

Music, Art and Drama

MUSIC

Singers Who Will Be Heard Here in Opera

By HENRIETTA M. REES.

THIS week we are to have the pleasure of again welcoming the Boston Opera company to another Omaha season, a season which is looked forward to with assurance and eager anticipation, because of the bright remembrance of last year, when their casts were splendid and their operas put on with a wealth of detail and vocal beauty, which afforded constant enjoyment. Many of the same singers are noticed in the casts for the operas to be presented this season. Puccini's "Tosca," one of the operas which we seldom are afforded an opportunity to see, Mascagni's "Iris," for which we are told Mme. Tamaki Miura personally supervised all the scenic properties in order to have them absolutely correct, and Japanese, and "La Boheme," also by Puccini, with Miss Maggie Teyte and Ricardo Martin as principals. The Boston Opera company set themselves a high standard last year, which makes their return looked forward to as an event. In the Boyd theater they will also have that added asset of a more intimate and personal sympathy between the singers and the audience, which makes each persons present feel that he individually has a share in the performance.

as far as they have worked, lies on the other side. But the development of the voice is also important. Sometimes we think that there are even some who have not worked nor striven very hard, or even tried to develop it, either not realizing that there really was something to strive for, and to learn, or who have the colossal conceit to think that with nothing but perhaps a fairly good quality of voice, and a lot of bluff they can put it over on the innocent people. These are the kind who have never worked either on voice building nor on music and yet they presume to be vocal teachers. By the way, you who are studying with the intention of making vocal music your life work, what kind of a musician or singer are you going to be?

According to the output of the highest musical authorities, fashions at present are remaining much the same. There will be the same general silhouette in the program after Easter as there was before it, in which classical effects and modern features are combined. The materials used will show the greatest variety in both composers and styles of music. The firmness and durability of the old masters will be contrasted largely with the filmy creations of the modernists in all sorts of figures and designs. Strong colors from the modern French and Russian will be much in vogue, and run riot in the most extreme fashions. Orchestras and singers are most pronounced in this tendency, the vocalists presenting an exclusive showing of small and complete articles in the widest variety of melody and accompaniment.

The great pianists are using as usual a great deal of Chopin, which is always good, and intricately fashioned compositions of the very latest harmonic weaves. Melody is decidedly out, as it has been for some time in the latest and most approved piano patterns. Among violinists, Kreisler styles are especially popular, and his idea of using some lovely old melody and ornamenting it with modern and skillful handwork is being much followed by various other creators of these tunes. The Dvorak "Humoreske" pattern is still used by many of the leading violinists, although this went out with pianists, organists and orchestras some time ago. As encores the Chopin E flat, "Nocturne," Beethoven's "Minuet," "Moment Musical," by Schubert, will be much worn.

The appointment of Edward Lemare, without doubt, one of the world's most notable organists, as municipal organist at San Francisco, is a most important event in the musical life of the western coast. It adds another great musician to the United States of a type of which we need all that we can get. According to the musical journals Lemare is planning to follow the principles of Theodore Thomas, who said that "popular music is familiar music," and then proceeded to popularize the best music by making it familiar. Through his courtesy many other San Francisco organists will also be heard at the municipal concerts, which will take place twice a week. The position carries a salary of \$10,000 a year.

In Grand Island, Neb., there is an organization of musical women whose sole purpose is the development of music and its appreciation in their vicinity. This is called the St. Cecilia society. On the 7th of May the sixth annual festival of music in



In view of the fact that two of the operas to be given by the Boston National Opera company at the Boyd theater, Thursday and Friday, March 29 and 30, are entirely new, it may be well at this time to give a short synopsis of the story of each of them. The opera "Tosca," by Puccini, which will be given on Thursday evening, with Villani as Tosca and Zanatello singing the very dramatic role of Cavaradossi, is founded upon Sardou's drama, "Flora Tosca" (soprano), famed as a singer, is in love with a young portrait painter named Mario Cavaradossi (tenor). Baron Scarpia, minister of police, is infatuated with La Tosca. Mario is at work on a picture of the Madonna in the Church of Sant' Andrea when Angelotti (bass), an escaped political prisoner, implores his assistance, and is directed to a hiding place in Mario's home. Flora arrives shortly afterward, jealously suspicious of her lover, who tells of Angelotti's visit and present hiding place to assuage her doubts. Scarpia (baritone) enters with his police attaches, having traced the fugitive here, and orders the arrest of the artist. He is put under torture to force him to reveal the hiding place of the fugitive. La Tosca, unable to bear the sound of his agonized voice in the next

room, earns his respite by telling Scarpia where to find Angelotti. Mario is imprisoned in the Castle Sant' Angelo. In Scarpia's apartment La Tosca again implores him to release Mario. He tells her that the only way she can save her lover's life is to give herself to him. She pretends to consent and he directs his lieutenant to allow Mario to escape, but secretly orders his death. When they are again alone she has stealthily seized a carving knife from the dinner table and kills him. Snatching the passport which he has recently signed, Flora hastens from the place. Mario is allowed to write his farewell to La Tosca before he dies before the firing squad. Tosca arrives, too late, but thinking that he is feigning death to deceive the soldiers. When they have all departed she runs to him, urging him in eager whispers to make haste and escape with her. She discovers the tragic reality and in a frenzy of despair leaps from the parapet just as soldiers rush on too late to arrest her.

