

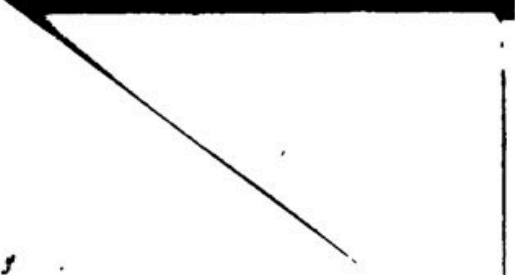
250

To Roy  
from  
H. C.

1913.

*Theatrical  
and  
Musical  
Memoirs*

RUDOLPH ARONSON



11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11

11/11/11



*Theatrical and Musical  
Memoirs*

By  
*Rudolph Aronson*  
1

*New York*  
*McBride, Nast and Company*  
*1913*

6

ML429  
A76A6  
Drama  
MUSC

Copyright, 1912, by  
CURTIS PUBLISHING Co.

Copyright, 1913, by  
McBRIDE, NAST & Co.

Published, February, 1913

## FOREWORD

Numerous friends both in this country and in Europe have prevailed upon me to write my memoirs covering more than thirty years of a most active life devoted to the bringing of musical productions and artists before the public, and so I have given the spring and summer of 1912 to the procurement of data and to writing and completing the work. Excerpts from what is now comprised in this volume may be recognized as having appeared from time to time in *Munsey's Magazine*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's Weekly*. I am grateful also to Mr. Charles L. Ritzman and to Mr. J. M. Priaulx of Ditson and Company for photographs and data furnished.

I am indebted to my lamented brothers, Edward and Albert, for their sincere co-operation in my behalf and their advice and assistance in spurring me on, when at times I was on the eve of defeat.

This work is offered to the public as a slight token of appreciation for its kindly interest manifested in my career, and as a tribute to a profession it has been my pleasure to serve.

RUDOLPH ARONSON.

NEW YORK, November, 1912.

Died. Feb. 4 - 1919.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I STUDENT DAYS IN NEW YORK AND PARIS . . . . .	3
Early Musical Impulses—Strauss Concerts in New York and Berlin—First Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, 1876—Meeting with Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt and Interviews with Them—Notable Attendance at the Banquet in Wagner's Honor.	
II RETURN TO PARIS . . . . .	17
Resumption of Studies After Return from Wagner Festival—The Unpopularity of Wagner's Music at the Cirque d' Hiver—Attendance at First Production of Massé's "Paul et Virginie," 1876—Interviews with Johann Strauss and Olivier Métra—First Productions of Saint-Saëns' "Le Timbre d' Argent" and Gounod's "Cinq Mars."	
III INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO . . . . .	25
First Concert at Gilmore's Garden—Realism in "The Awakening of the Lion"—The Metropolitan Concert Hall with Its Sliding Roof—Composition of the "Sweet Sixteen" Waltz for Jules Levy, the Cornet Virtuoso—How the Casino Was Planned and Built—The Distinguished Stockholders of the New York Casino Company—European Trip to Secure the Services of Eminent Composers—First Meeting with Massenet in 1882—His Objection to His First Name.	
IV THE OPENING OF THE CASINO . . . . .	47
Inauguration of the Unfinished Playhouse in 1882 with Strauss' "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief"—Beginning of the First Continuous Series of Sunday Popular Concerts—First Meeting of the Directors of the Metropolitan Opera House in the Casino, 1883.	

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
V THE WORLD'S FIRST ROOF GARDEN . . . . .	57
Inauguration on July 7, 1883—Francis Wilson and "The Dotlet on the I"—"The Merry War" from in Front and Behind the Curtain at the Casino—The Home of Comic Opera.	
VI FIRST PERFORMANCE OF "ERMINIE" . . . . .	65
Lillian Russell's Appearance in "Polly"—Heinrich Conried and His Connection with the Casino—The Beginning of "Erminie," the Most Successful Operetta of Modern Times—The Author's Prediction of Failure—Other Works by Offenbach Lecocq, Audran, Millöcker, Gilbert and Sullivan, etc.	
VII CONCERNING SOME CELEBRITIES . . . . .	79
Paderewski and the Automatic Piano—The Serpentine Dance of Loie Fuller—Master Josef Hofmann's Remarkable Precocity—Eugene Sandow's Appearance at the Casino—Fanny Rice and a Would-be Admirer—The Initial Production of "Cavalleria Rusticana."	
VIII THE FORTUNES OF THE CASINO . . . . .	91
Sir Arthur Sullivan's Visit to the Casino—Lawsuits Occasioned by the Piracy of "Erminie"—Francis Wilson and Louise Sylvester Brave the Blizzard of 1888—Marie Jansen and the Ballet Girls of "Nadjy"—General William T. Sherman at the Casino—An Attempt to Set Fire to the Casino—The Bronze Figure Group.	
IX THE STRAUSS GOLDEN JUBILEE . . . . .	119
Presentation of the Gold and Silver Wreath to the "Waltz King"—Incidents Relating to the Celebration—The Contributors to the Wreath.	
X VISIT TO MOROCCO . . . . .	133
Days in Tangier—A Ten-day Journey Through the Open Country to Fez—Presentation to Sultan Mulai Abdul Aziz—Giving the Sultan Music Lessons.	

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XI RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS . . . . .	147
Old New York—Meeting with Verdi—Banquet to Madame Adelina Patti—Signor Cardinali's Mishap —Jean de Reszke Gives Gratuitous Instruction to Talented American Girl—Madame Emma Eames and the Manuscript Society of New York—Miss Alice Roosevelt and the Wax Figures—Sarah Bernhardt's Generosity—The Advent of Henri Marteau—Teresa Carreño's Return to America— Brahms, Carreño and D'Albert—Meeting with Eduard Strauss in Cologne and His Subsequent Appearance in New York—Presentation of Johann Strauss' "Vienna Life" at the Broadway Theater.	
XII MORE RECOLLECTIONS . . . . .	175
Interviews with Pieter Tschaikowsky—The First Per- formance of Puccini's "Tosca" at La Scala, Milan —Meeting with Leoncavallo in Italy, and His Tour in America—Kocian at William C. Whitney's musicale—Mascagni and His Pupil—A State Con- cert at Buckingham Palace—Of Isadora Duncan, Maud Allan, Ruth St. Denis, and Tamara de Swirsky—The Difficulties of a Manager.	
XIII THE THEATRICAL SITUATION OF TO-DAY . . . . .	219
The Evolution of Musical and Dramatic Enterprises —Moving Picture Shows—Overproduction and Superfluous Theaters—The "Star" System and Present-day Productions as Compared with Those of the Past—Various "Schools" of Operetta—The Press Agent and His Ingenuity.	
XIV THE AMERICAN PALACE OF ART . . . . .	263
Proposed Plan for a Palace of Art for Washington, D. C., to Comprise a Conservatory of Music and School of Dramatic Art—The Scope and Details of This Suggested National Institution.	
INDEX OF NAMES . . . . .	271



## ILLUSTRATIONS

Rudolph Aronson . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Johann Strauss . . . . .	4
Richard Wagner . . . . .	8
Siegfried Wagner . . . . .	8
Georges Bizet . . . . .	12
Franz Liszt . . . . .	12
Charles Gounod . . . . .	12
A Letter from Camille Saint-Saëns . . . . .	20
A Letter from Emil Durand . . . . .	26
Josef Gung'l . . . . .	30
Jules Levy . . . . .	30
H. Saro . . . . .	30
A Letter from Charles Gounod . . . . .	40
Massenet . . . . .	40
A Letter from Massenet . . . . .	42
The Casino, New York . . . . .	48
Madame Theo . . . . .	52
The Casino Roof Garden . . . . .	58
Lillian Russell . . . . .	66
Sadie Martinot . . . . .	66
Marie Jansen in "Nadjy," 1888 . . . . .	72
Francis Wilson and Pauline Hall in "Erminie," 1886 . . . . .	72
Josef Hofmann . . . . .	82
Jaroslav Kocian . . . . .	82
Paderewski . . . . .	86
Leopold Godowsky . . . . .	86
Jacques Offenbach . . . . .	92
Lillian Nordica . . . . .	92
Sir Arthur Sullivan . . . . .	92
Hans von Bülow . . . . .	96
Walter Damrosch . . . . .	96
The Strauss Golden Jubilee Wreath . . . . .	122
Theodore Thomas . . . . .	128



## ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Anton Rubinstein . . . . .	128
The Sultan of Morocco . . . . .	138
Verdi . . . . .	148
Joachim String Quartette . . . . .	154
Adelina Patti . . . . .	158
Teresa Carreño . . . . .	158
Josef Strauss . . . . .	162
Eduard Strauss . . . . .	162
Johann Strauss III . . . . .	162
From the Original Manuscript of Eduard Strauss' "Greeting to America" . . . . .	164
Tschaikowsky . . . . .	176
Jan Kubelik . . . . .	176
Puccini . . . . .	176
Richard Strauss . . . . .	180
Henri Wieniawski . . . . .	180
Mark Hambourg . . . . .	180
A Letter from William Howard Taft . . . . .	188
A Letter from Theodore Roosevelt . . . . .	194
Luigi Arditi . . . . .	202
Leoncavallo . . . . .	202
Isadora Duncan and Her Dancing Class . . . . .	210
Maud Allan . . . . .	214
Ruth St. Denis . . . . .	214
Thamara de Swirsky . . . . .	214
Reginald De Koven . . . . .	222
John Philip Sousa . . . . .	222
Victor Herbert . . . . .	222
Eugene Sandow . . . . .	232
Mascagni . . . . .	232
Camille Saint-Saëns . . . . .	242
Henri Marteau . . . . .	242
Franz von Suppé . . . . .	246
Henry E. Dixey . . . . .	246
George Grossmith . . . . .	246
William Howard Taft . . . . .	256
Theodore Roosevelt . . . . .	256
Jean de Reszke as <i>Raoul</i> in "The Huguenots" . . . . .	264
Brahms . . . . .	264
Edouard de Reszke as <i>Mephistopheles</i> in "Faust" . . . . .	264

**STUDENT DAYS IN NEW YORK AND PARIS**

# Theatrical and Musical Memoirs

## CHAPTER I

### STUDENT DAYS IN NEW YORK AND PARIS

Early Musical Impulses—Strauss Concerts in New York and Berlin—First Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, 1876—Meeting with Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt and Interviews with Them—Notable Attendance at the Banquet in Wagner's Honor.

**I** HAD my first opportunity to see the world in New York City on April 8th, 1856. I am credibly informed that, aside from those directly interested in the affair, my arrival caused no unusual excitement. Despite this rather quiet reception I remained in New York, and at the age of six began my studies by learning to play on the piano—I also attended Grammar School No. 35 on West 13th Street at that time presided over by Dr. Thomas Hunter, and later I became a pupil of Packard's Business College in New York, with a view to my following a business career. My music teacher, Leôpold Meyer, however, discovering in me a strong preference for music, persuaded my indulgent parents to prepare me for a musical career, and in pursuance of this I received instruction on the piano, on the violin and in the theory of music. Fol-

Vertical line on the left side of the page.

Vertical line on the right side of the page.

Small horizontal mark at the bottom left corner.

# STUDENT DAYS IN NEW YORK

5

*Academy of Music*

First

GRAND ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

in New York

of the Illustrious Composer and Chef d'Orchestre from  
Vienna

HERR JOHANN

STRAUSS

Monday Evening, July 8th, 1870, at 8 o'clock  
on which occasion Herr Strauss will preside over  
The Finest Orchestral Ensemble in America  
selected expressly for him at the Boston Jubilee

Conductor .....CARL BERGMANN  
Pianist .....J. H. BONAWITZ

## PROGRAMME

### PART I.

1. Overture—"William Tell" *Rossini*  
Grand orchestra under the direction of  
Mr. Carl Bergmann
2. Introduction to the Third Act of "Lohengrin" *Wagner*  
Grand orchestra under the direction of  
Mr. Carl Bergmann
3. Waltz—Kuenstlerleben (Artist's Life) *Strauss*  
Grand orchestra under the direction of  
Herr Johann Strauss
4. Piano-Forte Solo—"Tannhauser" March *Wagner-Liszt*  
Mr. J. H. Bonawitz
5. Circassian March *Strauss*  
Grand orchestra under the direction of  
Herr Johann Strauss

### PART II.

6. Overture—"Rienzi" *Wagner*  
Grand orchestra under the direction of  
Mr. Carl Bergmann
7. Waltz—"On the Beautiful Blue Danube" *Strauss*  
Grand orchestra under the direction of  
Herr Johann Strauss
8. Piano-Forte Solo—"Luther's Hymn" *Arranged by Bonawitz*  
Mr. J. H. Bonawitz
9. Polka—"Pizzicato" *Strauss*  
Grand orchestra under the direction of  
Herr Johann Strauss
10. Marche aux Flambeaux *Meyerbeer*  
Grand orchestra under the direction of  
Mr. Carl Bergmann

## 6 THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

Strauss stepped on the little platform in front of the orchestra, violin in hand, amid thunders of applause, and conducted his Artist's Life Waltz in his own inimitable manner, at times himself playing the violin.

During the second number of this most popular creation the "Waltz King" showed that, notwithstanding the inspiration he possessed, he was subject to the commonplace accidents of ordinary humanity, for he slipped from the little platform on which he stood and smashed his violin. Without hesitation and showing little indication of undue haste, he seized a violin from the concertmaster, and losing only eight bars continued "Artist's Life" amid an outburst of enthusiasm from the audience such as I have never elsewhere heard. It is an honor to record that the magnetism of that genius of dance music inspired and overwhelmed me. His irresistible ease in conducting filled me with enthusiasm, and was the foundation stone on which I built my musical career.

During my early musical studies, I was domiciled with my parents at our house on 14th Street near 7th Avenue (then one of the most fashionable thoroughfares in New York). It seemed that already the love for music and the theater had imbedded itself in me, and as the Academy of Music at 14th Street and Irving Place was not far away I, in company with my brother Edward, soon managed to form an acquaintance with the janitor of that then famous "Temple of Art," and two and sometimes three times a week the good-natured janitor smuggled us in through the stage, and, ascending the emergency staircase leading to the gallery, we heard there to our

hearts' content the works of Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, Rossini, Gounod, and Ambroise Thomas; and such artists as Brignoli, Lagrange, Adelina Patti, Nilsson, Kellogg, Lucca, Parepa, Albani, Gerster, Nevada, Cary, Hauk, Campanini, Maurel, Capoul, Del Puente and others, with Max Maretzek in the conductor's chair.

On one of these eventful occasions, however, when reaching the gallery, we found it minus the usual audience and upon inquiry discovered that a ball was to be held that evening in honor of the Grand Duke Alexis. We remained in the gallery until the orchestra had played the introductory march and then ventured downstairs to the corridor which was fast filling with guests. We noticed that the manager's office had been transformed into a temporary committee room and buffet.

To my surprise I was accosted by a tall and strikingly handsome gentleman who with a slight foreign accent said, "Could you perhaps direct me to the committee room?" (I must already have had in the early stages of my career a sort of managerial bearing.) I replied, "Why, certainly. Will you follow me?" The tall gentleman followed and when the door opened there was a hearty welcome by a dozen or more of New York's most distinguished citizens, and I learned that my questioner was none other than His Royal Highness the Grand Duke Alexis, brother of the former and uncle of the present Czar of Russia.

At the age of sixteen I disclosed a talent for composition, and it is with the keenest satisfaction that my memory goes

## 8 THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

back to the presentation of my first waltz, "Arcadian," at the Arcadian Club, New York. Upon that occasion the good-natured Albert Weber, Sr. (head of the Weber Piano Company), turned the pages of my composition for me, spoke encouraging words and helped me to win my first success. This waltz was immediately published, and on September 7th, 1873, was publicly played for the first time by Theodore Thomas's orchestra at the Central Park Garden, Seventh Avenue, Fifty-eighth and Fifty-ninth Streets. The favorable manner in which this waltz was received by the audience encouraged me to go to Europe for further instruction. Accordingly I left New York shortly after the death of my mother in the following year, accompanied by my three sisters.

Arriving in Paris in 1874, I at once sought Professor Emile Durand, of the Conservatoire National, as he had been highly spoken of to me as a most finished and capable musical instructor. I became one of his pupils, and for three years followed attentively a course of studies in harmony, counterpoint, instrumentation and composition.

During my residence in Paris I attended most of the concerts at the Conservatoire, at the Cirque d'Hiver and the Grand Opera and Theaters, and in my spare moments completed a number of compositions of which the "Marche Triomphale" was performed with much success at the Johann Strauss Monster Concert in Berlin on June 17th, 1876, and the others by the leading orchestras and bands in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and London, for which I was decidedly grateful.



RICHARD WAGNER

SIEGFRIED WAGNER, SON OF RICHARD



STUDENT DAYS IN NEW YORK 9

Following is the program of the interesting Strauss Concert in Berlin:

STADT PARK

No. 147 Grosse Friedrichstrasse

Sonnabend den 17 Juni, 1876

Letztes

STRAUSS'S CHES MONSTRE-CONCERT

ausgeführt von der Berliner Symphoniekapelle und der, des Kaiser Franz Garde Grenadier-Regiments unter Leitung des K. K. österreich Hof-Ball-Musikdirector's

JOHANN STRAUSS

der Königl, Preuss, Musikdirect, Herren Prof. Ludwig von Brenner und Saro.

PROGRAMME.

I. THEIL.

1. Overture z. op. "Der Beherrscher der Geister" v. Weber
2. Marche Triomphale v. Rud Aronson
3. Intro., Thema und Variationen a. d. op. "Die Abenceragen" v. Cherubini
4. Miserere a. "Trovatore" v. Verdi
5. Nawa-Polka v. Johann Strauss
6. Cagliostro-Walzer v. Johann Strauss
7. II. Finale a. d. op. "Martha" v. Flotow
8. Jubel-Overture v. Weber

II. THEIL.

9. Overture "Ein Sommernachtstraum" v. Mendelssohn
10. Trolola, Toskanisches Volkslied v. Gordigiani
11. Carnevals-Botschafter Walzer v. Johann Strauss
12. Walthers Traumlied a. "Die Meistersinger" v. Wagner
13. Variationen a. d. "Chorfantasie" v. Beethoven
14. Corso-Quadrille v. Philipp
15. Wiener Blut Walzer v. Johann Strauss
16. Immergrün Potpourri v. Saro

Naturally I was present at the first Wagner Festival at Bayreuth in August, 1876, stopping en route at Berlin on a visit to my good friend, Herr Saro, Germany's most famous bandmaster, who honored me in performing for the first time my "Victory" and "Washington" Marches at the Stadt-Park, where I had as my guest a young cousin of mine (a resident of Berlin) Gabriel Rosenberg, who later on came to New York, composed the "Honeymoon" March and other popular numbers under the pseudonym "George Rosey" and conquered.

At Bayreuth I was one of the six New Yorkers at that historical event, the other five being Dr. Leopold Damrosch, Francis Korbay, Louis Dachauer, Fred Schwab, of the *New York Times*, and John P. Jackson of the *New York Herald*, who afterward translated into English several of Wagner's works.

The crowd of visitors at Bayreuth was so large on this occasion that hotels were filled beyond their comfortable capacity, and the people stopped sending 'buses to the railroad station for new guests. I was one of the victims of this overcrowding, and with my friend John P. Jackson, tramped the streets until we found in a private house a large room containing six beds. We engaged two of these beds at a fabulous price, so high that the rental of the entire six beds probably paid off any mortgages that may have then existed against the property. On the following night after the Wagner performance I aided Jackson in preparing his criticism on the

work. That the cable might be retained until we had completed our review, and his paper thus receive the first news in America of this great event, Jackson gave the operator a few hundred meaningless words to send over and we rushed the preparation of our message. The result of this clever and expensive expedient was that the newspaper scored a beat in its notice of the greatest musical event of the century.

