

Sousa, Bernhardt and Coquelin in Omaha

WHEN John Philip Sousa first appeared before an Omaha audience he was not clothed in a faultless uniform and did not wear the immaculate white gloves that have long characterized the march king.

Early in the season of 1873 Milton Nobles and a company of players headed by May Stevens came to the Academy of Music. "Bohemians and Detectives" was the play which the company produced to a large audience. The piece was afterward rechristened "Phoenix."

A slender, black-eyed boy played first fiddle in the orchestra which furnished villain music for the villain and hero music for Nobles and his outbursts of the sort of sentiment one expects from leading men. The orchestra was bad, but its leader was earnest in his efforts to bring harmony out of chaos. His duties were many. He pounded the bass drum during the rain storm, produced howling winds with his screeching violin and played an angel serenade when the heartless villain's spirit left its house of clay.

That versatile orchestra leader was 17-year-old John Philip Sousa; the Sousa who was destined to thrill all the world with his



MISS BUCKLIN, SOUSA AND MISS DUFFIELD—Photo by Louis R. Bostwick.

marches; the Sousa who was to assume leadership of the Marine band and secure for himself the sobriquet, "Electric Sousa."

A recital of the great bandmaster's early struggles must bring consolation to struggling genius which is seeking recognition. Like most men who have climbed the ladder of fame, Mr. Sousa talks very freely of his reverses and during his recent visit to Omaha he told many laughable stories of his first attempts at writing music.

Sousa's First Opera.

Mr. Sousa's second visit to Omaha was in 1880. He was then musical director of the key Comedy company, which was giving his opera, "Flirtation." The company was short and John Philip Sousa's first pretentious attempt as a composer became a matter of history.

"It was very bad," Mr. Sousa remarked, as he laughed about the unfortunate production. "But there was one march in the



AT THE STAGE DOOR—Photo by Louis R. Bostwick.

piece which survived the wreck. The "Flirtation" march, and I came out whole. I frequently see the piece for sale in music stores and hear it played occasionally."

But Sousa was not discouraged by the failure of his opera. He went east and associated himself with companies which were playing such operas as "Pinafore," "Trial by Jury" and "Chimes of Normandy." For five years but little was heard from the young composer. In 1885 the "Gladiator March" was published and proved to be his first great success.

Shortly afterwards Sousa abandoned the violin and orchestra work and devoted him-

self to band leadership. The change was a fortunate one. In a short time he was made director of the Marine band, a position he held for twelve years. Nine years ago he became leader of the organization with which he is now touring the United States.

"I have fiddled since I was a very small boy," the great conductor remarked when asked about his early instruction. "When I was 11 years old I began to study in J. S. Espuda's conservatory in Washington. Later I studied with George Felix Benkert.



SOUSA SUBDUES THE REEDS—Photo by Louis R. Bostwick.

These men are the only teachers I ever had and taught me all I know about music."

Breaks Into Marches.

The Sousa band made its first European tour last year. It played for several weeks at the Paris exposition and then gave concerts in all parts of England and the continent.

The success of "Gladiator March" encouraged Sousa and in quick succession he produced a number of pieces which made him famous. "Semper Fidelis" was followed by "High School Cadets." Then came "Washington Post" and each subsequent year has brought forth several popular Sousa marches.

"The Spirit of Liberty" is Sousa's latest production and it is well worthy of a place along with his other successes. He has written several operas, which have been well received, successful songs and all sorts of music, in fact, but it is as a composer of marches that the world knows him best.

It was a strange coincidence that when the Sousa band entered the harbor at Southampton last spring the American hospital ship Maine was the first vessel sighted. It was an American ship fitted up by philanthropic American women and had just returned from South Africa. The band struck up "Stars and Stripes Forever," and the disabled soldiers greeted the inspiring air with shouts of joy. "God Save the Queen" won the hearts of the hospital crew completely. Then followed "Star Spangled Banner" and a number of other popular airs.

"All the World's Akin."

"We were about to begin a tour of a strange country and did not feel sure of a kind reception. But that scene at Southampton reassured us. It showed us that all the world is akin; that the universe is small, after all, and that no man should be bound up in his own country to the exclusion of foreigners," said Mr. Sousa. "Everywhere we were received with kindness. In Germany, Holland, England, France and Austria a kindly welcome awaited us.

"Europeans are not so demonstrative as Americans and do not put the same reliance in advertising. For weeks there was but little applause when we first came on the stage. Our audiences seemed to say with their silence, 'Now, show us that you can play and we will accept you.' Europeans are Missourians, but we seemed to convince them that we knew something about music.

"The opinion prevails in Europe that Americans have no folk song and no music which is peculiar to the United States. Ragtime music was a revelation to the slow-going Germans, but it pleased them. All the programs we played contained many selections written by Americans and they were well received. When I say American selections I do not mean ragtime alone. We played much high grade American music, by such writers as Dudley Buck, Nevin, Hadley, MacDowell and a score of others.