The Mascagni opera, "Iris," in which Tamaki Miura, the little Japanese soprano, who made such a tremendous sensation in "Butterfly" last year, will be the star, is of especial interest because it is the new opera by the writer of "Cavaleria Rusticana." Iris (soprano), Tamaki Miura, a beautiful and innocent Japanese country maiden, is playing in her garden, when Osaka (tenor), Tavio Kittay, a wealthy, dissolute and unscrupulous young nobleman, determines to have her, and with the aid of Kyoto (baritone), Thomas Chalmers, a rascally gishka manager, a plan is devised. Iris is watching the antics of the quaint automatons of a puppet show when Osaka and Kyoto, disguised as strolling players, seize her and take her to the Yoshiwara. In the meantime her blind father (bass), Lazzari, calls for her in vain. Neighbors find a note explaining that she has gone to the Yoshiwara. The grief-stricken father hastens to this place, and when she runs to meet him, dressed in rich garb, he casts her aside, believing that she sought the place of her own accord. The grief-crazed girl leaps from a high balcony into a ditch. Supposedly dead, she is borne to the outskirts of the city, where rag pickers are attracted by her elaborate attire and valuable jewels. Seeing her arms move, however, they run away in superstitious terror. As she sings in wondering innocence of the terrible hours through which she has passed her soul mounts to the birthplace of flowers and sunshine.

Grand Island promoted by this society will take place. This will take the form of an afternoon and evening program by the Symphony society of New York, Walter Damrosch, conductor, with Efram Zimbalist and Oscar Seagle as soloists. Both soloists are known in Omaha, Zimbalist for his recital some years ago with Alma Gluck, and soon to be heard again with the same orchestra here that will be heard in Grand Island, and Seagle for one of the most enjoyable song recitals of the present year.

Henry F. Gilbert, in an excellent and bluntly true article in Musical America of this week, says that we have no composers as yet the equal of the creative leaders of Europe of the present day, citing Strauss, Debussy, D'Indy and Stravinsky as examples of the European composers. He maintains that the American pub-

lic "by the large" is interested in but two things, business and sport, and does not know the meaning of art. He compares the continual complimenting of America upon its musical attainments to the fooling of a blind man, by telling him his sight is excellent, until he really thinks it is, and then the finest compound for the prevention of progress or growth, conceit and ignorance, is obtained. He says that we have no particular reason to feel proud of our attainments as a nation in musical art. Mr. Gilbert is himself an American composer of prominence, and has practical knowledge of American creative conditions and accomplishments.

After all to be a musician is the most important point. Kreisler would still be Kreisler if he played upon a much less perfect violin than the valuable old instrument he uses, and Godowsky is still the master pianist whether he plays upon a poor piano or one with a wonderful tone. The point is that it is not the instrument that makes for success. It is the person behind the instrument who must be trained, for the instrument of itself cannot go very far alone. The finest Steinway ever built will never become a concert piano unless a concert pianist uses it. In the same way the most wonderful voice ever developed cannot attain any ultimate success unless the person it belongs to is a well educated musician. And yet there are many vocal students who go right on building and building their vocal instruments, and who forget that to get to the desired goal they must also train themselves in music. They get along very well for awhile up to a certain point, and then they come up against a great invisible obstacle, and they cannot get over it. Some of them call it prejudice, some of them ignorance on the part of everybody else, others personal dislike, and others partiality and unfairness. It is known by many misapplied names by many who either cannot or will not admit that it is none of them, but rather lack of musical intelligence and musical development. Granted that during their period of tuition they have builded well with the kind and quality of voice they had, and that they can sing high or low, or loud or long, and even loud and soft, smoothly and evenly, they cannot get over this obstacle with it, for the simple reason that it isn't a voice obstacle; it is one of music as an art. Some of them discover the obstacle and know it in its true colors and are of the undaunted and persevering kind who will go back and slave to overcome it, and to get the broad musical foundation which is as necessary in the voice line as it is in every other. With a thorough general musical education to work from, the whole problem of vocal technique would be much simpler for the student and because they would have a clear and definite idea of what they were working for, fewer voices would be ruined. But for the others, alas! refuse to acknowledge that they do not know all that is necessary if they have worked to a certain limited extent upon their high and low tones, and they wander from one place to another, appear in public when they can with no special success, teach with less, and blame the world. There are many who never overcome the handicap of the lack of musical training, and the pity of it is that the much desired success that they have hoped for and worked for

Harpist to Give Concert



Unusual interest is being taken in the coming harp recital to be given by Miss Loretta DeLone, who will present several numbers as quartets for concert grand harps on Palm Sunday evening at the Fontenelle hotel. One of the participants, Miss Dierks, who studied under Miss DeLone in New York, was presented with the only \$2,000 harp in the city by her mother, Mrs. Charles Dierks. The other young ladies to assist are Miss Timms and Miss Shern of Omaha. Mr. Lynn Sackett, lyric tenor, will



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