

WASHINGTON'S SINGERS.

WHO MAY BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE NEW CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC.

A Temple of Harmony for Which a Congressional Appropriation Was Secured. Bright Gossip About Marie Decca and Other Well Known Artists.

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The National Conservatory of Music, for the establishment of which congress at the last session made an appropriation, and which is to be located in Washington, will probably become one of the institutions of the capital city within a few months. Its success is undoubted. Washington has al-



MARIE DECCA.

ways been a musical center of importance. Many musicians of prominence give it as their birthplace or place of education. And its physical beauties have attracted to it many persons who have no concern with government affairs, not a few of whom have been musicians of note. There are, therefore, a great number of people whose interest in the proposed conservatory is direct and strong already in Washington and the actual opening of the conservatory will unquestionably attract many more.

It was through the efforts of the Washington musicians that congress was induced to act. Congressmen are rarely enthusiastic musicians. That being the case, it was difficult to arouse their interest. What was to be gained by a conservatory of music at the capital? Finally, however, they yielded and voted for the appropriation, and the musicians blessed them.

One of those who will undoubtedly play an important part in the new institution is Mlle. Marie Decca. She is a soprano and accompanied the Marine band on its recent tour. Mlle. Decca was a pupil of Mme. Marchesi. She was the only one of a class of sixteen who took the four years' course and graduated. She studied abroad for



SIGNOR MAINA.

awhile and then appeared at Covent Garden, London, under the management of Colonel Mapleson. Her first part was that of Queen of Night in the "Magic Flute." Her success was immediate and substantial.

During the two years she was with Mapleson she made tours of England and Ireland. She talks entertainingly of her experiences in the latter country. Irishmen and Irishwomen, she declares, are severely critical in musical matters. They criticize with judgment, too, she says.

At the first performance in Dublin the students of Trinity college, whose verdict is unquestioningly accepted as final by the musical public there, assembled in the gallery. The knowledge of the presence of these austere critics made Miss Decca rather nervous. But as they gave no indication of disapproval in the first few moments after her appearance, she quickly became confident and sang with such fine effect that when she made her exit the



MME. MAINA.

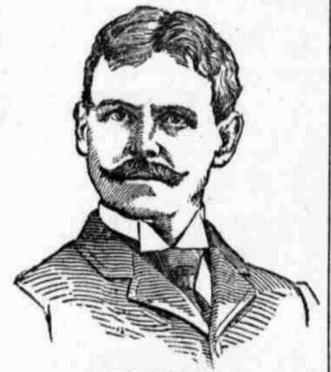
galleries gave a loud whoop, and demands for cheers for "the blue eyed darlin in the white frock" were responded to lustily.

Miss Decca is a member of the Marine corps and wears the insignia of the corps, an elaborate decoration of gold and silver. The court train belonging to one of Miss Decca's costumes is of great value intrinsically and also historically. The British museum offered \$2,000 for it. It is of spun silver and belonged to the aunt of the old Emperor William of Germany. In former days it was the custom for the bridesmaids to divide the silver train of the royal bride in half, one part being given to some cathedral for an altar cloth and the other kept in the family as an heirloom. The family half of this particular train was presented to Miss Decca during her stay in

London. The other half is in the Hohenzollern museum. The Americans in Paris presented her with a pin, the design of which is a music staff of gold. On the lines of the staff are five large diamonds, representing in music notes the letters of her name.

There have been many fables related concerning the origin of Miss Decca's nom de theatre. One says it is derived from two Italian words, decanter and cantore, which interpreted mean "a living song of praise." This is pretty, but it isn't true. The real story is less poetical. During her early life this songstress was known in Washington as Mary Johnston. After she went to Paris and was engaged by Colonel Mapleson, that gentleman thought it necessary for her to have a stage name. Ohio, the name of her native state, was suggested, but that seemed too much like an imitation of Nevada, who at that time was very popular. While searching for a name a cablegram came to Miss Johnston announcing the death of Professor Everest, of Philadelphia, her tutor before she went abroad. He wrote the first song ever dedicated to her. The news of his death made her reminiscent. She got the old song and, humming it over, noticed that the first five notes on the staff were d, e, c, c, a, which she immediately adopted as her stage name.