In honor of the grand event Bayreuth was adorned in a lavish and artistic manner. It offered an artistic tribute impulsively paid to the most illustrious art triumph of modern times. In the *American Register* of Paris, August 19th, 1876, I wrote of this interesting festival as follows:

“Bayreuth is magnificently draped with banners, emblems, and so forth, and from one end of the city to the other the German colors are visible. The trains bring in hundreds who are unable to obtain accommodations in the hotels and are compelled to find lodgings in the neighboring villages.

“The Emperor of Germany arrived last evening and was received by the populace; some two thousand men took part in a Fackelzug arranged in his honor, the band played Wagner’s Kaiser March, the Prussian anthem and a Fackeltanz, after which the crowd dispersed. The streets are literally packed with people, and in passing some of the private residences strains from “Die Walküre” and “Götterdämmerung” are heard.”

The performance of “Rheingold” should have begun at five o’clock on Sunday evening, but was postponed until seven

o'clock. Between these hours thousands were strolling in the direction of the theater. About seven o'clock the German Kaiser arrived and was ushered into the Prince's loge amid the greatest enthusiasm. In a few moments the fifteen hundred seats of the auditorium were occupied and almost immediately eight or ten trumpeters—stationed in an opening in the amphitheater—by the playing of a few measures of the principal motive of Rheingold announced the beginning of the evening's performance, a most original, timely and beautiful innovation.

The invisible orchestra of one hundred and twenty picked musicians under the able conductorship of Hans Richter with August Wilhelmj as concertmaster made an overwhelming success. Following is the cast:

<i>Wotan</i> .....	Franz Betz
<i>Donner</i> .....	Joseph Koegel
<i>Froh</i> .....	George Unger
<i>Loge</i> .....	Heinrich Vogel
<i>Alberich</i> .....	Karl Hill
<i>Mima</i> .....	Karl Schlosser
<i>Fasolt</i> .....	Alb Eilers
<i>Fafner</i> .....	F. von Reichenberg
<i>Fricka</i> .....	Friderike Grün
<i>Freia</i> .....	Marie Haupt
<i>Erda</i> .....	Louise Jaide
<i>Waglinde</i> .....	Lilli Lehmann
<i>Wellgunde</i> .....	Marie Lehmann
<i>Flosshilde</i> .....	Minna Lammert

**GEORGES BIZET**

**FRANZ LISZT**

**CHARLES GOUNOD**





It was my good fortune during the first Wagner festival to have a seat directly behind that of the master himself, and this gave me an opportunity to see how intently he followed every movement on the stage and in the orchestra. He was a little, wiry, nervous man, and just before the conclusion of each act he would spring to his feet, rush behind the scenes to consult with the artists, superintend the settings, and then appear before the curtain to acknowledge the plaudits of the audience. As the curtain arose for the next act he would quietly resume his seat.

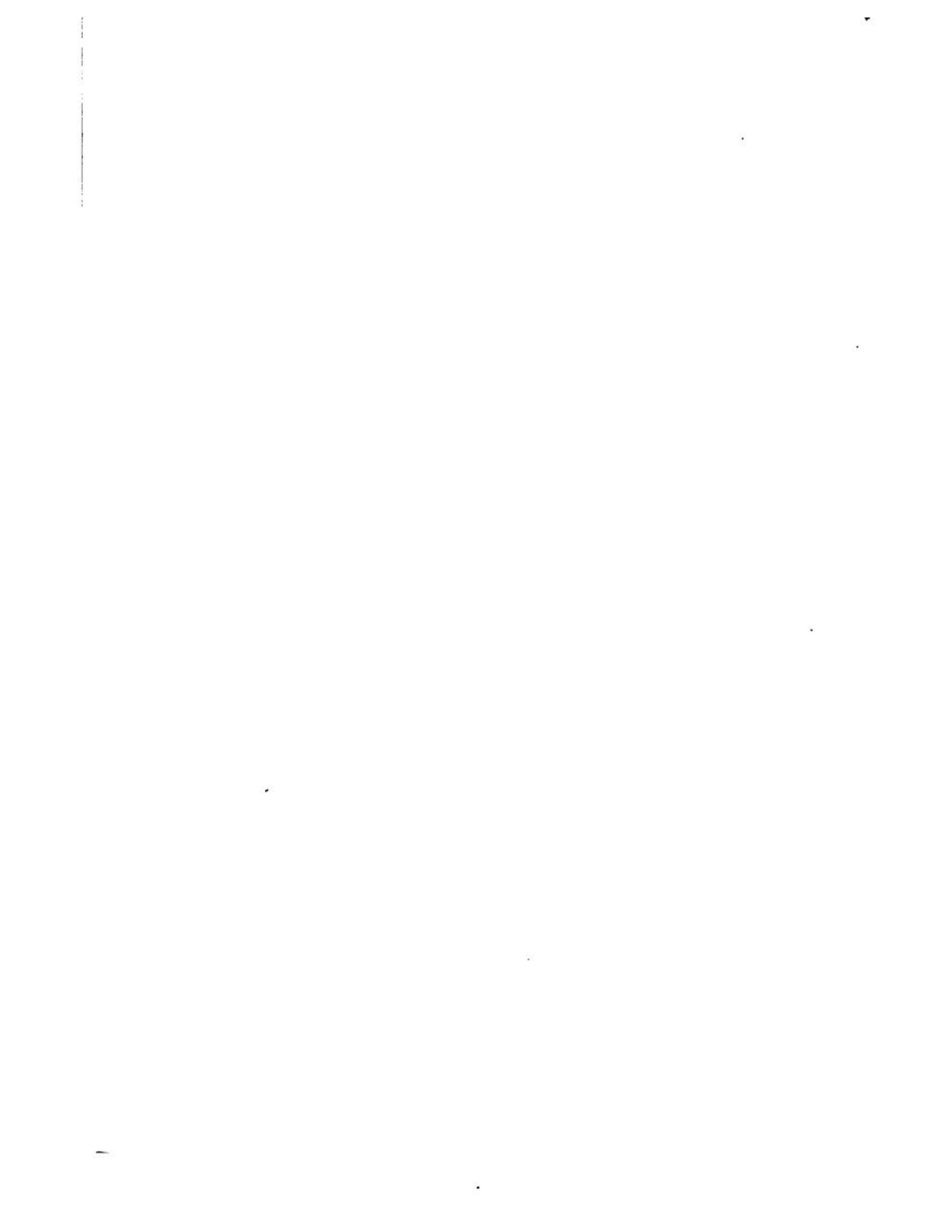
A casual happening that I chanced to witness marked Franz Liszt as the next person of consequence to Wagner in Bayreuth at that time. Liszt was passing the hotel where the Emperor of Germany was stopping, and His Majesty, on the veranda, recognized the famous "Abbé Pianist" and saluted him first, an honor rarely conferred upon an artist. In this instance it showed the positive reverence in which Liszt was held by even an emperor. Another evidence of reverence to art and talent was manifested at the banquet after the completion of the first Bayreuth festival. Wagner, seated at a table with the artists of the Ring of the Nibelungen—Franz Liszt, Hans Richter and August Wilhelmj—was commanded to step over to the tables of the Emperor of Germany and his guests and to be seated with them. This marked courtesy, however, Wagner declined, explaining that he must preside over his own table.

This banquet was attended by six hundred people, and in

Herr Wagner's address he set forth that his final remarks at the theater the previous evening, "*Wenn sie wollen, haben sie jetzt eine Kunst*" (If you so desire you now have an art of your own), were not to be misunderstood, that he merely meant them in connection with Germany alone, who was not original in her ideas, but imitates France and Italy. His idea was to create in Germany an Art heretofore unknown, and he thought that the success of the first performances of the "Ring des Nibelungen" partially assured this. He thanked in the most emphatic terms his life-long friend Franz Liszt, without whom his success would have been limited. They embraced each other, to the utmost gratification of the banqueters, after which Herr Wagner was presented with a silver wreath by Madame Lucca (not the prima donna, but the wife of the Milan Music publisher).

At the conclusion of this never-to-be-forgotten banquet, I had the honor of a few moments' conversation with Wagner and Liszt. They expressed to me their gratitude at the success of the Wagner works in young America.

**RETURN TO PARIS**



## CHAPTER II

### RETURN TO PARIS

Resumption of Studies After Return from Wagner Festival—  
The Unpopularity of Wagner's Music at the Cirque  
d' Hiver—Attendance at First Production of Massé's "Paul  
et Virginie," 1876—Interviews with Johann Strauss and  
Olivier Métra—First Productions of Saint-Saëns' "Le  
Timbre d' Argent" and Gounod's "Cinq Mars."

**A**FTER the Bayreuth festival I returned to Paris and resumed my studies under Professor Durand, attending musical performances or similar and improving diversions. A grand concert was announced for October 29th, 1876, to be given at the Cirque d'Hiver, with the famous Padeloup as director. In the course of the concert M. Padeloup introduced Siegfried's Death March from Wagner's Nibelungen. The anti-German feeling in France at that time was so intense, the hatred for all things German was so deep-seated in the French heart, that the beginning of the Death March was likewise the beginning of a most disgraceful scene.

Before the march was reached loud outcries began, outcries of "*A bas la musique de l'avenir! A la porte Wagner!*" and so boisterous and so persistent were these cries that many in the vast audience left the hall, evidently fearing more violent

demonstrations from the riotous element. Some gentlemen arose and declared the manifestation ridiculous, coming, as it did, before the march had been heard. This seemed to quiet the tumult sufficiently for the march to be played, but even its magnificent passages could not soften the rancor in the French heart, inasmuch as the whistling, hooting, stamping and yelling recommenced and the turmoil was even increased. Monsieur Padeloup nearly broke his baton, vainly endeavoring to regain order. He tried to speak to the audience but was not permitted to get beyond "*Mesdames, Messieurs! Respectez les exécutants, l'art, la musique!*"

After many efforts Monsieur Padeloup succeeded in giving an interrupted rendition of Weber's beautiful overture to "Der Freischütz," and it was accompanied, as it had never been before and has not been since, by the maledictions of three thousand angered hearers, who shouted at its conclusion "*A bas Padeloup!*" The entire scene was one not soon to be forgotten.

In commenting upon the first performance in Paris of Victor Massé's "Paul et Virginie" (November, 1876) I wrote: "It is charming, replete with melodies of a sympathetic nature; orchestration superb. The interpretation of the various characters by Messieurs Capoul (who later became assistant director of the Paris Grand Opera) and Bouhy and Mlle. Ritter (a girl of seventeen and a sister of the distinguished pianist Theodore Ritter) and Madame Engalli, was delightful."

The Opéra ball of January, 1877, is worthy of notice,

because an innovation was made in it that season. Hundreds of gas jets illumined the magnificent building wherein the ball was held, and the brilliancy thus produced can hardly be surpassed by modern electricity. In previous years candles had been used, and the spluttering, dripping wax was so profuse as to remind me of a snowfall. The dissatisfaction caused thereby was great, and particularly vehement among the numerous persons whose costumes were injured. Over 125,000 francs were taken for tickets, and the estimate was made that upward of 7,000 persons attended the ball. This was not difficult to believe, for the mass was so dense as to give little opportunity to the terpsichorean devotees.

On the occasion of this Opéra ball I had the pleasure of meeting and conversing with both conductors, Monsieur Olivier Métra, who presided for so many years over the orchestra at the Folies-Bergère and idolized by Paris as composer of "Les Roses," "La Vague" and "Serenade" Waltzes, and Herr Johann Strauss, who had just arrived in the city. Herr Strauss expressed to me his fear that, judging from the last rehearsal, the orchestra would not perform his works properly, and he gave me reason to believe that he thought a prejudice existed against him as it did against Wagner. He assured me he was *sehr zufrieden* with the rendition of his works in New York and Boston, but added that, although his stay in those cities was pleasant, he would never again attempt to cross the ocean. After a few moments' further conversation he uttered a hearty *auf wiedersehen* and as-

cended the orchestra platform, where he conducted his superb waltz, "Wine, Woman and Song" to be rewarded by the unrestrained plaudits of the vast audience.

In February, 1877, I attended in Paris the first representation at the Théâtre Lyrique, of Camille Saint-Saëns "Le Timbre d'Argent." Monsieur Saint-Saëns had a flattering audience, as it embraced many famous composers and other talented persons well known to the Paris world. Among the composers of eminence I noted Charles Gounod, Ambroise Thomas, Anton Rubinstein, Jules Massenet, Victor Massé, Ernest Reyer, Victorien Joncières, Paladilhe, Duvernoy and Guiraud.

The opera was not warmly received. The libretto seemed to be a mixture of "La Muette de Portici" and "Faust," and the music was unworthy the composer of those marvelous symphonic poems which are played wherever classical music is appreciated, establishing for Saint-Saëns a reputation surpassed by few living musicians.

In April of that year I witnessed the first performance of Gounod's "Cinq Mars" at the Opéra Comique in Paris. The intention had originally been to present the opera "Le Cinq Mars" March fifth.

Commenting thereon at that time I wrote: "The introduction to the first act is splendidly scored and introduced a wonderful *Marche funèbre*. This, with a few choruses and an unusually striking duet in Act IV commencing

*"Oui le ciel seconde nos vœux,"*



<p>4 mai</p> <p>Monsieur</p> <p>Le recteur</p> <p>de l'école      est respectueusement      remercié pour      l'envoi de      votre lettre et      l'assurance      que vous m'avez      adressée.</p> <p>Je vous prie      d'agréer mes      sentiments      respectueux.</p> <p>Camille-Saëns</p>	<p>de d'ici au point      que m'ont fait      agréer mes      sentiments      respectueux.</p> <p>Je vous prie      d'agréer mes      remerciements.</p> <p>Camille-Saëns</p>
--	---

A LETTER FROM CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

1

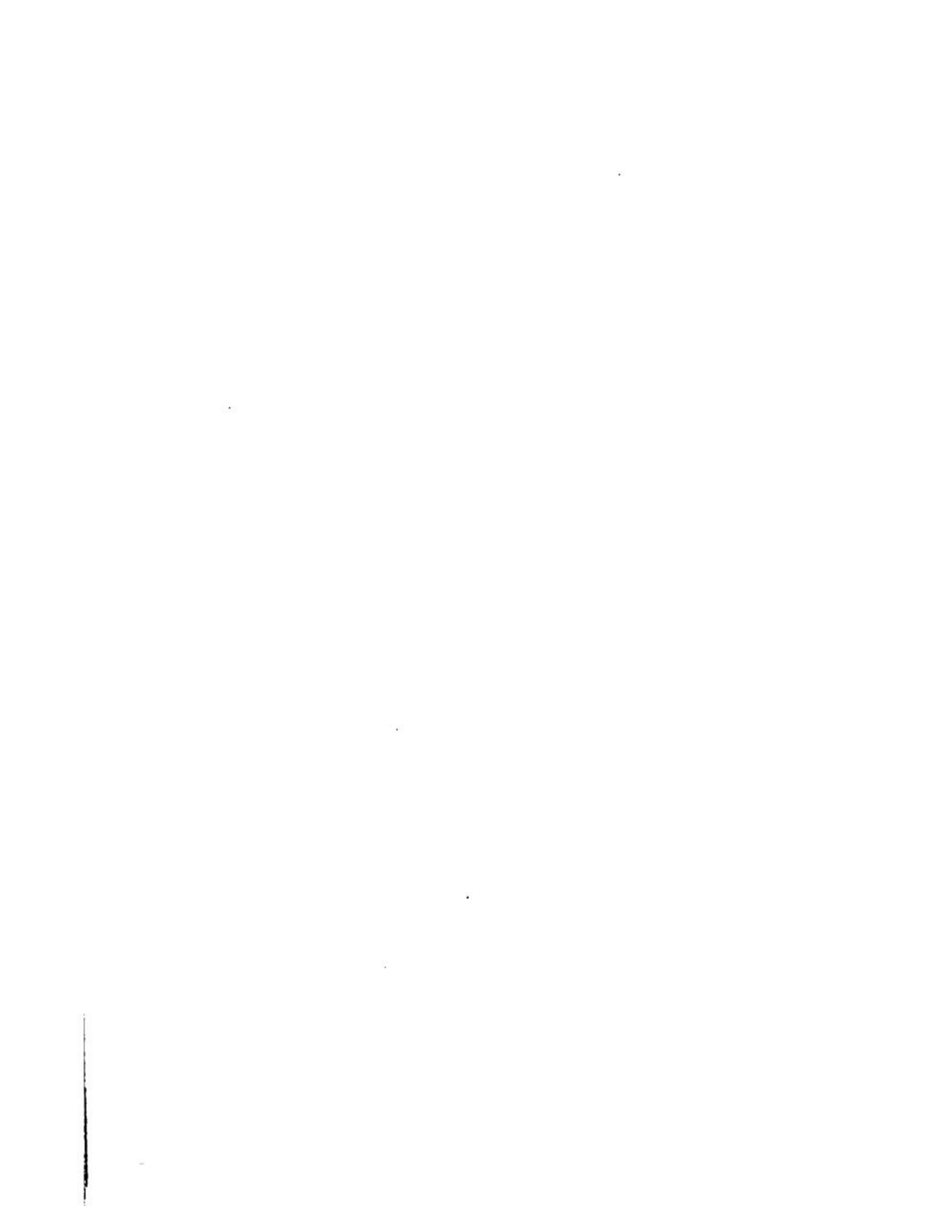
is the gem of the opera, which I think will not add to the established reputation of the composer 'Faust,' although the rights of publication and representation of 'Cinq Mars' in France, England and Italy were disposed of, at fabulous prices."

I also dwell with much pleasure on my attendance in 1877, at an early production of Bizet's "Carmen," given at the Paris Opéra Comique with Galli Marié in the title rôle. My written comments on the performance at that time may be of interest now.

"Monsieur Bizet deserves much praise for the masterly instrumentation of Carmen throughout, and although at times a little heavy or 'Wagnerian' it is pleasing to the ear. The melodies are original, characteristic of the Spanish although the 'Habanera' was composed by Yradier (a popular Spanish song writer) and cleverly re-arranged by Bizet. I was particularly impressed with the music in the Fourth Act, full of pathos and genuine dramatic power, while the duet song by Carmen and José, before she is stabbed, is rendered additionally pathetic by the contrast of its mournful strains, with the gay notes of triumph resounding from the neighboring 'Plaza del Toros.' The excellence of this work will soon place Monsieur Bizet in the very first rank of the rising young composers of France. There is hardly a doubt that Carmen will meet with success in New York."



**INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO**



### CHAPTER III

#### INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO

First Concert at Gilmore's Garden—Realism in "The Awakening of the Lion"—The Metropolitan Concert Hall with Its Sliding Roof—Composition of the "Sweet Sixteen" Waltz for Jules Levy, the Cornet Virtuoso—How the Casino Was Planned and Built—The Distinguished Stockholders of the New York Casino Company—European Trip to Secure the Services of Eminent Composers—First Meeting with Massenet in 1882—His Objection to His First Name.

**I**N May, having completed my studies in Paris, I left that beautiful city for my home in New York, and on the eve of my departure received the following letter from my esteemed Professor Durand:

"My dear Aronson,

"Before you leave Paris I desire to express to you the satisfaction you have given me in pursuing, with the most absolute assiduity, my lessons in harmony, counterpoint and orchestration. I do not doubt, but, that with a continuation of your work, your talent, matured by reflection and study, will bring you numerous successes. Remain laborious and persevering, as I have known you to be, and accept, dear pupil, my best wishes for your success and the expression of my affectionate sentiments.

