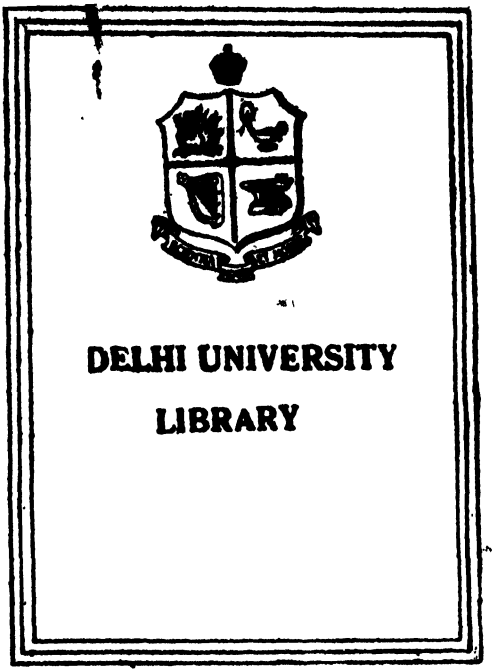
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THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

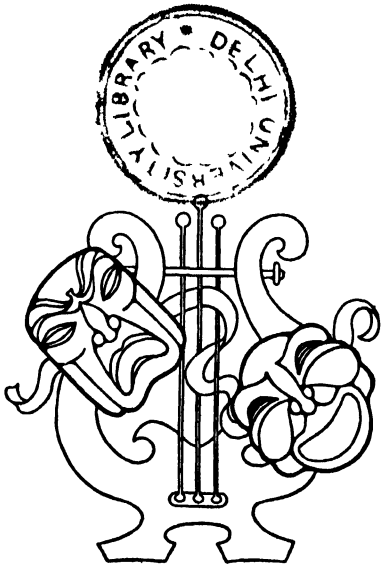
ENRICO CARUSO

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

1883-1939

BY

IRVING KOLODIN



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To Irma

FOR MANY REASONS

PREFACE

THE panorama of fifty years' activity which is the history of Metropolitan Opera invites consideration in each of its many aspects. There is the Metropolitan as the setting for a social pageant, a role which it shares with every home of pretentious opera in the world ; there is the Metropolitan as 'Block 815' on the real estate map of Manhattan Island ; there is the Metropolitan as the repository for the New York careers of a host of accomplished artists ; there is, finally, the Metropolitan as an agency for the performance of masterworks, 'vehicles' for singers, and claptrap. No one of these elements is appraisable independent of the others.

Within the last three years, the character of the Metropolitan enterprise has altered more radically in its relationship to the public than at any time in the preceding forty-nine.[1] There was initiated during these later years a policy of financial subsidy by public subscription and, more recently, by foundational support, which is radically opposed to the basis on which the institution was established and on which it has endured for half a century. If the course which has been charted to date is maintained, the future of the institution must repose either in the continuance of its present support by the Juilliard Foundation or in its further socialization, as a community enterprise.

Both of these possibilities foreshadow an organization and plan of production sharply divergent from those of the immediate past. Together with the retirement of Giulio Gatti-Casazza as managing director, after a career that had embraced more

[1] The period from 1883 to 1935 includes fifty-two years of operatic history, but in 1892–1893 and 1897–1898 there were no public performances by an official 'Metropolitan' company.

than half the years of the institution's history, the present moment thus constitutes a plateau from which the activities of the past may be surveyed and objectively appraised — in relation to the Metropolitan's various periods, to the musical life of New York, and to operatic production elsewhere.

Such a survey might concern itself primarily with the personalities whose activities comprise the history of the Metropolitan, illuminating by quotation and anecdote the colourful past. There has been no attempt to compile such an anthology of whimsy. Rather the author has held his chief duty to be the presentation of the actual public activities of the Metropolitan, the performances that were given, together with some description or appraisal of the quality and character of them. It has also been his endeavour to indicate the forces that shaped the destiny of the Metropolitan during its various periods, the changing aspects of New York which altered the opera from an institution giving an average of sixty performances per season (between 1884 and 1890) to one giving as many as one hundred and seventy-five performances (between 1925 and 1933). Those glimpses of personalities which naturally find their place in such a narrative have, of course, been included.

For what might appear a superabundance in the number of casts to be found in this volume the author may suggest, by way of explanation, that this material exists in no other book of which he has knowledge, and constitutes the actual, definite history of the opera company. For the casual reader whose main interest is in the larger outlines of the Metropolitan's history, a good portion of these have been subordinated, in the arrangement of the type, so that they are available for reference without impeding the flow of the narrative.

