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## MUSICAL MENTION

JOHN RANDOLPH

I am glad to be able to announce that Madame Camilla Urso, that brilliant violin virtuosa and genuinely great artist, is to be heard in Lincoln at the Lansing theatre on March 5th. Madame Urso and her concert company, consisting of Miss Minnie Methot soprano, Mr. Erwin H. Douglass, tenor, and Mr. Geo. H. Wesley, pianist, appear as the third attraction in the course of Artists' Concerts to be given during the present winter and spring. The violinist is heard on tour again for the first time in some years. It is safe to say that she is the greatest violinist—woman violinist—in America, and one of the greatest in the world. "Age cannot wither, nor custom stale her infinite variety"—at least they have not done so yet.

Madame Urso is not a tricky player; she belongs to the classical school of violinists, and the artistic repose of her performance is widely different from the pyrotechnic style of many violinists of the French school who have recently caught the ear of the groundlings; but no better artist, no more competent musician has ever been heard in Lincoln than this quiet little lady. There are gradations in musicianship, in artistry, and this player is of the very first rank as an interpreter of compositions for the violin. Upon the following reasons I base my conviction and assertion: In musical parlance a "virtuoso" is one who has mastered the technical difficulties of the instrument upon which he plays.

Thus Rosenthal is the greatest virtuoso pianist living, nor is our diminutive friend, Godowsky, far behind him in digital facility. An "artist" among musicians means more than the term "virtuoso"—although an artist must be a virtuoso, a virtuoso is not necessarily an artist—for an artist must, besides virtuosity, possess style, taste, charm, emotion, intellect! All of these Madame Urso has in a high degree, combined with monumental repose and dignity. I hope every young singer and player in this city will hear and learn from this great artist the truth that simplicity and freedom from affectation and mannerisms do not detract from genuine greatness of conception and execution, but on the other hand increases the artistic effect.

I have not yet received the program of Madame Urso's concert, but it is safe to say that it will be both pleasing and dignified. I know people cannot be scolded into attending concerts (I do not receive a per cent of the gross receipts) but I shall be sorry if this concert is not attended by a large audience. Madame Urso is assisted by a soprano who is well spoken of and has recently returned to the United States after study with that famous teacher of sopranos, Madame Marchesi. The gentlemen of the company are unknown to me, and make their first bows before a Lincoln audience.

I wish for Camilla Urso as large an

audience as that which assembled to hear "The Wizard of the Nile" last week. The music of this comic opera is by Victor Herbert, the cellist and orchestral director, and is both tuneful and ingenious. The serenade at the beginning of the second act deserves special mention.

Moreover I have rarely heard chorus and principals sing with more exact intonation and tuneful effect than in this production. The whole effect was one of grace and beauty and melody. I confess the performance was a surprise to me, for I had wearily prepared myself for the usual senseless horse play and idiotic plotlessness coupled with music of the most puerile description, common in productions of this nature. But the opera had a consistent if farcical plot. There was real humor in places and the singing and acting were creditable. Frank Daniels, as the Wizard of the Nile, displayed a good bass voice and considerable *vis comica*; his song about the human snake (his first wife) was uproariously funny, as was his appearance when despoiled of the king's "second best coronation robe." Altogether I was glad that I overcame my fatigue and chronic disinclination to exertion in the evening long enough to be beguiled by this, the best comic opera I have heard in Lincoln.

Grand opera must be more profitable to impresario and singers in Chicago than most of the other American cities. The Metropolitan Opera company of New York begins its yearly engagement on next Monday, February 22nd, at the Auditorium. This year they are billed to remain four weeks. Nellie Melba is no longer with this company, having re-

turned to Paris, but whether in a rage at her recent fiasco in the part of "Brünnhilde" in Wagner's "Siegfried" or whether really suffering from throat trouble, deponent sayeth not. But Calve is with them, emotional, electric Calve, and Eames the statuesque, and the season opens with "Carmen."

Several years ago when this company numbered Melba, Calve, Nordica and Eames as its prime donne, not to mention such lesser lights as Sigrid Arnoldson and Zolie de Lussan, I asked a man who had heard them all how he liked the four greater sopranos. He said: "Well, Eames is like ice water on a hot day, Nordica is Rhine wine, Melba is champagne, but begad Calve is a whole drunk!" He had evidently seen the great Emma as "Carmen."

The announcements for the first week of opera are as follows: "Carmen," "The Huguenots," "Martha," "Tannhäuser," "Tristan" and "Isolde." All kinds you see. You pay your money and you take your choice. I suppose Chicago will be visited as usual at this season by the elite of Omaha and Lincoln. I am not of the elite but I hope to go in and hear the novelties if any are presented, as I am weary of unlimited "Faust" and "Carmen," even with Jean de Reszke and Calve.

By the way, this opera troupe had a singular accident at a recent performance in New York. On February 10th the opera of "Martha" was given with substantially the same cast to appear in Chicago. The part of "Tristano" was taken by M. Armand Castelmary, a basso

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