EMILE DURAND,

Professor of the National Conservatory of Music, Paris.

Immediately following my arrival in New York, Mr. P. S. Gilmore, the famous bandmaster, honored me by placing on the programme of his first concert for the season (May 24th, 1877) at Gilmore's Garden, 26th Street, Madison and Fourth Avenues, my new waltz, "Return from Abroad," and at subsequent concerts my "Washington," "Triumphale" and "Victory" marches, the first composed for the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, 1876.

When I had completed some orchestral works upon which I had been engaged during the summer months, I was persuaded by over-enthusiastic friends to lease for Sunday evenings the Madison Square Garden—then known as Gilmore's Garden—from Sheridan Shook and Edward G. Gilmore, its managers. At that time the Barnum Circus was performing there during the week, but the managers of the circus promised to move the animals' cages, so as to avoid a noise during my intended concerts. For this purpose about one-third of the Garden was screened off and my orchestra of fifty musicians was placed on a platform in front of the improvised screen.

When I began the music, there came at an opportune moment, as though the animals had been trained for it, an outburst from lions, elephants, tigers, hyenas and the other varieties of wild creatures. This added much realism to the number on the program first greeted by the roars, which chanced to be Kontski's "Awakening of the Lion." As I had also included Strauss' "Sounds from the Vienna Woods" and Litolf's



Paris, le 2 mai 1847.

Mon cher Aronson,

Avant que vous quittiez Paris, je tiens à vous témoigner toute la satisfaction que vous m'avez donnée, en suivant, avec l'assiduité la plus absolue, mes leçons d'Harmonie, de Contrepoint et d'Orchestration. Je ne doute pas, qu'avec de la suite dans votre travail, votre talent, mûri par la réflexion et l'étude, ne vous vaille de nombreux succès.

Soyez toujours laborieux et persévérant comme je vous ai connu, et recevez, mon cher élève, tous mes vœux pour votre réussite et l'expression de mes sentiments affectueux.

Emile Durand

Professeur au Conservatoire national de musique

A LETTER FROM EMILE DURAND



"Robespierre Overture," the savage addition was not an unpleasant feature.

This accompaniment, however, convinced me, that environment was one of the essentials for proper concert entertainments, and so firmly did this conviction take hold of me, that the following year (1878) on one of my trips crossing the Atlantic on my way back to New York, I had the good fortune of meeting Mr. Charles Lanier, a fellow passenger, to whom I suggested the introduction of the European Concert Garden, with American embellishments. The idea at once appealed to him and he proposed that it be called "The Metropolitan Concert Hall," and almost immediately after our arrival, he enlisted the co-operation of our mutual friend, Mr. Jesse Seligman, who, like Mr. Lanier, was public-spirited, and favored any enterprise that would uplift music and art in the metropolis. The Metropolitan Concert Company was organized and the stockholders besides Messrs. Lanier and Seligman included J. Pierpont Morgan, James J. Goodwin, Wm. E. Strong, Edward Winslow, Henry Morgan, Geo. W. Cotterill, F. O. French, Francis H. Tows, Adolph Hallgarten, Josiah M. Fiske, Morris K. Jesup, Wm. H. Appleton, Wm. R. Garrison, José F. Navarro, Wm. H. Scott, Henry Havemeyer, Edward Cooper, Wm. A. Cole, Theodore Havemeyer, James E. Ward, C. F. Woereschoeffler, A. B. Stone, G. S. Winston, Julius Hallgarten, D. C. Calvin, Algernon S. Sullivan, Charles Renauld, Grosvenor P. Lowrey, Wm. H. Gunther, Charles Mali, Louis Waetjin, James P. Lowery, George

28 THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

W. Dillaway and J. N. A. Griswold. The Metropolitan Concert Hall was constructed in 1880 at Broadway, Forty-first Street and Seventh Avenue, New York (the present site of the Broadway Theater).

The building had been designed by Mr. George B. Post,



and was modeled somewhat after the concert resorts in Vienna and Berlin. The raised orchestra platform faced the orchestra seats, of which there were about eight hundred; in the balcony were boxes only. Refreshments were served from an excellent French restaurant, situated over the orchestra platform. A novelty, however, was a sliding roof, in the center

## INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO 29

of the roof proper, and encircling this sliding portion was a promenade that made a pleasant summer and winter resort at reasonable prices. The building was sufficiently large to accommodate, all told, over three thousand persons. At this hall were given concerts of a popular order with an orchestra of fifty selected musicians under my conductorship.

In July, 1880, at the Metropolitan Concert Hall, I revived with much success some of the most popular compositions of Paul Jullien, who captivated his audiences at the Old Castle Garden in New York in 1854. It was at this time, too, that I composed my "Sweet Sixteen" Waltz for the famous cornet virtuoso, Jules Levy. This waltz achieved signal success, and the sale reached several hundred thousand copies.

After I had conducted one hundred and fifty consecutive concerts there, Mr. Theodore Thomas for three weeks followed me as conductor of the orchestra. About this time I evolved the plan of building the Casino, which should have the first real roof garden in the world.

Spurred on by my brothers Edward and Albert and urged by a restless but clearly defined ambition, I prepared again to visit Europe and sought in my brain for a new musical idea. I had the personal satisfaction of knowing that my single-handed, strenuous efforts had raised the Metropolitan Concert Hall to an honored position, being, as the papers kindly said, one of the finest concert halls ever built. When I finally sailed in February, 1881, I had no thought that the hall would become an ice-skating rink, a quasi-theater, and then be de-

molished entirely to make place for the Broadway Theater.

The basis of the prompting that led me now to visit Europe was a desire to create in New York a place of amusement that should be a distinct improvement on the Metropolitan Concert Hall. With the hope of finding a suggestion I might utilize, I visited many of the cities of the Old World, and gathered from Kroll's Garten in Berlin, from the Volks Garten in Vienna and from Frascati's in Paris a multitude of suggestions which later I was able to use to advantage.

One evening, returning to my lodging at the little Hotel Mayran in the Square Montholon in Paris, after a concert at Frascati's, I considered whether such a resort would meet with success in New York. While the inquiring thought occupied my mind, I recalled frequent visits during my student days in Paris to the Ambassadeurs and the Alcazar on the Champs Elysées, where each summer I had enjoyed so many delightful open-air entertainments with refreshments served *al fresco*. But a realization of the enormous price of land on Broadway showed me the futility of attempting to replant the Champs Elysées gardens to a central part of New York.

To the realization of this financial obstruction I believe may have been due my greater thought, for at once came to me the question: Why not utilize for garden purposes the roof of the building I hope to erect, and thus escape the enormous cost of valuable ground space? Already had I christened it in my mind the Roof Garden, and I could mentally see an adornment of plants and shrubbery and fountains. I imag-

JOSEF GUNGL

JULES LEVY

II. SARO

ined concerts and other entertainments being given there, refreshments being served—in other words, I mentally transported the Ambassadeurs from the ground floor of the Champs Elysées in Paris to the roof of a building on Broadway in New York.

I discussed the matter with Johann and Eduard Strauss. During my visit to them, the latter most courteously invited me to attend a special rehearsal of his orchestra and instructed me in the proper interpretation of the Strauss repertoire. About this period I heard for the first time Johann Strauss' operetta, "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief," with which I was immensely pleased.

After leaving Vienna I paid a flying visit to Herr Josef Gung'l, the veteran composer, at Hamburg, and he quite surprised me with the information that in 1848 he had crossed the Atlantic Ocean with an orchestra of thirty-six men, and had given several concerts at the Astor Place Opera House in New York. Later he visited other cities in the United States and intended going to California, but was prevented by the sudden decamping of eighteen or twenty members of his orchestra. This curtailment of his musical talent compelled his early return to Europe in 1849. Herr Gung'l called his daughter *Die Amerikanerin* because, though she was but six months old when he took her with him to the United States, she had, he declared, inhaled some of its free ideas even at that age. This lady has since become, as Madam Naumann, a famous vocalist in Germany. Herr Gung'l wrote



two of his prettiest and most successful waltzes, "Träume auf den Ozean" (Dreams on the Ocean) and "Delaware Klänge," while in America, a fact which he recalled with pleasure. Like Johann Strauss, Gung'l was of a most genial disposition. He had composed more than one thousand piano-forte pieces, nearly all of them arranged for orchestra.

With the roof-garden idea safely secreted in my mind, and considered by me as an addition to the construction of a theater, concert hall, ballroom, reading room and restaurant, all in one building, I sailed for New York after a limited stop in Europe—limited in time, but particularly rich in the new ideas it had implanted for future development.

In April, 1881, I earnestly began the task of raising capital to construct my projected building. I suggested to a number of public-spirited and wealthy New Yorkers the plan of establishing in the city a thoroughly European Casino, with several novel features introduced. This suggestion received such encouragement that I undertook at once the formation of the New York Casino Company, and its completion meant six months of persistent work on my part. I worked unceasingly, and personally interviewed at least two thousand men, procuring over five hundred stockholders, including J. Pierpont Morgan, Charles Lanier, Jesse Seligman, Cyrus W. Field, Jesse Hoyt, Robert Minturn, Isaac Bell, L. L. Lorillard, William H. Vanderbilt, George Peabody Wetmore, H. McK. Twombly, James M. Constable, Chauncey M. Depew, William H. Fogg, Daniel S. Appleton, Cornelius N. Bliss, C. L.

INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO 33

Tiffany, Frederick Kernochan, Theodore Havemeyer, U. S. Grant, Jr., C. C. Baldwin, B. Perkins, Chester Griswold, Charles E. Strong, Osgood Welsh, N. K. Honore, Jesse R. Grant, Alfred Youngs, Thomas Minford, Baron C. de Thomsen, George C. Clark, Washington E. Connor, William Cruikshank, W. H. De Forest, Robert L. Cutting, Jr., C. Goddard, J. Low Harriman, C. B. Fosdick, M. V. B. Smith, J. D. Tiletton, William Reitlinger, Theodore A. Hummel, E. F. Winslow, C. N. Jordan, T. Houston, T. W. Lillie, C. Littlefield, W. H. M. Sistare, B. B. Kirkland, Edward Kemeys, R. P. Lounsbery, Henry W. Bibby, George M. Tooker, R. A. Haggin, Frank T. Wall, N. Y. Mortimer, H. S. Wilson, J. A. Stow, F. D. Tappen, E. K. Willard, H. Knickerbocker, Samuel Ward, J. M. Hughes, R. H. Parker, C. T. Barney, J. McGinnis, Jr., Thomas C. Platt, A. G. Meyers, George F. Opdyke, H. L. Horton, James A. Garland, George F. Baker, Juan P. Terry, A. E. Terry, Y. Martinez, Edward Winslow, M. B. Brown, W. N. Hamilton, C. B. Foote, Frank Ehret, George W. Ballou, John C. Latham, William Harriman, S. A. Strang, V. A. Blacque, Charles W. Kohlsaas, Rudolph W. Schack, C. I. Tappen, J. M. Libby, J. Whitely, J. D. Prince, J. J. Lancaster, W. G. Davies, Charles Gregory, J. T. Closson, R. C. Rathbone, H. C. Brown, Charles F. Fearing, John H. Draper, M. Woodruff, N. S. Simpkins, Jr., H. C. Fahnestock, Joseph S. Stout, H. C. Oakley, Henry Villard, William H. Starbuck, D. A. Lindley, Horace White, C. Lapsley, Charles A. Johnes, W. E. Pearl, William D. Searles, W.

H. Duff, H. O. Havemeyer, James Scott, L. C. Murray, A. H. Dayton, Arthur Dyett, L. G. Lockwood, L. M. Bates, H. C. De Rivera, S. H. Roosevelt, G. H. Palmer, Phil E. Harding, A. C. Downing, Jr., Paul L. Thebaud, H. Durkee, J. R. LeRoy, William L. Pomeroy, J. F. Plummer, John H. Scribner, N. Hobart, B. Gray, Walter Langdon, Joseph H. Brown, A. H. Calef, E. A. Treat, E. S. Auchincloss, Charles S. Smith, G. J. Brown, D. A. Davis, F. Baker, S. W. Sibley, H. F. Weed, Charles B. Stockwell, E. C. Moore, Gardner B. Charlick, George F. Damon, George J. Gould, William Rhinelanders Stewart, Lewis Edwards, Pierre Lorillard, Benjamin H. Bristow, Joseph W. Drexel, E. W. Stoughton, William Dowd, Horace Porter, Edward Cooper, Robert G. Remsen, Adrian Iselin, Jr., Heber R. Bishop, N. M. Beckwith, Robert B. Roosevelt, Edmund C. Schmidt, William Rhinelanders, Daniel E. Sickles, and Austin Corbin. I finally succeeded in securing over \$300,000 for the enterprise.

The popularity of the Newport Casino, at that time the most fashionable place of the kind in the country, suggested to me the name Casino for my new building, and while I was soliciting subscribers, Messrs. Kimball and Wisedell, the architects, were at work on the plans. The planning of the building went smoothly until I broached my idea for a roof garden. Upon this declaration, the architects threw up their hands, metaphorically speaking, declaring that such an absurdity could not be. No roof could be made that would sustain

a crowd, and if it were tried, the people would fall through to the cellar. They concluded their horrible warnings by saying:

"How do you expect to carry fifteen hundred persons on the roof of a building? Consider the tremendous weight!"

"Suppose you built, say, five additional stories over the contemplated building," I answered. "Would not the weight be as great as that of the proposed roof garden and its audience?"

They answered negatively, explaining that in the former case the weight would be divided and in the latter concentrated. But I persisted, perhaps because I knew nothing of architecture and its limitations.

At this point it may be of interest to give my original plan relative to the construction of the Casino at Broadway and 39th Street, New York. The property was then occupied as a coal yard, remote from any other place of amusement and was surrounded by numerous vacant lots.

"The building is to be of brick stone, and polished terra cotta; is to be four stories high, with a stone tower running twenty feet above the roof, and in general design of Moorish architecture. The basement will contain the kitchen, store-rooms, steam appurtenances, cooling and fanning apparatus—to keep the structure at all times at a pleasant temperature—and the necessary paraphernalia for illumination. The grand entrance and lobby—forty-five by fifteen feet, is to be on the

39th Street side, and to guard against every emergency there are to be eight twelve-foot exits.

"On the Broadway ground-floor front the restaurant, café and reading room—under the supervision of one of our best known restaurateurs—are to be situated, and will be fitted up sumptuously in Louis Quatorze style. The room will be eighty feet square.

"Two wide stone stairways are to lead from the 39th Street entrance to the foyer and theater, the latter sufficiently large to accommodate 1,500 persons, and to be fitted up in light woods, and decorated in white, blue and gold, similar to the theater attached to the Newport Casino. Here during the summer, light comedies and operettas will be performed in conjunction with the regular concerts, which will take place on the roof garden and in winter it will be used for lectures, meetings, concerts, private theatricals, balls, etc. An open balcony or terrace is to encircle the third story, looking directly into the theater, and be so arranged that during the fall and winter it may be inclosed with glass casings, and be used as a foyer as well as for floral and art exhibitions.

"The fourth story, or roof, will be laid out as a beautiful summer garden, and besides being prettily illuminated, will be ornamented with many rare exotics, to be loaned by several of the stockholders. The music stand is to be so constructed, with a new form of sounding-board, that the orchestra will be distinctly heard throughout the building. A suite of rooms, forty by seventy-five feet, with separate entrance on

## INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO 37

Broadway, is to be set apart from the hall and theater, so that private entertainments can take place without any interference from other parts of the structure. One of the features of the Casino is to be its admirable arrangements for balls, etc., there being adequate ladies' and gentlemen's retiring rooms, and every other convenience for such occasions."

The tremendous success of the first operetta presented at the Casino entirely changed my original policy, and eliminated the real Casino features of my enterprise.

In 1880, when I leased the land upon which the Casino is built, the rent was \$10,000 and taxes annually, my company agreeing to construct the building to cost not less than \$100,000. At the expiration of the lease, the building reverted to the owners of the land, who I understand are now (1912) receiving approximately \$65,000 annual rental!

I went so far as to say that I was resolved to have a roof garden, and if I could not have a roof garden I should want no building. I finally persuaded the architects to give the matter further consideration and when I saw them again, forty-eight hours later, they told me a way had been found to meet all the difficulties. They had devised a way of strengthening the foundations as much as possible and using extra heavy girders.

With this I was satisfied, and in December, 1881, ground was broken for the building of the Casino. My intention was not to devote the Casino exclusively to operetta performances and concerts, but to make its uses more extended.



38 THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

Having raised, as I thought, sufficient money for all purposes, and the architects having the plans for construction well in hand, I sailed for Europe in January, 1882, in quest of attractions for my new enterprise. I again visited Herr Johann Strauss, in Vienna, and made him an offer to direct with his orchestra a season of popular concerts at the Casino in New York. But the Waltz King had positively resolved never again to cross the ocean, the memory of severe seasickness endured on his one trip being sufficient to deter him. Sadly disappointed in this failure, I went to Paris, hoping there to find the composer I should consider worthy of presiding at the opening of my Casino.

At that time the reigning dance-music favorite as writer and conductor was Monsieur Emile Waldteufel, who was a jolly, middle-aged gentleman, and a delightful companion, and whose popular waltzes, "Manola," "Violettes," "Très Jolie," etc., I first presented to the American public at my concerts at the Metropolitan Concert Hall in New York.

During a luncheon with me at the Café de la Paix, Monsieur Waldteufel regretfully declined my invitation that he and his orchestra open the Casino. His declination, he assured me, was solely due to his engagements not only at the "Elysée" for the Presidential and other official functions, but numberless private affairs long contracted for.

Undaunted by my double disappointment, I visited the illustrious master of music, Charles Gounod, in his artistically

26 Fév. / 82.

Monsieur Brownson  
C'est bien 400 "Guineas"  
que je vous ai dit, pour  
la rente propriété d'une  
"Marche avec O'Connell" et  
"Chaux". La dite rente  
se fait livre du 25 au 30  
avril, à Paris, contre  
le versement de la somme  
de propriété du morceau

en fait pour les  
arrangements qu'il voudrait  
faire faire son affaire et  
je n'ai rien à y voir.

Je vous prie

Ch. Gounod

P.S. Pour que la rente  
se fasse livre du 25 au 30  
avril, il faudrait que  
l'acte de vente, en  
plus tard le 10 ou 15  
Mars. Ch. G.

A LETTER FROM CHARLES GOUNOD



INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO 39

appointed apartment on the Boulevard Malesherbes. It was early in the forenoon when I called, and, as it was Monsieur Gounod's custom to exercise in fencing at the hour I had selected, I found him sheathed in a leather costume and with a foil in his hand. Plunging at once into the purpose of my visit I said:

"*Maitre*, I desire you as the greatest French composer to write an Inauguration March for the Casino now in course of construction in New York, the city where your 'Faust,' 'Romeo et Juliette' and many of your other works have met with such magnificent success."

"That is a little out of my line," he replied, "but let me consider and I will communicate with you."

In the course of the following day his letter came:

26 Fevrier 1882.

*My dear Mr. Aronson:—*

As I said to you, 400 Guineas is the amount fixed, for *all rights* of a march for orchestra and chorus. Said march shall be delivered in Paris between April 25th and 30th on the payment of that amount.

The purchaser of the march can make any arrangement for same that he desires. That is his affair—and I have no right to interfere.

Very truly yours,

CH. GOUNOD.

P. S. In order that the march shall be delivered between April 25th and 30th, it is necessary that I have the words—at the latest—between March 10th and 15th.

CH. GD.

Exclusive copyright for a march for orchestra and chorus for the inauguration of the concerts of the Grand Casino of New York.