It is a pleasure for the author to express his thanks to the following persons, who have offered valuable material and suggestions for its presentation : Henry Adams, editor of the *Spur* ; Richard G. Conried, Henry Rogers Winthrop, Bruno Zirato ; Edward Johnson, Edward Ziegler, Frank Wenker, Carlo Ed-

wards, and Lionel Mapleson, of the Metropolitan Opera Association ; Oscar Thompson of *Musical America ;* W. J. Henderson of *The Sun ;* Philip Miller of the New York Public Library ; Henry B. Dazian ; and Alexander Smallens. The author would also like to acknowledge his indebtedness to Henry E. Krehbiel's *Chapters of Opera,* and *More Chapters of Opera,* the only source books for material about the Metropolitan and its productions. A particular debt of gratitude is owing to the late Lawrence Gilman, formerly musical editor of the *New York Herald-Tribune,* for the privilege of consulting the files of his department, and to Francis D. Perkins of the same paper for his co-operation in making that material available. He appreciates also the interest of Olin Downes, Edward Cushing, Robert A. Simon, and Bernard H. Haggin who have read the manuscript and offered comments for its improvement. Thanks are due to Jerome Milkman for the use of photographs from his collection.

IRVING KOLODIN

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since this book was first published, a new General Manager has taken his place in the Metropolitan's sequence, and four seasons of opera have been added to the total. However, nothing has occurred that requires a revaluation of the essential point of view expressed in these pages. Even the recent announcement by the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company of its intention to abandon the house to whatever destiny the Metropolitan Opera Association can contrive implies a hastening of the progression indicated in its history rather than a divergence from it. Some errors of fact in the first edition have been corrected, for which I am indebted to the sharp perceptions of numerous reviewers, especially Pitts Sanborn and John Alan Haughton.

16 October 1939 I.K.

FOREWORD

AS A temple of art the Metropolitan Opera House has at infrequent intervals been a shrine of glory. As a community house for smart society it has from its opening been a conspicuous public institution, while it was concomitantly also a demonstration of the power of big business. It is therefore gratifying that the author of this volume has studied its history with all of these matters continually in mind. The task has not been simple, for there have been several managers, each with his own views of the nature and requirements of such an opera house, and each confronted with his own special problems. But Mr. Kolodin has traced the devious paths with care, and with indefatigable labour in research. He has for the most part presented facts and has made few excursions into the realm of criticism. His records are the most comprehensive yet published.

The reader will undoubtedly be pleased to find well described the social trends and changes of the town as they have affected the opera house. There has been progress in certain directions, in spite of the indisputable blurring of the lines between the *haut monde* and the merely rich. It is inconceivable that in this day any stern father could tell his family that no child of his would be permitted to enter the Metropolitan for a performance of one of the impure music dramas of Wagner, as Mrs. Lehr's father did in the days when Mr. Ward McAllister was the steward of the smart set.

The disastrous failure of Henry E. Abbey's first season obliterated the plan which society and big business had created for the new theatre, and for seven years the leaders of fashion,

audibly complaining in their boxes, endured opera in its most serious and exacting form given by Germans in the pedagogical German manner. Some fine things were done in those years, but when the desire to set the crown of social prestige upon stage productions led to the disclosure of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha's lamentable *Diana von Solange,* the chagrined stockholders decided that they were not getting their money's worth, and incontinently sent German opera into the streets.

Mr. Abbey, now associated with Maurice Grau, resumed the management of the house. In his company was the artist who was chiefly the cause of the complete internationalization of the theatre, the gradual restoration of Wagner to his rightful place in the repertory and the climax of glittering star performances which, for a time at any rate, seemed to justify the proud title of 'greatest opera house in the world.' Probably the most thrilling, as well as the most significant, restoration that ever occupied the stage of the Metropolitan was that of *Tristan und Isolde* in the season of 1895–96, when Jean de Reszke sang the leading male role for the first time, with Lillian Nordica as Isolde and Edouard de Reszke as King Mark. Historically the most important new production in the long list was that of Puccini's *Girl of the Golden West,* a world *première* of a work by the most popular living writer of operas. The fact that the adventure of Puccini into a new field was unsuccessful does not obliterate the fact that at the time of the production it was front page news for nearly every newspaper in the world.