Signor Maina and his wife will take an active interest in the new conservatory. Signor Maina is a native of Italy. He was a pupil of Tancioni, who was a classmate of Rossini, and came to America under the management of Mr. Strakosch. He has sung with Gerster and Kellogg, as Mephistopheles in "Faust," his voice being a powerful basso of excellent quality. He is a vocal teacher and also the leader of the choir in St. Patrick's church, Washington. Mme. Maina was known before her marriage as Pauline Montgriffio, and received her first instruction from Barilli, in Washington. At the age of twelve she went to Milan to study with Lamperti. After five years of his tuition she made her debut in Catania, Italy. Directly afterward she made a tour through Europe under the management of Mr. Abbey. She sang with Patti, who, as a token of appreciation of her merit, presented her with a necklace containing forty-five diamonds. Her voice is a rich, full contralto. It has been heard in every country in the world except Australia.



OSKAR KRUTZSCH.

A musician of prominence in Washington is Oskar Krutzsch, who until recently lived in Boston, where he was educated in the musical conservatory. He also studied four years with W. H. Sherwood, of New York. Mr. Krutzsch is popular both as a teacher and a performer upon the piano. Among his recent compositions are, "The Heart and Hand," gavotte, a contralto song entitled, "My Heart's a Lute," and a march called "Le Regiment qui Passe." He is of German ancestry, but a Virginian by birth.

Mrs. E. M. Webber, a soprano, is also from Boston. She has been in Washington since last fall. Her voice is a clear, high soprano, and it has won for her a great amount of applause in the capital city. She was a pupil of Alexander Guilmette, of Boston. She also studied for some time with Carlotta Patti in Paris.

Tenor Herndon Morsell is a native of Washington. Fairbank taught him and for some time he sang in Washington churches. Then he went to Milan and studied with Lambert. After a concert season of six months in London he came to America and joined the Boston Ideal, remaining with them until they disbanded. He then went with the McCaull company



MRS. E. M. WEBBER.

and later with the Duff company. Hereafter he will sing only in concert. Mr. Morsell has composed a number of songs of much merit.

Mrs. Annie Roemer-Kaspar was born in Darmstadt, Germany. She came to America when a little girl and began her musical education in Baltimore, completing it in Germany and then returning to Baltimore, where she made her debut. Besides her own pupils Mrs. Kaspar teaches in Mrs. Somers' school, a position she has held for ten years. She is also the soprano in the E Street Baptist church. As a concert singer she is in much demand.

Washington is proud of Mrs. Annie Louise Powell, widow of Lieutenant Powell, of the army. During a western tour of the Boston Symphony orchestra, Mrs. Powell's fine contralto blended with the soprano of Mme. Fursch-Madl. Mrs. Powell also sang with Emma Thursby on her last southern tour. She also is a pupil of the great Milan teacher, Lambert. But before going abroad to study she was taught by Signor Agramento in New York, and while with him was the contralto soloist in St. James' Episcopal church. She wrote a lullaby last winter and secured the everlasting gratitude of the administration by dedicating it to Baby McKee. MARGARET MANTON.

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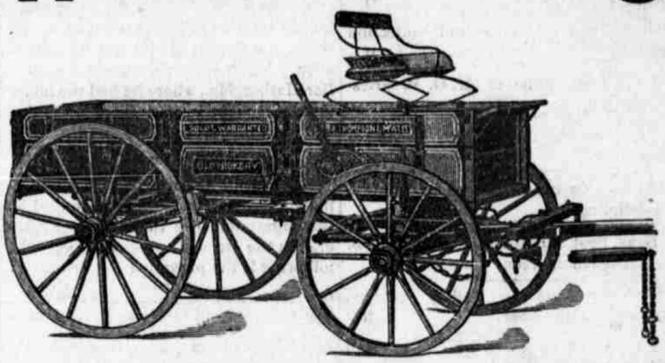
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