400 Guineas.

To my regret, however, this offer was declined by the directors of my Company.

It was upon this visit to Paris that I had the great pleasure of meeting another master, the distinguished composer, Monsieur Massenet. My meeting with him was at the Grand Opera, when one of his own masterpieces, "Le Roi de Lahore," was being performed. In the course of our conversation I said to him:

"Do you know, *Maître*, that your works are immensely popular in America? In fact, just before I sailed, I heard your 'Scènes Napolitaines' at a Theodore Thomas Concert in New York and the large audience was entranced with its characteristic beauty and its magnificent instrumentation."

The master looked at me with unfeigned surprise, and in a voice sincerely enthusiastic asked:

"Do you mean to say, my friend, that my music is already played over there?"

I quote this to show in an imperfect way the simplicity of this very remarkable genius, whose works, including "Poème d'Avril" "Scènes Hongroises," "Scènes Pittoresques," "Scènes Napolitaines," "Overture à Phédre," "Don César de Bazan," "Marie-Madeleine," "Eve" "Le Roi de Lahore," "La Vierge," "Manon," "Herodiade," "Le Cid," "Esclaramonde," "Le Mage," "Werther," "Thais," "La Navarraise," "Sapho," "Cendrillon," "Grisélidis," "Le Jongleur de Notre Dame," "Cherubin," "Ariane," "Don Quichotte," and "Roma," are performed the world over.

**MASSENET**

## INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO 41

In 1906 while in Paris I fixed an appointment with the great master at his little studio in the *Ménestrel*—No. 2 bis rue Vivienne—otherwise known as Heugel et Cie, his publishers, where on certain days and hours of the week he courteously gave audiences to operatic and concert aspirants, instructing and advising them in the proper interpretation of his works. On that occasion I suggested that the composer give a few moments of his valuable time to Mr. Paris Chambers, a cornetist, who had just arrived in the French Capital. Although he was at first averse to listening to a cornet player he finally agreed.

Mr. Chambers was presented, and he then charmed Massenet with his interpretation on the cornet of the composer's beautiful "Elegie," accompanied on the piano by Massenet himself. Rising, he complimented Mr. Chambers and said, "I have just composed a little song 'Je t'aime,' which ought to make fine effect on the cornet when performed by an artist like yourself." Mr. Massenet first played it on the piano, and then Chambers "went over it" to the evident delight of Massenet, who was recognized by artists the world over as a marvelous coach, a born stage director, an artist to his finger tips, kind and gentle and yet insistent upon what he considered proper interpretation.

During the winter of 1911 I met Massenet for the last time in Paris, just as he was leaving the *Ménestrel* to enter his carriage. He was wrapped in an immense shawl which almost covered his face, for he was very susceptible to colds.

42 THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

I again suggested a tour in America, and this time the great master answered, "Very, very sorry; not only because I fear the ocean trip, but now I am too old." He was then sixty-nine years of age. He died August 14th, 1912.

He was undoubtedly the greatest melodist and orchestrator France ever produced, and his works will remain to the world as everlasting monuments for this prolific genius.

Had I not succeeded in carrying out my Casino enterprise, I should have followed a course of studies in orchestration with Massenet, from whom I was the recipient of many valued letters of which the following was one of the most interesting.

Paris, Nov. 24th, 1911.

Mr. Rudolph Aronson,  
227 Riverside Drive,  
New York, America.

*Dear great friend:—*

Your letter and the clipping from the newspaper gave me much pleasure. From you I have also news of my works in America!

How amiable and good you are, and how much I thank you.

Faithfully yours,

J. MASSENET.

What course could be pursued so that the director of the opera or those who write the advertisements for the theater and newspapers would be prevented from always quoting my name incorrectly?

My scores have printed thereon

Music by

*J. Massenet*

and never, *emphatically never, the entire first name but the initial only* written otherwise, my name becomes altered, and eventually this fantastic inaccuracy must disappear.

Paris  
24 Nov. 1911

Cher grand aïeul,  
Votre lettre et la lecture de  
journal me causent un vif  
plaisir.

Sur vous, j'ai écrit de  
nouvelles de mes ouvrages  
en Amérique !

Courez vous être aimable  
à bon, et combien je  
vous en remercie ! ...  
Chère-mère à vous.

J. Massenet

Comment obtenir du directeur  
de l'école, ou de celui qui écrit

A LETTER FROM MASSENET  
(See also the illustration page following)



Débattez mon nom ; et cette  
inexactitude particulière  
doit enfin disparaître !

et

oh ! comme j'aimerais que  
vous passiez comment au  
théâtre.  
Ma rectification.

ahm, les officiers seraient enfin  
exactes !  
et les journaux devraient à bon  
exemple.

les a finis du théâtre - ou du  
journal au 15 ... - de ne pas  
commencer toujours la même inexacte.  
- s'écrit au sujet de mon nom ?

- Mes partitions portent: musique  
de J. Massenet  
et jamais, au grand jamais,  
"i."

- écrivait autrement. c'est

MASSENET'S LETTER—(Continued)





## INCEPTION OF THE NEW YORK CASINO 43

Ah! how much I would like you to make known to the theater management my rectification; in that case, the advertisements would then be correct! and the newspapers would follow the good example.\*

I endeavored on several occasions to engage Massenet for a short tour in the United States and Canada, to conduct and supervise his own works, but he always declined, fearing the ocean crossing. On one occasion he said to me that some time previously he had accepted an engagement to conduct some of his works in Algiers, but arriving at Marseilles with his baggage, he noticed the roughness of the water and decided then and there not to risk the sea trip, and returned to Paris by the first train.

\* This tempest in a teapot was occasioned on account of Massenet's strenuous objection to his own name "Jules."



**THE OPENING OF THE CASINO**



## CHAPTER IV

### THE OPENING OF THE CASINO

Inauguration of the Unfinished Playhouse in 1882 with Strauss' "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief"—Beginning of the First Continuous Series of Sunday Popular Concerts—First Meeting of the Directors of the Metropolitan Opera House in the Casino, 1883.

**T**HE declination of both Strauss and Waldteufel, though a great disappointment to me, did not divert me from my original thought that the opening attraction at the Casino must be of a popular foreign flavor. It occurred to me that inasmuch as Maurice Grau had engaged the operetta queen, Madame Theo, creator of *La Jolie Parfumeuse*, *Pomme d'Api* and other Offenbach rôles, for a winter season of operetta, she and her company to perform in French, I should do well to negotiate with that manager and also with Mr. D'Oyley Carte, manager of the Savoy Theater, London, intending from the latter to secure a new Gilbert and Sullivan opera. With Mr. Carte I arranged also that the Casino be illuminated throughout with the same kind of admirable electric apparatus as that used in the Savoy Theater.

An irritating slowness of the work occasioned by difficult rock excavations where the Casino was to be built, hastened my return to New York, where I arrived in April, 1882. I

## 48 THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

used every argument and effort to hurry the architects and contractors, and finally, after numerous postponements, they agreed to deliver the completed building to me on September 11th, 1882. This definite promise enabled me to negotiate with Mr. D'Oyley Carte for the presentation of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. I also closed by cable an arrangement with Mr. Maurice Grau for the appearance of Madame Theo and her company on the above mentioned date.

Work on the Casino was continued day and night, but the elaborate and artistic exterior as well as the interior wood carving and plaster panels covering walls and ceilings, required so much attention, that it became evident that the theater portion alone could be completed by the date set.

On many occasions until two o'clock in the morning I was in the workroom of the Casino watching Mr. Thomas Wisedell, one of the architects, busily engaged planning and drawing in detail the artistic panels of correct Moorish design for embellishing the interior of the building, and it is to be regretted that Mr. Wisedell's overwork and strenuousness brought about his demise just before the completion of the Casino.

Sir Edwin Arnold, author of "The Light of Asia," and one of the world's foremost authorities on Moorish architecture, during his lecture tour in America, visited the Casino many times, made sketches of the entrance portals and other parts of the ornamental exterior and of the interior panels. Sir Edwin said to me that the Casino was the finest example of Moorish architecture he had encountered.

**THE CASINO, NEW YORK**





On August 24th, 1882, receiving a hearty welcome on her first visit to America, Madame Theo arrived in New York by the steamer *Labrador*, accompanied by her manager, Maurice Grau, and her company of forty-six people. Her repertoire included "Madame L'Archiduc," "La Mascotte," "La Jolie Parfumeuse," "Le Grand Casimir," "Les Cloches de Corneville," "La Marjolaine," "Niniche," "Bagatelle," and "Pomme d'Api."

To my sincere regret, and despite the efforts we all made, the Casino could not be made ready for opening on the date arranged and Maurice Grau most reluctantly was compelled to transfer Madame Theo and her company to the Fifth Avenue Theater, where she achieved a pronounced success.

Negotiations were then entered into with Mr. Samuel Grau, brother of Maurice Grau, representing Mr. John A. McCaull, whose operetta company was at that time playing at the Bijou Opera House, New York, for an opening date. This I made sufficiently distant—October 21st, 1882—to provide for every delay. I told Mr. Grau I had recently heard in Vienna, "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief," by Johann Strauss, and if that operetta could be secured and presented with an adequate cast I should be willing to accept it for our opening. I explained to him that by an adequate cast I meant an exceptionally large chorus and an orchestra of thirty musicians, a number never before engaged in operetta performances in America. To this he assented.

Fortunately Mr. Townsend Percy had secured the Amer-

ican rights of "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief" and had made an English translation and adaptation. Mr. McCaull had under engagement an able conductor, Herr Ernst Catenhusen, admirably fitted to direct a Strauss operetta.

After very careful perusal and acceptance of the libretto the following cast was selected:

<i>The King</i> .....	Miss Louise Paullin
<i>The Queen</i> .....	Miss Lilly Post
<i>Donna Irene</i> .....	Miss Mathilde Cottrelly
<i>Marquise of Villareal</i> .....	Miss Jennie Reiffarth
<i>Cervantes</i> .....	Signor Perugini
<i>Count Villalobos</i> .....	Mr. Jos. S. Greensfelder
<i>Don Sancho</i> .....	Mr. George Gaston
<i>Don Quixote</i> .....	Mr. Jay Taylor
<i>Minister of War</i> .....	Mr. Harry Standish

I entered into an agreement with Mr. McCaull for the presentation of this work at the Casino.

Rehearsals were assiduously held, extra workmen were requisitioned and all seemed to augur well for the inauguration on October 21st; but it was another case of "man proposes." The elaborateness of the decorations again interfered and another postponement appeared to be inevitable. McCaull, though, with a big, expensive company on his hands, insisted on opening.

And open I did!

On October 22nd the first Sunday gala concert was given

in the unfinished Casino by members of both of Maurice Grau's opera companies and an orchestra of sixty musicians under my conductorship. This was the first Sunday concert beginning a regular course of Sunday concerts ever given in the United States.

Following the concert six more performances of "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief" were given under most unfavorable conditions, owing to the continued low temperature in the Casino.

Swallowtail coats were in view up to half past eight P. M., but overcoats, hats, and wraps began to be *de rigueur* before nine o'clock, and during the *entr'actes*, ladies and gentlemen tramped about the foyer to keep warm! So notwithstanding the comparatively good business, I decided to close the theater and to reopen it in a complete condition on December 28th, 1882. "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief" took to the road in the interim and played to excellent business in Philadelphia, Chicago and other cities. It returned to New York in time for the above date, when a reception for the stockholders of the New York Casino Company, the press and invited guests took place, the program consisting of an introductory concert by an orchestra of fifty musicians under my conductorship, followed by the Second Act of "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief."

"The Queen's Lace Handkerchief" opened the completed Casino on December 30th, and the cast was that of the previous presentations, except in the case of Mr. Francis Wilson,

who replaced Mr. Gaston as *Don Sancho*. The theater was filled to its utmost capacity and the audience proclaimed the play a success, a judgment fully verified by the succeeding one hundred and thirty performances. This opera was withdrawn only to make room for the Maurice Grau French Opera Company, in accordance with an agreement previously entered into.

Following five Jullien concerts with my orchestra and famous vocal and instrumental soloists, including Emma Thursby, Emma Juch, Zelda Seguin, Emily Winant, Teresa Carreño, Alexander Lambert, Louis Blumenberg and Jules Levy, the French Opera Company was scheduled to appear with Madame Theo on March 17th, 1883. Madame Theo played in "La Jolie Parfumeuse" with great success. Later Victor Capoul with Madame Derivis appeared in Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette" and Massé's "Paul et Virginie," and during the last week of their engagement Madame Theo and Capoul appeared conjointly in "La Fille de Madame Angot" and "La Mascotte." These productions were followed by Gilbert and Sullivan's "Sorcerer," presented by the McCaull Opera Company, including Lillian Russell, Laura Joyce, Madeline Lucette, Louise Paullin, Julia De Ruyther, John Howson, Digby Bell, George Olmi, Charles J. Campbell and A. W. Maffin. On May 5th Offenbach's amusing operetta, "The Princess of Trebizond," was produced with a cast embracing most of the capable artists mentioned above. "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief" was revived on June 11th and

**MADAME THEO**



continued until July 7th, making a total of two hundred and thirty-four performances to its credit at the Casino.

The first meeting of the directors of the Metropolitan Opera House, then in course of construction on a site diagonally opposite to the Casino, was held in the foyer of the Casino on May 23rd, 1883. Among those present were Messrs. William K. Vanderbilt, Robert Goelet, Adrian Iselin, George F. Baker, Henry Clews, William C. Whitney, G. Henry Warren, James L. Breese, A. Cutting, J. W. Drexel, R. T. Wilson, D. O. Mills, George Peabody Wetmore, H. McK. Twombly, James A. Roosevelt and George G. Haven.



1

**THE WORLD'S FIRST ROOF GARDEN**

11

## CHAPTER V

### THE WORLD'S FIRST ROOF GARDEN

Inauguration on July 7, 1883—Francis Wilson and "The Dotlet on the I"—"The Merry War" from in Front and Behind the Curtain at the Casino—The Home of Comic Opera.

**T**HE inauguration of the world's first roof garden on July 7th, 1883, brought realization to my dreams. The Champs Elysées had been transported to Broadway; the Ambassadeurs lifted from Paris and placed upon the roof of a building in New York.

The New York *Herald* in commenting upon the opening of the roof garden on top of the Casino had this to say in its issue of July 8th, 1883:

"The buffet floor and garden on the roof of the Casino were opened yesterday evening for the first time and were much admired by a large gathering of visitors. The buffet floor, which is over the top floor of the theater proper, is beautifully decorated in light blue, gold and silver, like the theater foyers. A café provides coffee, ice-cream and light beverages. A number of those who visited the Casino last evening, strolled around the buffet floor or sat at the tables and regaled themselves with cooling refreshments, while listening to the performance of 'The Queen's Lace Handkerchief.' At the close of the opera Mr. Aronson's orchestra took possession of the

small stage at the end of the buffet floor (over the proscenium arch) and played a few popular selections, delighting quite a large audience on the roof which has been transformed into a garden. There are plenty of shrubs and bright flowers well arranged, and a number of rustic seats. Arches of gas jets, which shine through vari-colored globes, make the scene brilliant and enchanting. The rustic seats were well filled all the evening, and the promenade was very popular. The cooling breeze was most refreshing. The buffet floor and garden cannot fail to be a most popular addition to the Casino's attractions. The outside lights around the buffet and roof lit up effectively the exterior of the building. 'The Queen's Lace Handkerchief' received its last performance last evening and the ladies received lace handkerchiefs as mementoes of the occasion."

The *New York World* of July 8th, 1883, commented as follows:

"Without any doubt New York has now, for the first time a summer garden and a summer theater combined, which make a place of amusement worthy of the metropolis.

"The Casino last night threw open its café and its garden on the roof, and in addition to the opera proper, 'The Queen's Lace Handkerchief' being in full swing, these new features of the already popular house drew together all the first-nighters in town. The colored lights blazed from the roof and lit Broadway and Thirty-ninth Street for blocks, and at nine o'clock, there was a row of promenaders, looking down from

THE CASINO ROOF GARDEN

the Moorish balcony, upon the groups in the street, and over the roofs of the city, wet with the shower that had just passed.

"In the construction of the Casino the attempt had been made to combine the opera-house, the café, the summer garden, and the promenade in an unexampled feat of architecture. Mr. Aronson is to be congratulated on the success of his attempt. It is now possible to sit at a table and drink your beer or wine fanned by the night breeze and at the same time look down upon the performance of a comic opera or listen to the music of Mr. Aronson's orchestra.

"What are ordinarily galleries, are here great open spaces with tables, through which the air circulates freely, and the topmost gallery of all being on the roof, is literally a garden with tropical plants in profusion and colored lights transforming it into a fairy bower, with no other roof than the cool starry sky.

"The whole aspect of the Casino, now that it begins to develop its summer resources, is unique and charming. There is nothing like it in America and we question whether there is anything exactly like it, in the world. Whether it will with its coolness, its seductive performance and its indomitable Aronson, woo the people of New York in the heated term remains to be seen. One thing is certain, however, that everything has been done to overcome the seasonable objections to amusements, and the Casino ought to be the most popular resort in town while the dog star rages."

To show all that can be done in music is not the only re-

quirement of a manager. In the process of this showing are many difficulties that perplex and tremendously irritate. An imperative requirement is for a manager to keep his head in spite of these.

It is rumored that when Sappho added two strings to the lute she felt more gratified than she did over all the poetry she had written and all the scholars she had taught. I may be pardoned for making even modest comparison with an artist so famous as Sappho, but my gratification was likewise beyond measure when I knew that I had rightly calculated the preference of the people and that I was adding my bit to the gayety of the nation. These little satisfactions are compensation for the little annoyances, and the latter are forgotten in the accomplishments of which they form an unavoidable part.

As I stated before, "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief" ran at the Casino for two hundred and thirty-four presentations, a phenomenal run in those days. The remarkable success of this operetta prompted me to seek other Strauss compositions, and "Prinz Methusalem" most fortunately was my selection. One hundred and two performances were given and they were all crowded. No let-up in excitement came with the termination of "Prinz Methusalem," wherein Francis Wilson in his interpretation of a topical song "The Dotlet on the I" scored an enormous success, for I was overwhelmed with a shower of injunctions that I fought with counter injunctions. All of these were incited by my announcement that I would pre-



sent Millöcker's "The Beggar Student," which in its turn achieved much popularity. Next the lure of Strauss' "Merry War" attracted me as it did almost all New York. The Casino was thronged while the "Merry War" was there, and its charming waltz, sung by Signor Perugini, was received by the public with as great an enthusiasm as was the waltz in Lehar's "Merry Widow" in after years.

Thus was the Casino established as the home of comic opera. The success I had met with confirmed my belief that the public had tired of the terror and melancholy conveyed to its mind by the plays that had enthralled it, and was eager to exchange tears for laughter. The people proved more than ready to support productions whose music belonged to a bright and merry school and was wedded to a plot that was romantic and humorous. The compositions of the great masters awaken thoughts that have lain dormant in the human brain, as though dreams were being realized, and it was my wish to arouse these pleasant sensations with light music, that all could appreciate because all could understand.

While a stage "Merry War" was amusing thousands of auditors, a veritable merry war was raging between a certain prominent manager and me. The cause of it was a contract I had with him, which was to expire on May 1st, 1885, and which I declined to extend for one more year.

This manager thereupon allied himself with a dissatisfied stockholder at the Casino and undertook to give me trouble. The alleged grievance of the stockholder was that my door-

62      THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

keeper had refused to recognize that gentleman's non-transferable card of admission when it was presented by the stockholder's servant. The stockholder then brought a suit against me as president of the company and manager of the Casino. After a lengthy, costly and irritating suit a decision was given in my favor.