The Metropolitan has been the place of many other noteworthy productions and performances, all of which have been treated by Mr. Kolodin with a fine perception of their values. His summary of the changing social status of the opera is particularly timely in view of the present efforts to democratize the institution in order to keep it alive. He is not a society reporter, but a musician of sound training and a newspaper critic of rapidly growing reputation. Nevertheless his chapter on 'The Diamond Horseshoe' in one of the most complete and

brilliant narratives of the disintegration of New York's social structure that has ever been written.

With these lines this foreword may close. The reader who pursues his way through the following pages will be convinced that the author has performed an invaluable service to the history of opera and its relation to the life of the town, and he has performed it with a vivacity of style which adds immensely to the attractiveness of his volume.

W. J. HENDERSON

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I

A MEETING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

MANHATTAN ISLAND contained all the official 1,164,673 residents of New York City on 3 April 1880, when George H. Warren journeyed downtown to keep an appointment with August Belmont and three other gentlemen. The Brooklyn Bridge had not yet been completed ; Madison Square was the centre of the city's fashionable activities ; and most of the area beyond Fifty-ninth Street was populated by 'squatters,' their children, and large numbers of goats. It is not recorded what Mr. Warren's thoughts were as he rattled over the cobbles in his carriage ; he might have been considering the imminent building of the Union League Club, the state of the nation under the benevolent guidance of Rutherford B. Hayes, or the folly of those rash speculators who had invested a million dollars in erecting the Dakota Apartments at the remote reaches of the city — Central Park West and Seventy-second Street — where they endure and are occupied today. But unquestionably some portion of his thoughts was reserved for Art, and the opera in particular ; for the engagement was with Mr. Belmont in his official capacity of president of the Academy of Music's directorate, and with three fellow-members of that Board, Messrs. Lorillard, Von Hoffmann, and Dinsmore.

Mr. Warren was the representative of a group who were dissatisfied with the Academy of Music — at Fourteenth Street and Irving Place — as the home of fashionable opera in New York, a function it had filled satisfactorily since its construction in 1853. It is palpable that Mr. Warren and his confreres had not

found fault with the sound of Christine Nilsson's voice as it rang through the Academy, deemed the stage inadequate for the performance of opera as it was currently conceived, nor considered the orchestra pit too small for the musicians required to perform *La Sonnambula* or *I Puritani*. Their complaint was architectural rather than operatic. The Academy of Music simply was not equipped with sufficient boxes for the number of persons who had the money to purchase them. Not merely the number of boxes was inadequate — the only desirable locations were held by persons who retained their use from year to year and rejected any financial offers to part with their claims to priority. As much as thirty thousand dollars had been offered and refused for a good box ; and the new capitalists, relegated to the *parquet*, had decided, finally, to erect their own opera house, with all the boxes which the architect of the Academy had been too short-sighted to provide.[1]

In those relatively innocent times there were fewer ways in which the possession of large sums of money could be publicly demonstrated than there are now. Yachts, aeroplanes, sixteen-cylinder motor-cars, and the other paraphernalia of modern monetary aristocracy still belonged to the future, and one of the few ways by which such a tangible superiority could be made visible was the possession of an opera box. To be sure, the cost was trivial — a mere thousand dollars for the Academy season, but the value of the boxes was really proportionate to the number of persons who wanted, but could not have them. It simply chanced that, by 1880, the power of those who wanted them was great enough to override the bulwarks erected by those who possessed them at the moment. Opera houses are not so difficult to duplicate as Gutenberg Bibles or Rembrandt's portrait of a warrior ; and when William H. Vanderbilt, who in 1877 had in-

[1] Lilli Lehmann, *My Path Through Life*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1914, p. 340 : — 'As, on a particular evening, one of the millionairesses did not receive the box in which she had intended to shine because another woman had anticipated her, the husband of the former took prompt action and caused the Metropolitan Opera House to rise wherein his beloved wife might dazzle.'

herited ninety million dollars from his father — Commodore Vanderbilt — and others of the recently affluenced had become thoroughly disgusted with the pews they were able to obtain in the Academy, they retired from the scene and erected their own shrine.

Thus, Mr. Warren's journey was a momentous one ; but if Mr. Belmont and his fellow-directors had entertained a vision of an amicable understanding, they were speedily disillusioned. They offered to enhance the attractiveness of their auditorium by adding twenty-six boxes, but the proposal held no lure for Mr. Warren and his co-rebels. Four days later, 7 April 1880, *The New York Times* announced that $600,000 had already been subscribed with which to purchase a site and erect a building. Included among the group, said Mr. Warren, were : 'The two Roosevelts, Iselins, Goelets, the Astors, the three Vanderbilts, the Morgans, myself and others.' Goelet and Warren were at that time recognized as the pioneers in the venture. On the following day the articles of incorporation were filed for the Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd., and at a meeting at Delmonico's Restaurant — then uptown, on Twenty-eighth Street — the company was formally organized on 28 April, with J. N. A. Griswold as president, G. H. Warren vice-president, and E. H. Fabbri treasurer.