"One night in Berlin we played what was styled a Berlin and New York program. All the numbers were written by residents of those two cities. A funny incident came to my notice while we were in Berlin. During one of my concerts a portly German officer attempted to teach a beautiful girl how to walk in ragtime. My boys saw the ungainly efforts of the big fellow to cake walk and were so convulsed with laughter that I was afraid we would not get through with the number."

MME. BERNHARDT is afraid of a camera. During her present American tour she has eluded squads of artists who have sought to photograph the tragedy queen. A phalanx of French servants with a studied ignorance of English stand between divine Sara and the man with a camera.

In New York and Chicago the papers were compelled to go to the newspaper "graveyard" for pictures of the great Frenchwoman. She was never in when requested to pose for staff artists, and a curious world had to content itself with photographs of the tragedienne which are as familiar as stock pictures of Queen Victoria.

In Omaha divine Sara did not get off so easily. As usual she was not in the temper to be photographed—and to hear Bernhardt's servants talk it would seem that it is dangerous to go against the madame's temperament. Madame is not as terrible, however, as her wire-edged servants would have the world believe.

In the afternoon of the day she spent in Omaha Bernhardt went for a drive. A carriage arrived at her special car a short time before she was ready for her daily outing. The Bee's staff artist had the coachman stop where the sun was shining brightly and intimated to him that it would be worth his while to not start in too great a hurry after the great actress was seated.

Coming of the Cavalcade.

Benon, madame's French coachman, understood none of the conversation which was carried on by the artist and the local cabman. Presently Coquelin, Madame Levi, Madame Bernhardt, the actress' two fox terriers and half a dozen maids and menservants alighted from the car and went to the carriage. It took several minutes to tuck madame's tiny feet into fur warmers. Meantime the artist focussed his camera and when the servants got out of the way he was ready to take a picture of Bernhardt. She ordered Benon to drive away, and motioned frantically at the camera. But Benon did not have the lines, and the local cabman was slow to understand the sign language by means of which Sara talks to all the world.

The artist moved his tripod to within a few feet of the carriage and deliberately focused it on the face of the Frenchwoman.

"Not so close, not so close!" she exclaimed, as she threw up her beautiful hands and tried to conceal her face. Then she gave another order to Benon and smiled as the horses started. She had fooled another artist and laughed merrily as she

at its best, he went to the station at 6 o'clock.

"Madame is at dinner. She will see nobody," was the exclamation which came from the throats of half a dozen servants past whom the artist brushed as he made

raising her hands in imitation of a flashlight.

Servants were ordered to remove a number of wine bottles which sat on the table, and the divine Sara, M. Coquelin and other members of the company were photographed



"ZE CHEEKS SO FULL!"

his way into the dining room where Bernhardt and Coquelin were eating. The madame's pictures were laid before her and she gave a little scream of delight.

"You make ze cheeks full! I like it!"

Finishes It in French.

Mme. Bernhardt's English failed her, and she burst into French exclamations which are not intended for the ears of Americans who have acquired their French from textbooks.

The secret of Bernhardt's reluctance to be photographed was out. She had been afraid that fifty-seven years had made inroads upon her beauty and the youthful picture was a revelation to her. The artist was not slow to appreciate the situation.

"But, madame, we want a picture of you in your car. Won't you let me take it now?" he asked.

just as they sat about the table while eating their evening meal.

Orders Extra Copies.

"I want ze picture," madame remarked, after she had posed. "It is so young."

M. Coquelin was called upon to explain to the artist that Madame Bernhardt wanted copies of all the pictures he had made of her. A pen was called for and both Bernhardt and Coquelin wrote their names and their San Francisco address upon the back of the proof which showed madame with the full cheeks.

Then Madame Bernhardt insisted on having the artist drink some of her choice wine. Her servants could not wait on the man who had made a youthful looking picture of her. She poured out the wine with her own hands and made a toast in the rippling tones that have brought all the world to her feet.

Such is the gracious Sara Bernhardt,



wayed him adieu. But the divine Sara was mistaken. An excellent picture had been taken of her before she got out of range of the Bee artist, who has a record of never missing when he once starts, and that delightful smile was just the expression the artist wanted. He registered it on a plate and the result is the picture of Mme. Bernhardt and Mme. Levi which is shown on this page.

One picture of the queen of tragedy did not satisfy the artist. He developed the plates and found that they were successful. His appetite was whetted and he determined to secure a picture of Bernhardt in her car. Armed with a proof of the picture, which showed the Bernhardt smile

Sara Bernhardt and M. Coquelin

"So dark. No good!" she exclaimed. "Oh, yes; I can take it all right. I have a flashlight apparatus." Madame was perplexed for a moment. Then her face lighted up as she said. "Ze pouff!" She made her meaning clear by

who is surrounded by an army of servants so solicitous of their mistress' welfare that they have led the world to believe that she is a woman whom years of hard work have developed into a terzagant. More youthful in appearance and actions than many women less than half her age, it is impossible to explain why Bernhardt avoids the photographer, unless it be the realization that other women who are approaching three-score years will be grieved at seeing how successful a sister has been in warding off all traces of old age and in renewing her youth as the years go by.