**FIRST PERFORMANCE OF "ERMINIE"**

## CHAPTER VI

### FIRST PERFORMANCE OF "ERMINIE"

Lillian Russell's Appearance in "Polly"—Heinrich Conried and His Connection with the Casino—The Beginning of "Erminie," the Most Successful Operetta of Modern Times—The Author's Prediction of Failure—Other Works by Offenbach, Lecocq, Audran, Millöcker, Gilbert and Sullivan, etc.

**W**HEN the manager had ended his season at the Casino the operetta "Polly" was presented, having Miss Lillian Russell as the "pet of the regiment." Miss Russell's husband, Mr. Edward Solomon, was composer of the music, and he had but recently arrived in this country, coming with her from England.

"Polly" enjoyed a run of eight weeks, when it was removed to give place to "Billee Taylor," another of Mr. Solomon's operas. Miss Russell was also in this opera and it ran until the end of June, 1885.

About this time there were rumors that another theater was to be erected in a central locality in New York, *with a roof garden* somewhat similar to the one on the Casino. I immediately consulted my attorneys, had drawings of the Casino

roof garden prepared, and sent them with the necessary documents to the Patent Office at Washington, applying for a patent.

The authorities informed me that a patent would have cheerfully been granted, because the roof garden *was a boon to the public*, but that they were deterred from granting same, because my application was not made within one year of its inauguration.

Immediately following "Billee Taylor," Zell and Genée's "Nanon" was produced under my own management. "Nanon" was staged by Mr. Heinrich Conried, who afterward became director of the Metropolitan Opera House, and it achieved great success. It was followed by other successes, Czibulka's "Amorita" and Strauss' "Gypsy Baron," which also were staged by Mr. Conried in a most sumptuous manner.

During this German operetta invasion, and at the urgent request of Mr. Conried, I was promoted from manager of the Casino to god-father of his (Conried's) son Richard!

The date May 10th, 1886, will long be marked in the history of comic opera, because on that evening I began the presentation of "Erminie," the most successful operetta of modern times. This marvelous operetta was staged by Mr. Harry Paulton, the author of its libretto, and it enjoyed twelve hundred and fifty-six performances at the Casino alone, almost unprecedented.

The first knowledge I had of "Erminie" was early in 1886,

Copyright, 1887, by B. J. Falk, N. Y.  
**LILLIAN RUSSELL**

**SADIE MARTINOT**

When Mr. Edmond Gerson cabled me from London, saying: "Can procure for you for five hundred dollars new operetta by Paulton and Jakobowski, entitled 'Erminie,' and now playing at the Comedy Theater, London, to fair business." I at once replied by cable: "Send libretto and if satisfactory will wire five hundred."

Before this could be done, however, Mr. Frank W. Sanger purchased the operetta in conjunction with Mr. Willie Edouin and Miss Melnotte and finally arranged with me for its production at the Casino. In the course of its phenomenal run they received one hundred and twenty thousand dollars in royalties on it. This is a forceful illustration that occasionally a fair success in Europe will make a great success in America.

Mr. Harry Paulton, when his work of staging "Erminie" was finished and the final dress rehearsal was at an end, said to me in a voice full of disappointment:

"With the antics of some of the people on the stage, the many interpolations and its Americanization, so to speak, 'Erminie' will be a fiasco." I expressed decided disagreement with this statement, although I realized that it is a difficult matter to judge beforehand what the public will accept.

As an example of the quick expediency required of a theatrical manager, a few of the incidents connected with the presentation of "Erminie" are appropriate.

I found it necessary in order to strengthen the entrance of

the two thieves, *Caddy* and *Ravvy*, in the first act of "Erminie," to introduce something foreign to that operetta, which I had discovered in Planquette's "Les Voltigeurs du 32<sup>me</sup>" and it fitted the situation like a glove, getting four and five encores nightly.

Again, when I approached Miss Marie Jansen, one of the most popular soubrettes of those days, with a view of engaging her for the part of Javotte in "Erminie," Miss Jansen read the part over, then handed it back to me with tears in her eyes, saying: "Mr. Aronson, is it possible that you ask me to play such a mediocre part that has not even one song?" I thought of what she said for a few moments and then replied: "Very well, I will get a song for you that will be acceptable." And I did. I took a little catchy German song I had heard in Berlin some years before, had words written to fit the situation, with the refrain, "Sundays after three, my sweetheart comes to me." This I submitted to Miss Jansen, who promptly accepted the part and the song, and the ballad thus introduced made one of the hits of the operetta. Miss Jansen thanked me many times thereafter for "that splendid introduction."

The cast of "Erminie" was ideal and included many of those artists who later were leaders in the field of comic opera. In the cast were Pauline Hall, Marie Jansen, Marion Manola, Jennie Weathersby, Agnes Folsom, Rose Beaudet, Francis Wilson, William S. Daboll, Harry Pepper, Carl Irving, Max Freeman, A. W. Maffin and Murry Woods, and



## FIRST PERFORMANCE OF "ERMINIE" 69

Jesse Williams as musical director. The occasion of the five hundredth performance of "Erminie" was made a gala day for the company, all the members being presented with mementoes. On that day I remember Mr. Wilson saying to me: "Do you know, Mr. Aronson, this continuous playing of the same part is telling on my nerves and at times I almost feel as though I were forgetting my lines. Why won't you relieve me of the part temporarily?" I very much regretted not being able to accommodate Mr. Wilson, but it would have been difficult to replace him after his tremendous success.

"Erminie" continued, running on for hundreds upon hundreds of performances and was finally succeeded by Lacomé's "The Marquis," Lecocq's "Madelon," Chassaigne's "Nadja," Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Yeomen of the Guard," Offenbach's "The Brigands," "The Drum Major," and "The Grand Duchess," Chassaigne's "The Brazilian," Lecocq's "Madame Angot," Millöcker's "Poor Jonathan," Hellmesberger's "Apollo," Strauss' "Indigo," Zeller's "The Tyrolean," Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana," Genée's "Nanon" (revival) Audran's "Uncle Celestin," Millöcker's "Child of Fortune" and "The Vice Admiral," and my own "The Rainmaker of Syria," the libretto of which was by Sidney Rosenfeld.

Miss Lillian Russell's engagement at the Casino extended over a long period, and during that time she missed but one performance and I had only one misunderstanding with her.

It was a custom of hers to call on me at the end of each season with the request for a small increase in her weekly salary, and the request was generally granted, as Miss Russell was a valuable addition to any high-class company. Her last observance of this custom was the occasion of our very slight disagreement. We had arranged for the usual increase, which brought her salary up to, I believe, seven hundred and fifty dollars a week; and she left me, saying she would call on the following Thursday to sign her contract, which I was to have ready at that time. On the day agreed Miss Russell called at my office and said: "Mr. Aronson, I have signed." Not entirely understanding what she meant by this remark, I told her the contract was ready for her signature. She continued then rather nervously: "I have signed with Mr. T. Henry French for twelve hundred dollars a week and a share in the receipts above a certain amount every week." To this I made again the only reply possible for me to make, that if she had signed a contract on such terms she was to be congratulated.

During the preparation for the presentation of "Erminie" at the Casino I was very frequently in consultation with Mr. Henry E. Hoyt, the famous scenic artist. At that time Mr. Hoyt had a small studio among the flies over the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House. This was a congenial resort for me, where I could enjoy the ideas of a finished artist regarding the elaborate scenery that was being planned and made ready for this new opera. During these consultations I sug-

gested to Mr. Hoyt that he experiment with a stage setting entirely of one color. With the proper light effects such a setting would, I thought, be beautiful. The result of our conferences was the famous pink ballroom scene in the second act of "Erminie," which was painted by Mr. Hoyt, and brought him most favorable encomiums.

A great deal of discretion was shown in the selection of the cast for "Erminie," and I particularly remember that my attention was called to a young actor then appearing with the Salsbury Troubadours, Mr. William S. Daboll. I was so impressed with his acting, his personality and general make-up that I engaged him at once for the rôle of *Ravennes*, the gentlemanly thief in that operetta, and my judgment regarding him was fully sustained by public and press. Mr. Daboll scored an unqualified triumph, and had not unsuccessful speculations and illness hastened his early demise, he would have achieved very great prominence in America.

While Chassaigne's delightful operetta, "Nadjy," was in rehearsal for the Casino, Miss Sadie Martinot, who had been engaged for the leading part, became involved in controversy with Mr. Richard Barker, who was staging the operetta, concerning some stage business in the last act. I was watching the rehearsal from the front and felt that Miss Martinot was correct in what she wanted done, which was merely a change in the position of the chorus girls in order that she might make a better entrance. Mr. Barker possibly did not approve of the change, for he replied to Miss Martinot's re-

quest, "I am directing the stage and you must follow my instructions." Miss Martinot then declined to continue unless her suggestion was accepted, and came in front to consult me. She stated her demand and I replied, "Had you suggested your idea to Mr. Barker or to me previous to the rehearsal, I have no doubt that either or both would have acquiesced. But your peremptory demand on the stage before the entire company was unwarranted." Her reply to this was that she would not play the part. "Very well!" I said, "the operetta will be played anyway on the day set, five days hence."

I at once rushed to Miss Marie Jansen's apartment, informed her that I was in an awful predicament, explained the situation and appealed to her to help me out, and to rehearse and play Nadjy on the following Monday—five days later. Miss Jansen looked at me earnestly and all she said was: "Man, are you insane? Why, I couldn't learn the dances in that time, not to mention the music and the lines! And how about the dresses?" She placed particularly strong emphasis on the last obstacle, the dresses, so I guaranteed her them for Sunday morning. She once more considered for a time, then said, "I have engaged passage for Europe, but if it is a favor to you, I will cancel that and go right over to the Casino and look at the part." She went to the Casino and I to the dressmaker on Fifth Avenue, where, after much argument and after finally agreeing to pay one hundred and fifty dollars in addition to the regular price, the three dresses were promised for Sunday morning. I hastened back to the

MARIE JANSEN, IN  
"NADJY," 1888

FRANCIS WILSON AND PAULINE HALL,  
IN "ERMINIE," 1886

Casino, where I found Miss Jansen had already started her rehearsals, and when I told her the dressmaker had promised me the gowns in time, she became so absorbed with the part that she hardly left the Casino night or day until the opening of "Nadjy."

When Miss Jansen appeared on the first night of the operetta she received a veritable ovation. For five minutes the vast audience applauded the energetic Jansen to the echo, and in that operetta she made one of the greatest hits of her career.

Miss Sadie Martinot was one of the enthusiastic admirers of Miss Jansen at the "Nadjy" premiere. I remember, though, a few days previous thereto I requested her for emergency's sake, to deliver to me the three "Nadjy" dresses she had had designed and made in Paris at my expense, and she declined, preferring to pay for and retain them as souvenirs.

Previously when Miss Martinot made a pronounced hit in Genée's "Nanon" at the Casino, among the funny incidents that make every serious matter easier to overcome, was one that occurred the third evening of that operetta. One scene was somewhat in the form of a diminutive menagerie, and Miss Martinot had entire charge of the animal collection during the scene. She was animal trainer to a quantity of doves, pigs, geese, goats and other live-stock of small dimensions. While bringing these wild beasts into a condition of domesticity Miss Martinot fed them with a selection of dainties most

popular with such creatures. But the little pigs apparently were not amenable to this kindness, for they ran about the stage and one of them indulged in frequent squeaks. During the second evening of "Nanon" an officer representing a society with a long name, called at my office and informed me that the shriek was injurious to the little pig, although it might be an addition to the scene. He explained that the reason it was injurious was because it was doubtless occasioned by the prick of a pin or needle, as the beautiful attendant and the bountiful food would otherwise put from the brain of the pig all thought of squeaking. The officer then asked me to have this stopped. I promptly agreed to do so, and the officer returned to his seat for further enjoyment of the play. The following evening the officer again came to my office. He observed rather bitterly that he had accepted my word the night before that the pig would not again be made a pin cushion for the pleasure of a Casino audience, but that on this evening the animal had again shrieked, and in the tones of that shriek he, the officer, could detect great pain. Of course I made profuse apologies for this recurrence of cruelty and invited the officer to go back of the scene with me to interview the pig regarding the matter. We saw the property man, and after I had told him the purpose of our call he exhibited a papier-mâché pig, which Miss Martinot manipulated so cleverly as to conceal its artificial nature from the audience. He repeated the squeak in the flies with such excellent naturalness that I was at once relieved from the sus-



picion of cruelty, all idea of the pin and needle accessories was abandoned, and the officer left me with earnest apology for his mistake and with a smiling face.

The troubles and worries haunting me thus far I had considered real, but they were nothing compared to those that now came along. I had shortly the consolation of knowing that the worst was yet to come. In one of the operettas at the Casino—it was entitled "The Marquis"—were three really prima-donna rôles, *Mae*, *Marie* and *Marion*, for which the Misses Bertha Ricci, Lillie Grubb and Isabelle Urquhart had been cast. Each of these three ladies wanted the so-called "star" dressing room, nor would she be satisfied with any other. As a matter of fact, I had put no star dressing room in the Casino because I never intended having a star there; I intended to have a strictly stock company. But these ladies, one and all, regarded the room known as Room A to be a star room, and demanded it. For the moment I was at my wit's end, until the plan came to me of dividing the one room into three by placing through it two partitions, having a separate door to each of the three sections and lettering the doors respectively A, AA, and AAA. By this means peace was restored. Each lady was quite satisfied with a room two thirds smaller than need be, for each lady was exalted into a prima donna.



**CONCERNING SOME CELEBRITIES**

CHAPTER VII  
CONCERNING SOME CELEBRITIES

Paderewski and the Automatic Piano—The Serpentine Dance of Loie Fuller—Master Josef Hofmann's Remarkable Precocity—Eugene Sandow's Appearance at the Casino—Fanny Rice and a Would-be Admirer—The Initial Production of "Cavalleria Rusticana."

**I**N "Uncle Celestin," a light operetta at the Casino, I introduced for the first time the automatic piano. The dummy player was made up like Paderewski, who was then the rage in this country. One evening during the "Uncle Celestin" engagement the real Paderewski strolled into the Casino, and I invited him to accompany me on the stage, holding forth to him the promise of great joy in meeting a brother artist. He accompanied me and his surprise was genuine when I introduced him to his double, made up so accurately as to be almost undistinguishable from the original, who fell all over and finally into the piano. Paderewski laughed heartily at his double's antics.

This "Uncle Celestin" episode recalls my business associations with Miss Loie Fuller, and her original dance.

Late in the eighties Miss Fuller had been engaged by me for a minor part at the Casino, which, however, she declined just previous to rehearsal time, accepting instead an engage-

ment with Mr. Nat Goodwin in "Little Jack Shephard" at the Bijou Opera House in New York. After a short season there, Miss Fuller left for England, played in a company in London, and while there, discovered the light material which she afterwards used in her dances.

Returning to New York later on, she called at my brother's office at the Casino, stating that she had a new sort of a dance which she was quite sure would take, and that she would like to submit it to me. My brother came to my office, explained the matter, and although I was a little piqued at Miss Fuller's action on the occasion of her first engagement at the Casino, I fixed an appointment with her for a rehearsal for the next morning.

My orchestra was on hand, and I sat back in the auditorium to watch the dance. Miss Fuller gave her directions for the lights, the orchestra played a Spanish dance that I had heard many years before, and she then appeared with the two sticks and a white flowing gown of light fabric which she waved to and fro.

At the conclusion of the dance she came back to my office and I said to her: "Miss Fuller, the only things in your dance are the sticks and the material." I then played for her a charming little piece, just received from Paris, Gillet's "Loin du Bal," and said to her, "Now, that ought to fit your dance like a glove." I further suggested to her a title for her dance, "The Serpentine," because the waving of the sticks indicated that. I then agreed to have her lights properly arranged and

before she left my office she had signed a contract with me for two years—at fifty dollars per week.

The "Serpentine Dance" was put into rehearsal at the Casino, and then was interpreted by Miss Fuller during six weeks on the road in conjunction with "Uncle Celestin," after which the combined attraction was presented at the Casino. After a few performances and because I declined to increase her salary Miss Fuller retired from the Casino and later sailed for Europe, appearing at the Wintergarten in Berlin and then the following year at the Folies Bergères in Paris, where the dance was sumptuously done with lights and effects, creating a veritable sensation, so much so that Miss Fuller after a few years returned to New York and appeared at Koster & Bial's, then on 34th Street, receiving a fabulous weekly salary and scoring a wonderful success. On one occasion during this engagement, she requested me to visit her back of the stage and presented me to her friends present—as the father of her dance—a very graceful compliment on her part.

I was one day invited by Mr. Henry E. Abbey to attend an exhibition he proposed giving of the almost incredible musical talent possessed by Master Josef Hofmann, then a boy of eleven. This introduction of the wonderful boy was made at Wallack's Theater to an audience of musicians, artists, newspaper men and others interested in art in all its phases. Little Hofmann did a variety of marvelous piano "stunts" and I, among others, put him to a test. I played on

the piano sixteen bars of an unpublished waltz I had recently composed, and, while I played, young Hofmann listened attentively. Then, seating himself at the piano, he played my waltz correctly, modulated from one key to another, interpolated other melodies, and after five minutes of this extemporizing, reverted to my waltz in the original tone and note for note. This brought great applause from his critical audience, and for fully an hour after that he submitted his talents to tests, far surpassing even the exalted opinion all had formed of him.

This reminds me of another incident involving that most delightful man, Mr. Abbey; and although it is slightly incongruous to intermingle muscle with music, I think the story is theatrically interesting enough to excuse me in doing so. Most persons will remember Eugene Sandow, the strong man with the marvelous physique, whose personal manager at that time, was Mr. Florenz Ziegfeld (the present day producer of successful musical reviews). Well, Mr. Abbey had engaged Sandow, and he said to me one day: "Aronson, I will let you have Sandow for what he costs me, six hundred dollars a week. You place him between two of the acts or at the finish of your operetta at the Casino, and I'm sure he will fill the house." Unfortunately for Abbey, this suggestion was made in July at a time when theater business is rather hazardous. So I replied, "Although this attraction is somewhat out of my line, and you are so sure of your card, I will give you fifty per cent of our receipts after we have cleared

Copyright, 1887, by Napoleon Sarony

JOSEF HOFMANN

JAROSLOV KOCIAN

the average weekly receipts." Abbey was a born speculator. He accepted my offer and Sandow came to the Casino, where he gave his first performances in this country, including his lifting of a grand piano on a platform with a dozen or more persons thereon.

However, the fact that it was July and that the temperature was terrifically high, had an unhappy influence on business, and only one week in the entire six of Sandow's engagement did the house receipts go above the average. So, for that one week only did Mr. Abbey receive any monetary return from the Casino for Sandow's most admirable work. But Abbey's speculative disposition had a satisfactory return in the publicity Sandow received on the road because of his lengthy Casino appearance. Immediately following his Casino engagement Sandow appeared to enormous business at the Trocadero in Chicago during the World's Fair.

I could boast, as could Mr. Abbey, of bringing a famous pianist to the attention of the public. During my popular Sunday night concerts at the Casino in the eighties, I presented Mr. Leopold Godowsky, a youth then, and now recognized as one of the foremost pianists living. At his first appearance in New York on Sunday, January 18th, 1885, he performed Mendelssohn's *Prelude* and *Fugue op. 35*, a Chopin *Scherzo* and the Rubinstein *Valse Caprice*, making an excellent impression. In these concerts I also presented Mr. Alexander Lambert, another gifted pianist, Mr. Louis Blumenberg, the distinguished violoncellist, and Mr. Michael

## 84 THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

Banner, the violinist, who had but recently received a first prize at the Paris Conservatoire, and for the first time at the Casino, Sunday, December 9th, 1883, the distinguished prima donna, Madame Nordica. Madame Nordica sang the aria from Mozart's "Magic Flute" and the polonaise from "Mignon" of Thomas. Of course she sang them magnificently. I had not met her since 1878, when as a young girl—Miss Lillian Norton—she crossed the Atlantic with Gilmore's Band and sang through many European cities with that excellent organization. I was a fellow passenger upon the occasion and we had music galore during the trip.

