not only is the artistic taste of an audience now being given the chance to gratify itself, but the coupling up of the best music with motion picture plays opens a field for a better understanding of the drama.

"These scores will be so arranged that they can be used for any size orchestra from a single pianist to the largest symphony orchestra."

"These scores will be furnished to the exhibitors by the exchanges upon a rental basis. They will mean the saving of the effect of the film from rination through the inappropriateness of its musical accompaniment."

Fraulein Hempel, who had been attentively listening, clapped her hands.

"That is good," she exclaimed. "By the proper adaptation of music the photoplay house will be raised to a much higher artistic plane. But what an interesting problem it must be for a musician to select from the musical



Photo Famous Players Co.

NOBODY PLAYED THE LOVE MOTIF FROM "TRISTAN AND ISOLDE" WHEN THE FAMOUS PLAYERS' DIRECTOR TOLD MARIE DORA TO SMILE LIKE AN ENGAGED GIRL IN "DIPLOMACY." PLAY OVER THE FOLLOWING BARS FROM THE MOTIF AND SEE IF YOU AGREE WITH FRIEDA HEMPEL. SHE CHOSE THEM AS THE IDEAL MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT FOR EVERY PARAMOUNT LOVE SCENE.



history of the world, themes that will adapt themselves to some of the intense dramatic situations one sees in the better pictures! But how difficult it would be to find suitable music to describe the 'Mysterious Hand' or 'The Perils of Polly'! I am mentioning titles that I have never seen, but which may sufficiently interpret my idea.

"I can't understand why this important question of the appropriate music for the more pretentious motion productions has not before been seriously considered. All the sentiment and duty of feeling in human nature is most perfectly expressed in music. In fact, it is only imperfectly expressed in stories and in drama. No, I do not even exempt such a master playwright as Sardou, the great French author. His play 'Diplomacy,' which I have just seen put into motion pictures, is, of course, a classic, but much of the deeper undercurrent of the play was brought out for me in the phras-

ing of the incidental music chosen especially for that purpose. Undoubtedly, music takes the place in these stories of silence of the spoken word. It plays the feeling of the drama straight to the heart."

"Miss Hempel, what composer do you think has written the most adaptable music for the motion picture plays?"

"I suppose that Richard Wagner is the only master who has applied literature to music," replied Miss Hempel. "It seems to me that in Wagner's music there is everything adaptable to any drama ever conceived. Of course the 'Wedding March' of Lohengrin has become the recognized symbol, the world over, of every joyous scene, or joyous for that matter, at the altar. That in itself is a new testimony of the universal appeal which Wagner has made to the sentiment of the world, upon its most vital subject—marriage.

"What emotion of the most popular kind, has not Wagner interpreted to the improvement of any other composer in the world? I should like to suggest to motion picture producers that there is no greater love theme ever written in music than the love motif of 'Tristan and Isolde.' It should become as universally inspiring and popular as his 'Wedding March.' It is quite remarkable to realize how easily most of the music in Wagnerian opera can be applied to the most thrilling of modern photoplays.

"For instance, the 'Ho, Ho, Hei,' music of the 'Walküre' with its stirring vitality of open air and god-like courage, applies itself wonderfully to the interpretation of cowboy pictures of those beautiful outdoor scenes taken in your western country, in the hills of California. Wagner never saw them. He gained no inspiration from the great stretches of prairie and sky and valley, which your western country so amply provides, but he had the univer-

felt all things that were possible to an feeling.

can remember the wonderful music written for 'Hans Sachs' in Wagner's Opera 'The Meistersingers.' I have always thought that that music would apply itself to some of those home scenes I have witnessed in photoplays, where the masterful philosophy of heart is often shown in the character of the father. Of course, in these modern stories that are put before us in the motion picture houses there is perhaps a purpose beyond the mere suspense of story writing, but I was particularly impressed with the fact that in this production of 'Diplomacy' I enjoyed the poetic feeling in the play because of the ideal music selected, which I had not felt when I saw the play produced abroad. You see, music will always idealize, and that is something we can never get too much of.

"Of course, when the ball-room scene came I instinctively expected to hear the 'Blue Danube Waltz' by Strauss, and when the wedding scene came of course I also expected to hear Wagner's Wedding March. But I had never considered Mendelssohn as an inspiration to intrigue. Yet I found the music selected for that big scene in the play in Dora's apartment from 'Hebriden' by this composer was marvellously appropriate. So also was the serenade by Moszkowski for another moment of intrigue in the scene between 'Baron Stein,' the villain, and 'Countess Zizka.' The selection from 'Musetta' by C. Saint-Saens was ideal for the symbolic vision of Dora. As I watched the progress of the play, with its many opportunities for improvement over the mere theatrical production on the stage, I couldn't help wondering what the great Sardou would have thought of it himself. Sardou, by the way, would have made a wonderful scenario writer for moving pictures, wouldn't he?"

"But, Miss Hempel, are there no



"Sardou, Author of 'Diplomacy' Would Have Made a Wonderful Scenario Writer."

other composers whom you think adaptable to motion pictures?"

"Why not? Take Bach's music, for instance. I can imagine nothing so suitable for a scene in a Pullman sleeping car than some of his fugues. 'The

music of 'The Barber of Seville' would be excellent for thrilling situations. The music of Verdi's operas is perhaps too lyrical for the purposes of interpretation of moving picture dramas. There must be substance and thought



"How Easily Wagnerian Opera Can Be Applied to Thrilling Photoplays."

to the music selected for a big dramatic story, not only tunefulness and emotion.

"The trouble in this country has been, I am told, that it is almost impossible to get pianists and organists to play good music in the average motion picture house. In Berlin and other European cities, so I understand, it is the custom for advanced pupils studying in the musical conservatories to take orchestral positions in moving picture houses. In Berlin, it is essentially important that the music must be good, and that it be well played. The public taste demands that. It seems to me, that there must be a great opening in this country for the large number of musical students to help out their musical education by playing in these moving picture houses in the evenings. And with carefully chosen scores, like Paramount's how charming—what an appeal to people who like music, as well as pictures it would be!

"I firmly believe that music is a prime necessity for the future success of motion pictures, and that the more beautiful the music the deeper will be the under current of feeling stirred, and the more sincere will the audience believe the screen story they are watching to be. I think eventually you will develop certain motifs taken from the great composers that will become recognizable at once by motion picture audiences. For instance, my suggestion is to make love motif of all love scenes to be the one I have chosen from 'Tristan and Isolde.' Of course, I am a singer and my profession is music, but I do not believe that any human beings are fully nourished with the savor of ideality that is necessary to perfect happiness, unless they hear and appreciate the finest music written."

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