During Miss Fanny Rice's engagement in "Nadjy" at the Casino, following the retirement of Miss Marie Jansen, she was annoyed as most leading artists are with notes from stage-door "mashers." One of them was written on delicately tinted paper and signed "Jewels." The letter stated that the writer had considerable property in his possession which belonged to Miss Rice and that he was anxious to deliver it to her but only in person, and asked her to put a personal in the *Herald* and state where and when he could see her. A street corner would suit him best, he said, and she was to hold a handkerchief in her hand, so he could identify her. There were two dollars enclosed to pay for the personal.

Miss Rice burned the letter and gave the money to a poor woman. She thought no more of the matter. A few days after, another letter was received which again called her attention to the matter and stated that the writer had failed



to see the personal. No attention was paid and then, another note reached the theater, stating that the property consisted of valuable diamond earrings, pin, bracelets and trinkets of all sorts.

"Nadjy" here concluded to consult her husband, and he inserted the following personal in the *New York Herald* on April 3rd, 1889:

"Breakfast"—if your object is strictly business and it is true that property has been left to me and intrusted to you for delivery, you will find me at my home 270 West 39th Street, Wednesday, at one o'clock.

FANNY RICE.

It is not necessary to state that the would-be masher did not turn up. If he had, he would have been received very cordially by Miss Rice's husband, a score of reporters and a big Newfoundland dog.

To illustrate how much attention was given to the scenic requirements of Casino productions I remember that I commissioned Mr. Henry E. Hoyt, the artist, to paint for the second Act of "Nanon" (The salon at Countess Carlotta's) a fac-simile of Fortuny's famous painting, "Choosing the Model." Its success was second only to the pink ballroom scene in "Erminie."

I also recall the engagement (I mean for the stage) of Miss Victoria Schilling, the daughter of Mr. Morosini, the banker. She eloped from Yonkers with a coachman of her parents. Mr. Morosini refused to recognize his daughter as long as she

remained with her coachman husband, Ernest Schilling. She decided finally to adopt the stage and joined my company in 1885 during the run of "Amorita," playing the part of a young artist very acceptably indeed, so well that she became the understudy for one of the leading characters, and was re-engaged for a part in "The Gypsy Baron" which followed.

One Sunday evening during his engagement with "The Beggar Student" at the Casino, Mr. Fred Leslie dined with my family, and at the table he suddenly imitated the me-ow, me-ow of a cat, so cleverly that my father, then over seventy years of age, said, "Why don't you throw that abominable cat out!" I said, "Governor, if we throw *that* cat out, it will have to be our guest, Mr. Leslie!" My father laughed heartily and apologized to the comedian.

On one of my visits abroad, Mr. James Creelman, who at that time was correspondent of the *New York Herald* in Paris, informed me he had just returned from Italy, where he had interviewed His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII, in Rome, and while there had been present at an early performance of an extraordinarily beautiful opera, "Cavalleria Rusticana," by a new composer, Mascagni. At the same time Mr. Creelman gave me an Italian libretto of the opera, and was enthusiastic in his eulogy upon the music and of the originality of the tenor solo at the beginning of the opera. Most unfortunately I was compelled to return to New York hastily and thus was prevented from hearing that remarkable work, which in the course of a few months became the talk of

PADEREWSKI

J.EOPOLD GODOWSKY

musical circles. It was not until the following year that I went to Europe again, when I heard "Cavalleria Rusticana" and arranged for its production in New York. America showed signs of becoming "Cavalleria Rusticana" mad as was Europe then, and anticipating this, I hastened to New York with the score of that opera carried safely in my suitcase. I also carried with it Zeller's unusually tuneful operetta, "Tyrolean," and as soon as I reached port I arranged for a double performance at the Casino, consisting of both works. Mr. Heinrich Conried was to be stage director of the double bill, with Laura Bellini, Grace Golden, Madame Von Doenhoff and Charles Bassett and William Pruette in "Cavalleria Rusticana," Miss Marie Tempest playing the title part in "Tyrolean." The orchestra of fifty musicians was under the leadership of Mr. Gustave Kerker. At once, upon my announcement of the first performance of "Cavalleria Rusticana," Mr. Oscar Hammerstein also announced a performance of the same opera at the Lenox Lyceum at Fifty-ninth Street and Madison Avenue, New York (now the Plaza Music Hall), and we watched one another with great suspicion. But my production was the first in the New York field and was an invitation opening, so that all the local music world went to the Casino. Subsequently I gave fifty-five performances. Mr. Hammerstein gave only three performances and said that the opera should have been called Cavalleria Busticana instead of Rusticana!



**THE FORTUNES OF THE CASINO**



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FORTUNES OF THE CASINO

Sir Arthur Sullivan's Visit to the Casino—Lawsuits Occasioned by the Piracy of "Erminie"—Francis Wilson and Louise Sylvester Brave the Blizzard of 1888—Marie Jansen and the Ballet Girls of "Nadjy"—General William T. Sherman at Casino—An Attempt to Set Fire to the Casino—The Bronze Figure Group.

ON June 30th, 1885, Sir Arthur Sullivan occupied a box at the second performance of "Nanon" at the Casino, and he complimented me highly upon the artistic completeness of that operetta, emphasizing the excellence of the chorus work and the orchestra. Sir Arthur had just arrived from England to superintend the final rehearsals of "The Mikado" at the Fifth Avenue Theater, New York, and also to use his every effort for the suppression of the many piratical productions of that clever opera.

Speaking of piratical productions, brings to mind that I was a victim of them during my representations of "Erminie" in 1886, 1887 and 1888. In those years I had no less than fourteen lawsuits against pretended owners of this very successful operetta, produced or announced to be produced under all sorts of fictitious titles such as "The Two Thieves,"



"Robert Macaire," "The Vagabonds," "The Robbers," "Ravvy and Caddy," "Robert and Bertram," and so forth. In each suit I secured an injunction, but it meant for me much trouble and expense. Mr. David Leventritt was my attorney in these suits, and they kept him exceedingly busy, almost to the very moment he was elected to the bench of the Supreme Court.

I recall the greatest blizzard of modern times in New York in March, 1888, when for three days (with snow in some places twelve feet deep) traffic was at a standstill. On the first night of the blizzard, March 16th, only two performers, Francis Wilson and Louise Sylvester reported at the Casino (the latter almost exhausted from the effect of the wind and snow). "Erminie" was still the attraction, but the only applicants for seats on that memorable night were three sturdy Canadians—to whom (in the absence of my treasurer) I extended a complimentary pass for the following evening, when I thought it might be possible to resume operations.

My policy had always been to keep the Casino Comic Opera Company intact and devoid of stars, and to this I attribute largely the artistic results of the performances given by that company under my direction. It was entirely owing to this policy that I rejected a proposal made by Mr. Francis Wilson, after his long engagement with me, to give him a reduced fixed salary and an interest in the profits of our company. My rejection of this request resulted in Mr. Wilson's combining with Messrs. Nixon & Zimmerman and they later

JACQUES OFFENBACH

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN

*Copyright by Almé Dupont*

LILLIAN NORDICA

on became important factors in the so-called Theatrical Syndicate with Messrs. Klaw & Erlanger, Charles Frohman and Al Hayman.

One of the potent factors in the success after success of many Casino productions, is attributable in a great measure to the creation, so to say, of new original business, something that would strengthen a scene, a situation or a finale. As I previously mentioned, the apropos introductions and changes in "Erminie," so in "The Grand Duchess," in order to give Miss Lillian Russell a dignified entrance, befitting the character of the part and her own personality, I suggested to Mr. Max Freeman, the stage director, that inasmuch as we never had a snow scene on the Casino stage, why not introduce one in "The Grand Duchess," and have Miss Russell appear gowned in her magnificent ermine set, in a sleigh on the top of a hill and descend towards the footlights during the falling snow!

Mr. Freeman at first intimated that it was all foreign to Offenbach's masterpiece, and then acquiesced, and my suggestion was carried out and with very great success.

Also in Offenbach's "Brigands," I decided after examination of the score that the finale of the first act was not strong enough, and commissioned Mr. Gustave Kerker, then the musical director at the Casino, to write an effective waltz measure, which he did and with some telling business this finale received four and five encores nightly.

Again in "Nadjy," I suggested to Mr. Richard Barker,

who was directing the stage, that we must make one of our strong effects in the ballet scene. We had a chorus of unusually pretty and well formed young ladies and they were put through a regular course of ballet training with Monsieur de Bibeyran, the Casino's ballet master, and in their short fluffy white and pink skirts in contrast with the one, entirely in black, worn by Miss Marie Jansen, presented a most picturesque appearance, and proved an immense factor in the great run of Chassaigne's tuneful operetta.

In Millöcker's "Poor Jonathan" the third act was laid at West Point, on the Hudson. I said to Mr. Heinrich Conried, who had charge of the stage, "We must introduce here an effective military march and evolutions for the girls of the chorus to be uniformed as West Point cadets." I wrote the music for this introduction published as a march under the title, "For Love or War." It took eight weeks of incessant rehearsal with Mr. Conried and a prominent drill master of one of New York's crack regiments, to teach the girls (forty-eight in number) the difficult steps and more difficult evolutions, but they finally acquitted themselves like real warriors, receiving encore after encore at each performance, and materially aiding the immense success achieved by the operetta.

Many prominent Europeans expressed themselves in highest terms at the excellence of the Casino productions. Herr Eduard Strauss during his first visit to America in the eighties, paid me a great compliment when he said that he regarded the representations of the Johann Strauss operettas at

the Casino as infinitely superior to those in either Berlin or Vienna.

Later on Dr. Hans von Bulow, the famous pianist and conductor, visited the Casino with Mr. Walter Damrosch. "The Grand Duchess" was on the boards with Lillian Russell in the title rôle. Dr. von Bulow said to me at the time that he had never witnessed a more artistic and elaborate presentation of the Offenbach burletta (as he termed it) anywhere in Europe. I thanked the Doctor heartily and invited him to the Casino Café, and was surprised when he ordered and drank three bottles of Sarsaparilla!

On the occasion of the 75th performance of "The Grand Duchess," May 5th, 1890, Miss Russell was presented with a replica of the crown originally worn by Mlle. Hortense Schneider, the famous créatrice of "La Grande Duchess" in Paris in 1868. The orchestra on that occasion was directed by the composer, Jacques Offenbach.

Before the presentation of "Erminie" at the Casino I had contracted with Mr. T. Henry French for a six weeks' engagement of the Violet Cameron Opera Company from London, beginning October 4th, 1886. During those six weeks my company, for the first time in its history, played a road engagement in "Erminie" with the original cast, to phenomenal business, in Boston at the Globe Theater three weeks, in Philadelphia at the Chestnut Street Opera House two weeks and in Brooklyn at the Park Theater one week.

Miss Violet Cameron (daughter of Lydia Thompson, a

great favorite in London) and her company duly arrived accompanied by Lord Londsdale (intimate friend of the then Prince of Wales and later King Edward VII) as its manager. A few days later there appeared on the scene the husband of Miss Cameron, a Mr. David de Bensaude, whose presence occasioned much trouble and an enormous amount of newspaper publicity. It was verily a case of "The Earl, the Prima Donna and the Husband."

The first operetta—I should say burlesque—presented, was "The Commodore," an adaptation from Offenbach's "La Créole." At the conclusion of its premiere, there congregated such a mob at the Thirty-ninth Street stage entrance of the Casino, that I found it decidedly advisable to escort Miss Cameron through the auditorium of the theater (after the retirement of the large audience) and then to Broadway through my private office, in order to avoid an impending riot at the stage door. There seemed to have been intense feeling aroused against the manager of noble birth who afterwards was sued by de Bensaude claiming one hundred thousand dollars as damages.

Although Miss Cameron was a delight to the eye and the ear, "The Commodore" and its successor, "Kenilworth," did not seem to appeal to the American public, so that the business was only fair and the company returned to England after a short tour on the road.

A memorable occasion was when the Ancient and Honorable Artillerymen of London, accompanied by the West

HANS VON BÜLOW

WALTER DAMROSCH

Point cadets, attended the performance of "Nadjy" at the Casino on June 11th, 1888. General William T. Sherman and friends occupied two boxes. After the first act, Cadet Alexander Perry arose and said in a commanding voice, "Attention! Classes rise! Three cheers for the retired general of the Army!" How the voices rose and rang! The vast audience joined in the ovation. General Sherman stepped to the front of the box and said that forty-eight years ago he had worn the cadet gray, and expressed the hope that the graduates would excel their predecessors if only a little bit and that they would at least follow the example set them in maintaining the great Union. Loud and continued applause followed the gallant General's remarks. It was on this same evening that I said to General Sherman that I had recently invited General Grant to the Casino, who inquired as to what was playing there. I replied, "A musical show called 'Erminie,'" and General Grant answered, "I'll wait until you play a drama or a comedy, as I don't care for musical shows!" General Sherman then informed me that he accounted for that in this way: "During the war, the almost continuous rattle of horses' hoofs, the beat of the drums, and other weird sounds had evidently imbedded themselves so thoroughly in General Grant's ear that a veritable dislike for a real musical or melodious strain was occasioned! It is very different with me, however," continued General Sherman, "for I am fond of all kinds of music, whether light, popular or classical!"



The advent of a new work by the authors of "Pinafore," "The Pirates of Penzance," "Patience," "The Mikado," etc., Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, was always the sensation of the time.

I procured the exclusive American rights for what was at that time their latest opera, "The Yeomen of the Guard," although the title was not made public until just before the first production at the Casino on October 17th, 1888. Previous thereto, however, a number of stories were circulated, placing the locale of the new opera in Sweden, Hungary, Dalmatia, Bulgaria and other quarters of the globe. Strange to relate, the music of the finale of the second act was first received and put into rehearsal, then followed something of the first act, and then came another number of the second act, and so on, and finally, at the latest moment the remainder of the score. This precaution had been taken, to avoid piratical productions which at that period seemed to be very much in vogue.

There were many applications from reputable managers to procure rights for the production of "The Yeomen of the Guard" in various sections of the United States, although they knew nothing of the subject or value of the opera. I received from The Emma Abbott Opera Company ten thousand dollars for the rights in San Francisco and the Northwest, and from John Stetson the same amount for Boston and the East in addition to fixed royalties. Besides the regular Casino Company, I organized what was termed a "number two" company to invade Chicago and the West.

With all my efforts and those of my confrères, "The Yeomen of the Guard" did not score the success of any of the aforementioned works of Gilbert and Sullivan, accountable in a measure to the rather gruesome libretto. Some of the music, however, was in Sir Arthur's best vein, particularly the finale of the first act, with its double chorus effect and its wonderful musicianly treatment; indeed it was a veritable masterpiece in itself.

Mr. Richard Barker, the eminent stage director of the Savoy Theater, London, representing Mr. D'Oyley Carte, the manager of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, was sent especially to direct the rehearsals and supervise the production of "The Yeomen of the Guard," and I engaged a well known prima donna, who had just arrived from Europe, for the leading part, but she had to be dispensed with, a week before the opening performance. Although the possessor of a most charming voice, she lacked the necessary stage experience for this class of work. Her part was acceptably filled at short notice by Miss Bertha Ricci.

Mr. D'Oyley Carte endeavored to arrange with me for the presentation at the Casino in New York of Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Gondoliers," insisting, however, upon a guarantee and a fixed number of performances, which I flatly refused. If Mr. Carte would have guaranteed me another "Pinafore" or "Mikado" success in addition to permitting me to engage for the leading part his incomparable comedian, Mr. George Grossmith, an agreement might have been made, but

suppose "The Gondoliers" should have turned out to be another "Ruddygore" or a "Yeomen of the Guard," what then? An inferior company was later on sent over from England and "The Gondoliers" did not prove successful.

At the rehearsals of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera at the Savoy Theater in London, which I attended, the ladies and gentlemen of the chorus were seated in a semi-circle on the stage, in the midst of which was a small upright piano. The late Mr. W. S. Gilbert attended nearly all the musical rehearsals, took notes of the style of composition, time and rhythm and then invented his groups and stage business.

Mr. Gilbert was, as is well known, a very strict disciplinarian. He would stand on the stage at rehearsals and repeat the words and action of the parts over and over until they were delivered as he desired. All the arrangements of color and the groupings were designed by him.

About this time two important events occurred at the Casino. One was the introduction, back of the seats, of the automatic opera glasses, a boon to theater-goers and now quite universally adopted; the other was an attempt to set fire to the building.

For some insubordination, I notified my chief stage machinist that his services would not be required after Saturday night. The night previous to his discharge, he placed a candle surrounded by inflammable material in one of the rooms back of the upper boxes in the theater, calculating that the candle would burn down and ignite the inflammable material just as

the audience was leaving, and he would be on hand with a bucket of water, ready to extinguish the flame and that his heroism would at once reinstate him. Luckily, the night watchman made his rounds earlier than usual, and recognizing through the cracks of the room an unusual light, opened the door at almost the moment when the candle had reached the inflammable material. He extinguished the impending flame and thus averted a catastrophe, for the performance was not yet over.

I reported the case to the then Superintendent Byrnes, who questioned me on many points, and finally asked if I had recently discharged anyone. I mentioned the stage machinist, and the superintendent at once procured his address. With Detective-Sergeant Dusenberry, I went to this residence, and just as we arrived he was walking down the stoop, valise in hand. He was immediately put under arrest, and divulged the whole plan to the Superintendent. He was tried and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

During the memorable days of "Erminie" at the Casino in the eighties, there was a frequent attendant, in the person of the heir to the Brazilian throne. On one occasion the Prince expressed to me a desire to meet Mr. Francis Wilson, who was then performing Caddy with so much success, and one evening I arranged with Mr. Wilson that he meet the Prince in his ragged stage togs on the roof garden before his entrance in the first act. I introduced Wilson to the Prince, who addressed him in his slang parlance thus: "It pleases me mightily

to meet yer royal 'ighness and when I land in Rio I 'ope to call on your pop. Would yer 'ighness like to jine me in the 'unt on Thursday, 'ave some fine 'orses and 'ounds. Won't yer 'ave an eye opener?" The Prince, although amazed at the query, enjoyed it immensely, called the waiter and ordered a bottle of champagne, and when it arrived Wilson said: "None for me. I'll have a glass of croton." He got it, and with a hearty grasp of the hand bid the heir to the throne farewell and rushed down from the roof garden to the stage, just in time for his entrance with Ravvy, his partner in crime.

At one of the performances of "The Marquis" at the Casino, James T. Powers, the popular comedian who was playing the part of Briolet, had occasion to swallow during the scene a dozen or more tarts, to the amazement of the audience. The imaginary tarts were made of paper which he retained in his mouth until after leaving the stage. At this particular performance, after taking ten or eleven paper tarts, a real tart filled with salt was placed amidst the paper ones and in his hurry he bit into it. One can imagine the predicament Powers was placed in. It was evidently intended for a joke, by some one on the stage, but the perpetrator was never discovered.

In the eighties, during the phenomenal run of "Erminie," Miss Pauline Hall, who had sung herself into popularity through her artistic rendition of that famous catchy lullaby, was in the habit after the performance to take her magnificent and costly jewels home with her in her little satchel. She

was accompanied by her maid and one evening after crossing Broadway at Thirty-ninth Street, she was attacked by a highwayman, who appropriated Miss Hall's satchel and ran away. The prima donna with her maid, hurried to their apartment at Seventh Avenue and Thirty-ninth Street, and informed the police, but the highwayman was never discovered. Fortunately Miss Hall had taken the precaution to place her jewels in the keeping of her maid so that the robber had nothing but her satchel for his risk and trouble. But after that experience I strenuously advised Miss Hall to place her valuables in my safe at the Casino, and she acquiesced, and there were not any further robberies.

As already stated the Casino opened on Saturday evening, October 21st, 1882, with "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief," and after a limited number of performances had been given the house was closed to permit of the finishing of the decorations and furnishings. When all was in readiness, the doors opened once more on December 30th, 1882, and for more than ten years performances were given without interruption either in summer or winter. By actual reckoning, over three million five hundred thousand people had witnessed comic opera performances given in this house during that period, and the sumptuousness and brilliancy of the many successful productions will long be remembered by a large part of this immense throng. Almost every star and artist of prominence in the comic opera or musical comedy world to-day, has at some period of their career appeared in this appropriately



named "Home of Comic Opera" as the following list amply indicates, and in the order of their presentation at the Casino:

"*The Queen's Lace Handkerchief.*" STRAUSS. Louise Paullin, Lily Post, Mathilde Cottrelly, Jennie Reiffarth, Signor Perugini, Joseph Greensfelder, George Gaston (followed later by Francis Wilson), Jay Taylor, Harry Standish.

"*The Sorcerer.*" GILBERT AND SULLIVAN. Lillian Russell, Laura Joyce, Madeline Lucette, Louise Paullin, John Howson, Digby Bell, George Olmi, Charles Campbell, A. W. Maffin.

"*Princess of Trebizonde.*" OFFENBACH. Lillian Russell, Laura Joyce, Madeline Lucette, Emma Carson, John Howson, Digby Bell, George Olmi, A. W. Maffin.

"*Prince Methusalem.*" STRAUSS. Mathilde Cottrelly, Lily Post, Julie de Ruyther, Rose Beaudet, Francis Wilson, A. W. Maffin, Jay Taylor, Harry Standish, Ellis Ryse.

"*The Beggar Student.*" MILLÖCKER. Bertha Ricci, Rose Leighton, Rose Beaudet, Mathilde Cottrelly, Fred Leslie, William T. Carleton, W. S. Rising, Ellis Ryse, Harry Standish, H. D. MacDonough, Harry Hamlin.

"*The Merry War.*" STRAUSS. Gertrude Orme, Lily Post, Mathilde Cottrelly, Rose Beaudet, Fred Leslie, William T. Carleton, Signor Perugini, E. Cripps, J. A. Furey.

"*Falka.*" CHASSAIGNE. Mathilde Cottrelly, Bertha Ricci, Carrie Burton, Hattie Richardson, Julie De Ruyther, Billie Barlow, J. H. Ryley, Hubert Wilke, Frank Tannehill, Jr., Alfred Klein (brother of the famous author Charles

Klein), Harry MacDonough, A. W. Maffin, Louis Raymond.

"*Little Duke.*" LECOCQ. Georgine Von Janaschowsky, Agnes Folsom, Genevieve Reynolds, Billie Barlow, J. H. Ryley, Hubert Wilke.

"*Nell Gwynne.*" PLANQUETTE. Mathilde Cottrelly, Laura Joyce Bell, Ida Valerga, Irene Perry, Annette Hall, Billie Barlow, Jay Taylor, Charles Dungan, Wm. Hamilton, Digby Bell, J. H. Ryley, W. H. Fessenden, Edward Cameron, J. A. Furey.

"*Apajune.*" MILLÖECKER. Mathilde Cottrelly, Lily Post, Belle Archer, Kate Ethel, Rose Marion, Florence Bell, Francis Wilson, W. S. Rising, Jay Taylor, Ellis Ryse, Herbert Archer.

"*Patience.*" GILBERT AND SULLIVAN. Mary Beebe, Laura Joyce Bell, Rose Leighton, Irene Perry, Ethel Clare, J. H. Ryley, Digby Bell, C. W. Dungan, Geo. Roseman, J. A. Furey, George Appleby.

"*Die Fledermaus.*" STRAUSS. Rosalba Beecher, Ida Valerga, Irene Perry, Agnes Folsom, Mathilde Cottrelly, Mark Smith, De Wolfe Hopper, C. W. Dungan, Charles Plunkett, A. W. Maffin, Edwin Whitney.

"*Polly.*" SOLOMON. Lillian Russell, Alice Barnett, Rose Beaudet, Florence Bemister, Marion Giroux, Agnes Folsom, Isabelle Urquhart, Hindie Harrison, Louise Gordon, J. H. Ryley, Harry S. Hilliard, John T. McWade, E. H. Aiken.

"*Billee Taylor.*" SOLOMON. Lillian Russell, Verona Jar-



beau, Alice Barnett, Josie Hall, J. H. Ryley, Harry S. Hilliard, John E. McQuade, Wm. White, E. P. Temple.

*"Nanon."* GENEÉ. Sadie Martinot, Pauline Hall, Billie Barlow, Alice Vincent, Agnes Folsom, Rose Beaudet, Carrie Andrews, Florence Bell, Adele Langdon, Marie Koenig, Sadie Wells, Emma Hanley, Francis Wilson, Wm. T. Carleton, W. H. Fitzgerald, Alexis Gisicko, Harry Standish, Gustavus Levick, Wm. Herbert.

*"Amorita."* CZIBULKA. Pauline Hall, Madeline Lucette, Georgie Dickson, Billie Barlow, Agnes Folsom, Rose Beaudet, Florence Bell, Adele Langdon, Victoria Schilling, Carrie Andrews, Emma Hanley, Eugenie Maynard, Frank Celli, Francis Wilson, W. H. Fitzgerald, Harry Standish, Alfred Klein.

*"Gypsy Baron."* STRAUSS. Pauline Hall, Mae St. John, Letitia Fitch, Georgie Dickson, Billie Barlow, Victoria Schilling, Agnes Folsom, Rose Beaudet, Emma Hanley, Florence Bell, William Castle, Francis Wilson, W. H. Fitzgerald, Alfred Klein.

*"Erminie."* JAKOBOWSKI. (Original cast.) Pauline Hall, Marie Jansen, Marion Manola, Jennie Weathersby, Agnes Folsom, Rose Beaudet, Francis Wilson, Wm. S. Daboll, Harry Pepper, Carl Irving, Max Freeman, A. W. Mafin, Murry Woods, C. L. Weeks and J. A. Furey; (and in subsequent casts): Louise Sylvester, Mary Stuart, Alma Varry, Georgie Dennin, Josie Sadler, Sadie Kerby, Isabelle Urquhart, Fanny Rice, Eva Davenport, Sylvia Gerrish, Florence Bell, Eva Goodrich, Kitty Cheatham, Henry Hallam, Mark Smith,

George Olmi, Charles Plunkett, Edwin Stevens, Fred Solomon, James T. Powers, B. F. Joslyn, Charles Campbell, John E. Brand, N. S. Burnham, Ellis Ryse, Frank Ridsdale, E. B. Knight.

*"The Marquis."* LACOME. Bertha Ricci, Isabelle Urquhart, Sylvia Gerrish, Lillian Grubb, Rose Wilson, Estelle Morris, Rose Ricci, James T. Powers, Mark Smith, Courtice Pounds, Max Freeman, Arthur W. Tams, Edgar Smith, Henry Leoni.

*"Madelon."* LECOCQ. Bertha Ricci, Isabelle Urquhart, Sylvia Gerrish, Lillian Grubb, Rose Wilson, Florence Barry, James T. Powers, Mark Smith, Courtice Pounds, Arthur W. Tams, Edgar Smith, Henry Leoni.

*"Nadgy."* CHASSAIGNE. Lillian Russell, Marie Jansen, Isabelle Urquhart, Jennie Weathersby, Fanny Rice, Elma Delaro, Kate Uart, Sylvia Gerrish, Zelma Rawlston, Laura Russell, Emma Lawrence, Rose Ricci, Florence Melin, Clara Coudray, Fanny Adams, Rene Ferrers, Addie Mason, Edith Mai, Ina Weddell, James T. Powers, Mark Smith, Jno. E. Brand, Henry Hallam, Fred Solomon, Edgar Smith, A. W. Maffin, A. W. Tams, J. A. Furey.

*"The Yeomen of the Guard."* GILBERT AND SULLIVAN. Bertha Ricci, Sylvia Gerrish, Isabelle Urquhart, Kate Uart, J. H. Ryley, George Broderick, Henry Hallam, George Olmi, Charles Renwick, Fred Solomon, H. Adams.

*"The Brigands."* OFFENBACH. Lillian Russell, Fanny Rice, Isabelle Urquhart, Sylvia Gerrish, Anna O'Keefe, Laura

Russell, Delia Stacey, Jennie Donaldson, Eva Johns, Florence Wilson, May Grosvenor, Clara Randall, Edwin Stevens, Fred Solomon, Max Lube, John E. Brand, Henry Hallam, Richard F. Carroll, H. E. Walton, George Olmi, A. W. Mafin, Arthur W. Tams, Henry Leoni, Chas. Priest, Henry Vogel, Charles Renwick, J. A. Furey, Fred Hall.

*"The Drum Major."* OFFENBACH. Pauline Hall, Marie Halton, Eva Davenport, Sylvia Gerrish, Florence Bell, Georgie Dennin, James T. Powers, Edwin Stevens, John E. Brand, N. S. Burnham, Charles Campbell, A. W. Mafin.

*"The Grand Duchess."* OFFENBACH. Lillian Russell, Fanny Rice, Isabelle Urquhart, Anna O'Keefe, Drew Donaldson, Delia Stacey, Laura Russell, Florence Wilson, Sylvia Thorne, Fred Solomon, Henry Hallam, Richard F. Carroll, Max Lube, Arthur W. Tams, George Olmi, Henry Leoni, Charles Renwick, J. A. Furey, Charles Priest, George R. White, M. J. Thomas.

*"The Brazilian."* CHASSAIGNE. Marie Halton, Edith Ainsworth, Grace Golden, Eva Johns, George Olmi, John E. Brand, Fred Solomon, Richard F. Carroll, Henry Hallam, Max Lube, A. W. Tams, A. W. Mafin, Henry Leoni.

*"Madame Angot."* LECOCQ. Camille D'Arville, Marie Halton, Eva Davenport, Grace Golden, Eva Johns, Lizzie Leoni, Florence Bell, Drew Donaldson, Fred Solomon, Henry Hallam, Charles H. Drew, Max Lube, A. W. Mafin, George Olmi, A. W. Tams, Henry Leoni.

*"Poor Jonathan."* MILLOECKER. Lillian Russell, Fanny

Rice, Eva Davenport, Grace Golden, Harry MacDonough, Charles Campbell, Max Figman, A. W. Tams, James Maas, Edgar Smith, Edwin Stevens, Jefferson De Angelis.

"*Apollo.*" HELLMESBERGER. Lillian Russell, Louise Beaudet, Eva Davenport, Grace Golden, Jefferson De Angelis, Edwin Stevens, Ferdinand Schuetz, Harry MacDonough, Max Figman, Edgar Smith, Charles Renwick, James Maas.

"*Indigo.*" STRAUSS. Pauline L'Allemand, Louise Beaudet, Eva Davenport, Villa Knox, Jefferson De Angelis, Edwin Stevens, Ferdinand Schuetz, Edgar Smith, Charles Renwick.

"*The Tyrolean.*" ZELLER. Marie Tempest, Annie Meyers, Anna Mantell, Jennie Reiffarth, Carrie Boelen, Drew Donaldson, Jefferson De Angelis, Fred Solomon, Ritchie Ling, Henry Leoni, Harry MacDonough.

"*Cavalleria Rusticana.*" MASCAGNI. Laura Bellini, Helena von Doenhoff, Grace Golden, Charles Bassett, William Pruette.

"*Nanon.*" (Revival.) Marie Tempest, Drew Donaldson, Eva Davenport, Grace Golden, Edwin Stevens, Max Figman, Fred Solomon, Ferdinand Schuetz, James Maas.

"*Uncle Celestin.*" AUDRAN. Annie Meyers, Sylvia Gerish, Villa Knox, Jennie Reiffarth, Jennie Weathersby, Mabel Stephenson, Jefferson De Angelis, Harry MacDonough, Henry Leoni, Maurice Abbey, George Mackenzie, A. W. Maffin, J. A. Furey, and Loie Fuller in her serpentine Dance.

110 THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL MEMOIRS

*"Child of Fortune."* MILLÖCKER. Lily Post, Annie Meyers, Jennie Reiffarth, Clara Coudray, Charles Bassett, William Pruette, Henry Leoni, Harry MacDonough.

*"The Vice Admiral."* MILLÖCKER. Annie Meyers, Villa Knox, Lizzie Derious Daly, Jennie Reiffarth, Emma Hanley, Mabel Potter, Jefferson De Angelis, Charles Bassett, Harry MacDonough, Henry Leoni.

Following is list of operas and number of performances:

The Queen's Lace Handkerchief.....	234
The Sorcerer .....	21
The Princess of Trebizonde.....	50
Prince Methusalem .....	102
The Beggar Student.....	110
The Merry War.....	69
Falka .....	110
The Little Duke.....	50
Nell Gwynne.....	43
Apajune .....	42
Patience .....	22
Die Fledermaus .....	42
Polly .....	55
Billee Taylor.....	7
Nanon .....	150
Amorita .....	103
Gypsy Baron .....	86
Erminie .....	1,256
The Marquis .....	75

**THE FORTUNES OF THE CASINO** 111

Madelon .....	50
Nadjy .....	256
The Yeomen of the Guard.....	100
The Brigands.....	167
The Drum Major.....	67
The Grand Duchess.....	145
The Brazilian.....	64
Madame Angot.....	61
Poor Jonathan.....	208
Apollo .....	85
Indigo .....	50
Cavalleria Rusticana.....	55
The Tyrolean.....	100
Uncle Celestin.....	60
Child of Fortune.....	60
The Vice Admiral.....	75

The success of the Casino productions during my régime was due in a great measure, not only to the generally well chosen casts and artistic stage equipments, but to the stage and musical directors, and they included Heinrich Conried, Richard Barker, Max Freeman, Jesse Williams, Gustave Kerker (composer of the famous "Belle of New York"), Ernst Catenhusen, Adolf Novak, J. de Novellis, John Braham, Hermann Perlet, Paul Steindorff, Selli Simonson, and Ernest Salvator.

The following named scenic artists, Henry E. Hoyt, Richard Marston, William Voegtlin, T. S. Plaisted, Goatcher and

Young Harley Merry and John Mazzonivich, are also deserving of much credit for their share of the work at the Casino.

One after another some of the leading artists of the Casino Company retired, first it was Francis Wilson, then followed Marie Jansen, then Pauline Hall and later Lillian Russell, accepting more lucrative starring engagements with other organizations and creating thereby much opposition. I thereupon decided in 1892 to change the policy of the Casino entirely, in other words to endeavor to establish there a theater on the lines of the Opera Comique in Paris, with a box tier on the balcony floor, seats and boxes to be sold first by subscription, as at the Metropolitan Opera House. The repertoire was to be made up of the works of the lighter French and German schools. I kept this entire matter a secret, sailed for Europe for a tour of inspection, and while in Paris met Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan at the Hotel Bristol. I suggested to him my idea and he seemed so much impressed with it that he said, "Meet me in New York in two weeks." I returned to New York almost immediately, feeling assured of Mr. Morgan's co-operation, but to my heartfelt regret the directors of the Casino Company, a few days before my arrival, decided to turn the Casino into a music hall, on the plan of the Empire and Alhambra in London, with smoking accessories, etc., and all my argument with the directors was of no avail, and I was obliged to take the first steamer back to Europe in order to select a number of vaudeville attrac-



tions for the innovation at the Casino. While I was absent, a ballet was being rehearsed on the stage of the Casino under the direction of the famous ballet master, Espinosa, from the Alhambra Theater of London, and the necessary alterations in the auditorium and on the buffet floor were perfected.

I closed a number of engagements and procured several options for well known artists while abroad.

Among other acts I presented for the first time on any stage the "Bronze Figure Group," which from its description I felt would meet with public favor. The portrayers, in place of fleshings, covered themselves with some contrivance colored in bronze, presenting subjects from the old masters very cleverly posed.

Among the artists who witnessed the rehearsal of the "Bronze Figure Group" at the Casino on March 1st, 1895, were Augustus St. Gaudens, William M. Chase, J. S. Hartley, J. G. Brown, J. Wells Champney, Francis S. Jones, J. D. Smilie, Frederick Carl Blenner, M. F. H. de Haas, F. S. Church, George R. Halm, George W. Maynard and Carroll Beckwith.

"The Disk Thrower," "The Fisher," "The Gladiator," "The Runners," and "Ajax" were admirably presented, eliciting most flattering encomiums from the distinguished audience. But some prudes objected to the exhibition, the matter was brought before the court, and Mr. William M. Chase, then President of the Society of American Artists, testified in my behalf as follows:



Q. Have you seen the bronze statues at the Casino?

A. Yes.

Q. You have made a study of art?

A. Yes.

Q. In your opinion is the exhibition modest or immodest?

A. Modest.

Q. Did they impress you as being in any sense indecent?

A. I had the impression that I was looking at bronze figures and I thought them very fine reproductions of statues I have seen.

Q. (By Justice Simms.) Now, Mr. Chase, don't you consider the exhibition on a public stage of a theater to which the public are admitted on the payment of a fee, of persons nude or partly nude an indecent and immoral spectacle?

A. I lose sight of the fact that they are nude, and consider only the artistic result, and from that standpoint I don't consider them any more indecent than the original figures would be in a public gallery.

Q. You think that the exhibition of a nude figure in a public place would not tend to deprave the public mind?

A. On the contrary, I think that it would cultivate the artistic sentiments of the people.

Mr. J. G. Brown, the famous painter of street gamins, sustained Mr. Chase and earnestly declared that the bronze figures did not represent vitality or suggest creatures of flesh and blood and were in his opinion excellent representations of beautiful statues produced by the ancient masters, which the genius of the present age could never hope to reproduce.

This case created a great sensation at the time, was carried to the Appellate Division and finally decided in my favor.

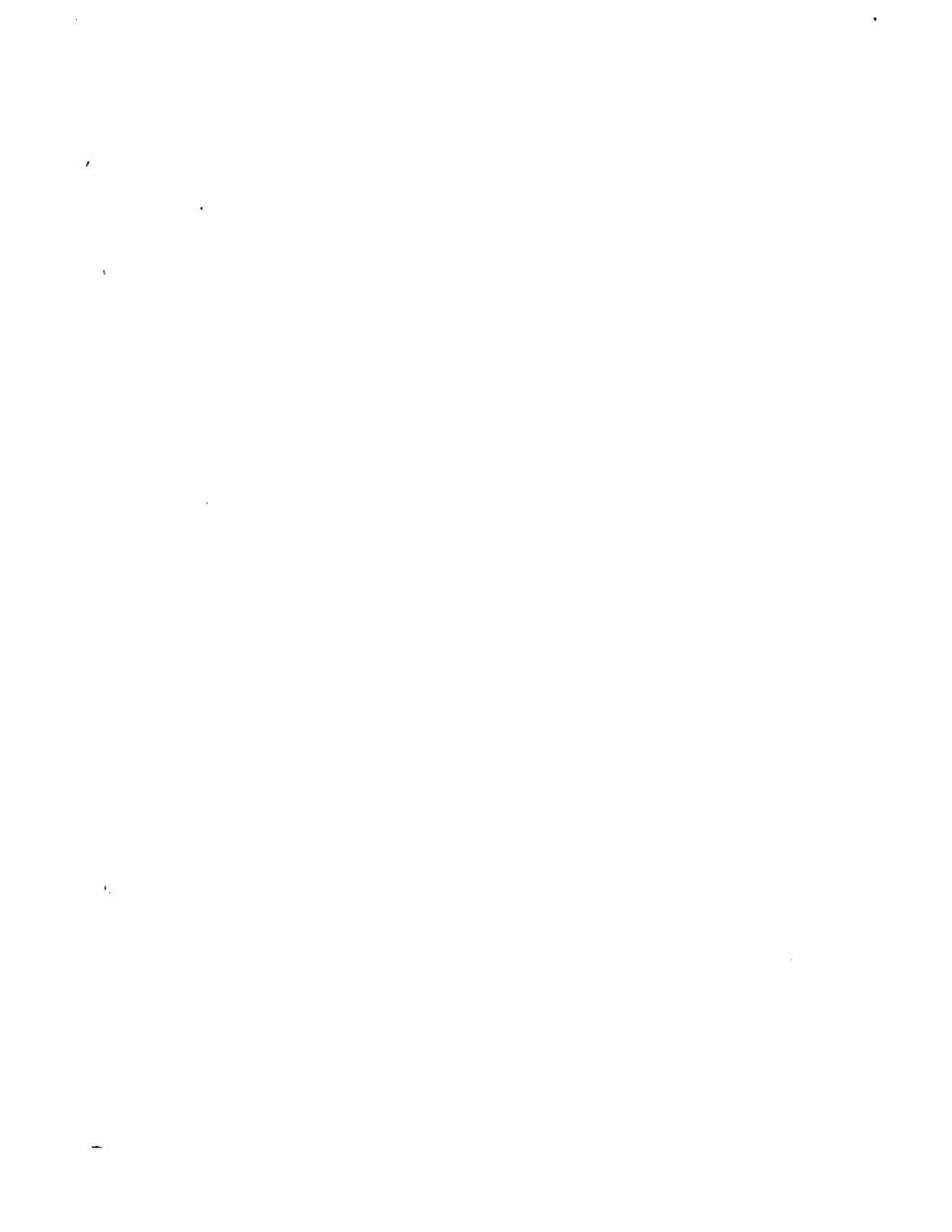
The vaudeville innovation at the Casino was finally launched on September 26th, 1892, and although the per-

formances were excellent of their kind, the public had not yet become accustomed to smoking in the auditorium of a theater, and furthermore there seemed to be a general feeling of sorrow on the part of the public that the "Home of Comic Opera" had broken away, so to speak, from its moorings, and they zealously kept away, with the result that the artists under engagement were placed elsewhere, the vaudeville experiment discontinued, and the Casino turned again to its former policy.

On November 14th, 1892, Mr. J. M. Hill presented for the first time at the Casino, the delightful operetta "The Fencing Master," by DeKoven and Smith, with Marie Tempest as Francesca, and it scored deserved success.

Mr. Hill was of a most speculative disposition. On one occasion he informed me that his leading artiste had requested that he permit her to select her own costumes for a musical play then in rehearsal. He acquiesced good-naturedly and gave her *carte blanche* to purchase what she wanted. The artiste selected not only the costumes and accessories but lingerie, stockings, shoes, slippers, hats, etc. The bill, amounting to nearly two thousand dollars, was sent to Mr. Hill and after scrutinizing it, he said to the artiste, "Why didn't you buy the whole establishment while you were at it? I shall pay this, but hereafter *carte blanche* will be excluded from my vocabulary."

**THE STRAUSS GOLDEN JUBILEE**



## CHAPTER IX

### THE STRAUSS GOLDEN JUBILEE

Presentation of the Gold and Silver Wreath to the "Waltz King"—Incidents Relating to the Celebration—The Contributors to the Wreath.

**I**N my whole career nothing has given me greater pleasure than being chosen custodian of the magnificent gold and silver wreath (the cost of which was defrayed by American admirers) which I had the honor to present to Johann Strauss in Vienna on the occasion of his golden jubilee on October 15th, 1894.

Before my departure at the beginning of October with the Strauss wreath in my trunk, I arranged that on the evening of its presentation, every theater and concert orchestra in New York play programs made up entirely of the works of Johann Strauss, befitting this historic event. Arriving in London, I exhibited the wreath at Tiffany's on Regent Street, where it was acclaimed by public and press an artistic masterpiece, and as soon thereafter as possible I left for Vienna, where great preparations had been perfected for the Strauss Jubilee festivities.

I doubt if in the annals of the world's history any one has ever enjoyed the triumphs, the ovations, the love and admiration which the whole world has united in extending to

Vienna's son, Johann Strauss, the composer, director, and man, of whom Richard Wagner said: "One Johann Strauss waltz overshadows in respect to animation, finesse, and real musical value, most of the mechanical, borrowed, factory-made products of the present time." And now was held the golden anniversary of Strauss' marriage to the lovely muse of melody. With his black hair, straight, elastic figure and sprightly carriage, genial manners, and the fire of genius burning in his eyes—who would accuse him of seventy years? He certainly danced through life to the accompaniment of his own waltzes.

Twenty years before, the Theater an der Wien was the scene of Strauss' first operatic production and triumph, so it seemed but fitting that the first evening of celebration, October 12th, 1894, be dedicated to the production of his new opera "Jabuka" in the same house. The theater was packed from pit to gallery, and the success was a foregone conclusion. The cast included the favorites: Gerardi, Frau Pohlner, Frau Biedermann and Messrs. Streitmann, Felix and Josephi.

Saturday evening, October 13th, there was presented in the Royal Opera House the new ballet "Rund um Wien" in honor of the master. In the first act, amid artistic grouping of the dancers and exquisite scenic effects, the center rose of an immense floral wreath unfolded its petals and disclosed an excellent portrait of Strauss. The fêted man was dragged from his box and fairly carried onto the stage amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the great audience.

The next morning, in the Musik-vereinsaal, was assembled a most distinguished gathering. In the boxes were Brahms, Hanslick, Schratt, Sonnenthal, Materna, Beeth, VanDyck, Lucca, in short, all the shining lights of Vienna's artistic circle. The "Fledermaus" overture was never more perfectly given than by the superb Philharmonic Orchestra under the leadership of Fuchs. "Wine, Woman and Song," arranged for chorus and orchestra, set every head nodding, every heart beating. Alfred Grünfeld, the pianist, outdid himself in a concert paraphrase from Strauss waltz motifs and an arrangement of the Persian March. The "Blue Danube" waltz, for chorus and orchestra, acted like magic on the hearers, and Strauss, who during the concert had given all honors to the performers, was obliged to appear and respond to innumerable recalls.

In the afternoon a second concert was given by the Strauss orchestra, under the direction of the fascinating Eduard Strauss. A garland of interwoven Strauss compositions dating from 1844 to 1894, electrified the audience, and honors were shared by the brothers.

The reception Monday morning, October 15th, was the event of the festivities. The beautiful home of the master at No. 4 Igelgasse, was an immense bower of loveliness; and what an assemblage graced the scene! Such talent, genius and brains; the greatest representatives of literature, music, art and culture were gathered together to pay homage to the nineteenth century's most beloved musician. There they

were—Brahms, Hanslick, Fuchs, Jahn, Richter, Brill, Renard, Grünfeld, Gericke, Goldmark, Goldschmidt, Kremser, Tilgner, Count Kinsky, Lucca, Dr. Grühl, Bösendorfer, Sonnenthal, and Baron Bezecny, who had charge of the arrangements. The rooms were filled with rare and costly presents, while in the stairways and every nook and corner there were laurel wreaths and flowers.

There were present only four Americans, Miss Lillian Apel, a very talented pianist who had been studying in Vienna with Letchetisky, Miss Harriet Cady, Mr. Glentworth, correspondent of the *New York Herald*, and myself.

Robert Fuchs had written and dedicated to Strauss a serenade suite, with motifs taken from the "Fledermaus," which delighted everyone. It was played under the direction of Herr Fuchs, by the Conservatory Orchestra, composed of twenty-five students of stringed instruments. The master was overwhelmed by the tribute paid him, and exclaimed: "It is too much; I do not deserve it." I thereupon took the floor and delivered my speech in German, of which the following is a translation:

"It affords me unlimited pleasure to have been selected on behalf of my American brothers upon this occasion—an occasion so unique, so deserving, so remarkable of remembrance.

"When it was announced on the other side of the Atlantic that a committee had been formed in Vienna to celebrate in this your noted city, in a fitting manner, the fiftieth anniversary of the accession to conductorship of one whose name is



**THE STRAUSS GOLDEN JUBILEE WREATH**

worldwide, the idea occurred to us that Americans ought to have a part in such a celebration, and you will be glad with me to know that America bears her part on this occasion in offering a tribute to that genius of popular music who has done more to gladden the hearts of the masses and has set more feet in sympathetic motion than any other living musician, a tribute which will show that Americans are not the heathens or savages in the musical world which many Europeans might consider them to be, but on the contrary are heartily in touch with every true artist and his work.

"It will interest you to know, that at the Casino in New York, under my own direction, was first presented in the English language one of Strauss' operettas, inaugurating that playhouse with his delightful 'The Queen's Lace Handkerchief' (Das Spitzentuch der Königin), which was followed by the 'Fledermaus,' 'Prince Methusalem,' 'The Merry War,' 'Indigo,' and 'The Gypsy Baron,' all of which were popular successes.

"Without hesitation, it can be stated that your distinguished master is deserving of the thanks of the New World for creating a new era in dance music and showing the people how it should be played.

"Your great leader will recall, how at the Boston Peace Jubilee in 1870, at the first rehearsal, conducting himself in his masterly manner one thousand musicians, he announced that he had never heard the 'Pizzicato Polka' and the 'Blue Danube Waltz' interpreted with more vim, precision, and

feeling than on that memorable occasion, a result due not to that gigantic orchestra, but to the magnetic genius of the master with the baton.

“As a slight token of regard and esteem for the ‘Waltz King,’ one hundred of America’s most distinguished composers, musicians, conductors and other admirers have enabled Mr. Paulding Farnham, the artist, to design, and Messrs. Tiffany and Company to manufacture, the silver and gold laurel wreath which I now hold in my hand. Each of the fifty leaves is inscribed with the name of a favorite composition of the master, his portrait, with a strain of his famous ‘On the Beautiful Blue Danube Waltz’ in gold, depictive of the ‘Golden Wedding’ of his artistic career, and the intermingling of the Austrian and the American colors.

“With America’s high appreciation of his genius and work, a work which we hope may yet be prolonged for many years, I present, on behalf of those whom I have named, this token to the great master and composer, Johann Strauss.”

Herr Strauss in response said that he owed everything to his predecessors, and above all to his father, who showed him the way to musical progress, especially in the sphere of dance music. “My feeble merit,” he continued, “having only taken an enlarged form and broadened preceding methods, I feel that you do me too much honor. I am no orator, I have spoken enough.”

Strauss then fairly wrung my hands, and all crowded about to admire the most beautiful gift of the jubilee. It was the

most eloquent tribute paid him and Strauss testified his appreciation by suggesting that it alone adorn the banquet table in the evening at the Grand Hotel and that later it be exhibited in the National Museum.

My "Strauss Jubilee Waltz," which I dedicated by permission to the Waltz King, formed part of the musical diet at the banquet and I had the honor of a place next to the only lady present, Frau Johann Strauss, and Herr Eduard Strauss, to whom I casually remarked: "If you ever contemplate paying another visit to America (he had been there with his orchestra in the early eighties) may I count on its being under my management?" The Herr Director, taking me by the hand, replied: "You have my assurance, that if ever I go to America again, it shall be under your direction."

In connection therewith the following characteristic letter from America's foremost conductor is of interest:

Fairhaven, Mass.  
July 21st, 1894.

Rudolph Aronson, Esq.,  
New York.

*Dear Sir:—*

Your letter was forwarded to me here. Enclosed please find check for my subscription towards the silver wreath to be presented to Johann Strauss.

My orchestra has disbanded for the summer and will not meet until October. Otherwise I am sure the members of Thomas' Orchestra would, like myself, have considered it an honor to have signed your paper and would have been glad of the opportunity to show their appreciation of this genius of popular music.

Yours truly,  
THEODORE THOMAS.

Those who subscribed to the wreath were:

Rudolph Allen, Rudolph Aronson, John H. Burdett, Sigmund Bernstein, David Blakely, Charles Henry Butler, George L. Beebe, A. B. Bauer, C. M. Bomeisler, Charles O. Bassett, L. S. Bernheimer, H. C. Barnabee, Ernest Catenhusen, Lucciano Conterno, Albert Crane, A. Murio Celli, Richard F. Carroll, Laura F. Collins, Mathilde Cottrelly, John Church Co., A. De Novellis, Walter Damrosch, Ludwig Engländer, George Ehret, G. Emil Elliot, M. I. Epstein, Max Figman, Nahan Franko, Max Freeman, L. Froehlich, L. Fuenkenstein, C. A. Graninger, H. S. Gordon, Theodore C. Gross, Leo Goldmark, Victor Herbert, Wm. Frank Hall, Oscar Hammerstein, De Wolf Hopper, H. W. Hunt, J. W. Herbert, T. B. Harms & Co., A. Herrman, M. Hirschfield, Reginald De Koven, Charles H. Ditson, Leo Ditrichstein, Oliver Ditson Company, Jefferson De Angelis, James C. Duff, Gustave Kerker, Alexander Lambert, Louis Lombard, Jules Levy, Julius J. Lyons, Arthur Mees, Max Maretzek, Ovide Musin, A. Newman, Ernest Neyer, J. W. Norcross, Jr., J. L. Ottomeyer, Charles Puerner, Hermann Perlet, A. R. Parsons, Simon Hassler, Rafael Joseffy, R. E. Johnston, Theo. John, G. Jacquin, Wm. Knabe & Co., Paul Steindorff, H. E. Schuberth, Thos. Q. Seabrooke, Henry Seligman, Wm. Steinway, Frank V. Strauss, George Sweet, Theodore Thomas, A. Tomaso, Aeolian Company, R. Thallon, Arthur W. Tams, Samuel Untermyer, F. C. Whitney, Francis Wilson, Wm. Pruette, George Purdy, L. M. Ruben,

W. B. Rogers, W. J. Rostetter, G. M. Rosenberg, A. Reiff, Jr., J. H. Ryley, Morris Reno, A. G. Robyn, Anton Seidl, John Philip Sousa, Jesse Williams, C. F. Wernig, A. Waldauer, Carl Zerrahn.

I cannot refrain from extolling in the highest degree the unparalleled services rendered the cause of music in this country by Mr. Theodore Thomas. I was a frequent attendant not only of the Philharmonic Society Concerts under his conductorship, but of his excellent summer night concerts at the Central Park Garden at Seventh Avenue, Fifty-eighth and Fifty-ninth streets, New York, when I was quite a youth in the early seventies. On Thursday evenings, I remember, Thomas devoted the second part of the program to more serious and classical compositions, and on one or two occasions when that second part consisted wholly of works by Wagner (the "Rienzi" Overture, "Tannhäuser" March, Introduction to the third act of "Lohengrin"), a large part of the audience deliberately left the hall, causing Thomas to remark from the platform that as soon as the anti-Wagnerites had finished retiring, he would resume his program! Afterwards Thomas and his admirable orchestra went to Cincinnati, and later on to Chicago, where finally a permanent magnificent orchestra was organized and a great hall erected for him, which is a lasting, well-deserved monument to that genius of the baton and exponent of all schools of music.

After Theodore Thomas' absence from New York for many years, he announced a series of concerts with his Chi-

cago Orchestra at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and I conceived the idea that it would be a fitting compliment to present Thomas with a loving cup at the first of these concerts.

I called upon Mr. William Steinway (the head of the firm of Messrs. Steinway & Sons), whose friendship at that time with the great conductor had been somewhat strained, but when I suggested a loving cup for Theodore Thomas he at once subscribed for a handsome amount, and so did many other old friends and admirers of Thomas.

Mr. Gerrit Smith, then President of the Manuscript Society of New York, made an appropriate address in presenting the artistic cup, and the leader replied in most grateful terms.

Contributors to the testimonial were: William Steinway, Elkan Naumburg, Henry Seligman, George Foster Peabody, B. T. Frothingham, Walter Damrosch, Frederick Cromwell, Henry K. Sheldon, Homer N. Bartlett, Smith N. Penfield, E. C. Phelps, William C. Carl, Grant Odell, George William Warren, Richard H. Warren, Charles H. Ditson, Warren Pond, Rafael Joseffy, Gustave A. Kerker, Arthur Foote, William Mason, Mrs. H. Walter Webb, Mrs. Henry Draper, Mrs. Ella A. Toedt, Miss Amy C. Townsend, Charles F. McKim, Stanford White, Frederick Dean, Mrs. John L. Gardner (Boston), Miss Aloise Breese, Xaver Scharwenka, Victor Herbert, Emma Juch, Adolph Neuendorff, Albert Ross Parsons, Maude Powell, Bruno Oscar Klein, John K. Paine, Karl

**THEODORE THOMAS**

**ANTON RUBINSTEIN**



Feininger, Madame De Vere-Sapio, Fanny Bloomfield-Zeisler, Ernest Neyer, C. W. McAlpin, Gerrit Smith, J. M. Lander, Robert Jaffray, Jr., Morris Reno, Dr. H. Holbrook Curtis, John L. Burdett, B. J. Lang, Arthur Mees, J. F. Von der Heide, S. B. Whitney, Montgomery Schuyler, and Rudolph Aronson.

In concluding his presentation address to Mr. Thomas, Mr. Gerrit Smith said: "When Mr. Rudolph Aronson presented his testimonial wreath of silver to Johann Strauss in 1894, on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary as conductor, the name of the first subscriber was Theodore Thomas. And what was the reply of the Waltz King at seeing this name? '*Der, kann aber meine Walzer spielen!*'"

"To-night, once again, by the labor and zeal of Mr. Aronson, we as friends, musicians, members of the Manuscript Society of Composers, and other well-wishers, have the honor to present you with a center piece or bowl, as a slight token of our esteem. I believe that I am right in saying that you are the first conductor who has been thus publicly honored in this country.

"Upon the edge of the bowl appear, in bas-relief, the heads of your intimate and cherished friends—the musical representatives of different nations—Wagner, Brahms, Berlioz, Rubinstein, yourself and Beethoven. I place Beethoven last, because, though one of the dearest of your friends, I feel as if you were not personally so well acquainted with him. If these men were here to-night, they would rise up, and call

you blessed. While this souvenir is a decorative piece for flowers, I may add that it may, in case of necessity, be used to decorate the selfish interior of man!"

No more beautiful tribute could have been extended to Theodore Thomas, than was extended him at the banquet at which I was present at Delmonico's in New York, April 22nd, 1891, when Mr. George William Curtis in proposing Mr. Thomas' health said:

"I rise to propose the health of a public benefactor, an artist whose devotion to a beautiful, refining and ennobling art, has greatly distinguished his name and given great distinction to the city in which he lives. He has made the conductor's baton an imperial scepter, with which he rules not only an orchestra, but an ever-widening realm of taste and cultivation.

"In his hand it has become an enchanter's wand, which has transformed our musical ignorance and crudity into ample knowledge and generous appreciation. While it has introduced us to the crowned and acknowledged masters of the past, it has summoned and revealed the still shadowy figures of the future.

"Musical artists have come and gone. Virtuosos of every kind have appeared, have charmed us and have vanished. But through all changes, the one figure which has remained, the laureate of the past and the herald of the future, is Theodore Thomas."