However, by the time the house was actually opened three years later, the Astors and the Griswolds had retired from active participation in the scheme. In *The New York Times* of 18 December 1882, the building of the Metropolitan Opera House was designated as 'the venture of Mr. Vanderbilt and his associates.' Among the associates were Darius Ogden Mills, newly arrived from the West Coast, who purchased a house on Fifth Avenue for several hundred thousand dollars in 1880 and paid $450,000 for interior decorations alone ; Cyrus W. Field ; William Rockefeller, brother of John D., then busily engaged in establishing the power of Standard Oil ; Jay Gould, one of the celebrated stock manipulators of the day ; Henry Clews, the adoring

historian of Wall Street ; and a dozen others whose heritage of position was even more recent than their heritage of wealth. In a period when building operations in New York increased from $22,567,322 for 2065 projects, in 1879, to $43,391,300 for 2682 projects, in 1881, an investment of a mere $600,000 spread among some sixty persons was hardly momentous. Establishing a new opera was not unlike housing a new club — which, in essence, was what it amounted to — save that it included certain details of hiring performers, building scenery, buying costumes, etc., to a total rather more imposing than that involved in outfitting card-rooms or purchasing billiard-tables.

Indeed, when the technical details of a theatre's construction became apparent, it seemed momentarily that the entire scheme might collapse. The first site to be selected was located on Madison Avenue, bounded by Forty-third, Forty-fourth Streets, and Vanderbilt Avenue — significant choice ![2] But the deeds to several of the plots forbade the erection of an auditorium for theatrical purposes, and on 9 March 1881 that location was abandoned. It was then admitted that the present site of the opera house, Broadway and Thirty-ninth Street, was under consideration for a reported price of $600,000.

Since the initial capitalization had been only for this sum, it was patent that more money would have to be raised, and it subsequently developed that on the previous 22 February (1881) the capital stock of the enterprise had been increased to $1,050,000. On 15 March the purchase of the Broadway plot was confirmed. At the same time a member of the board undertook to answer the rumours that this was a Vanderbilt project by saying : 'It is a mistake to suppose that the Vanderbilts own the greater portion of the stock. Of the 10,500 shares W. H. owns 300, W. K. 300, and Cornelius 150.'[3] But, since 150 shares entitled the owner to a box in the new house, it is apparent that the possession of five boxes in one family indicates rather well the

[2] The Biltmore Hotel now stands there.
[3] *The New York Times*, 9 March 1881.

leaders of the movement. The opera house was then estimated to cost $430,000, and was promised for the fall of 1882.

Difficulties with stubborn leaseholders delayed the beginning of construction. When these were overcome matters lagged until 14 March 1882, when it was reported that the increase in the cost of building materials (this was a 'boom period' after the slump between 1873 and 1878) would compel the abandonment of the project, though a foundation had already been laid at an expense of $125,000. An apartment house was forecast for the site, or else a subdivision and sale simply as real estate. But by 27 March the sentiment of the group had swung about in favour of completing the original undertaking with the stockholders voting thirty-seven ayes against fourteen nays. Though only fifty-one of the seventy stockholders were present and voting, the thirty-seven in favour constituted a majority of the whole, and it was announced that the job would be completed, the total cost now estimated to be $1,700,000.[4] It was also proposed to fill in the corners of the building with rent-bearing apartments, to compensate the investors for their additional expenditure. Whatever may be said of the architect's conception of the interior, it is unquestionable that the exterior of the building would have been far more sightly had the original intention to indent the corners been pursued. The flat façade necessitated by the alteration of the architect's design is probably the least attractive aspect of the whole structure. It is not wholly inconsistent with the character of the enterprise, however, that the æsthetic considerations of the building were dominated by the material concerns for rent-bearing properties, the small details of building materials, etc. One cannot help juxtaposing the spectacle of the gold-laden horseshoe, containing, on the opening night, wealth estimated by a contemporary newspaper at $540,000,000, with the owners' concern for the few hundred thousand dollars necessary to build a really handsome structure, to preserve the building only for cultural purposes.

[4] The final cost was $1,732,478.71.

But this was the temper of the men and of the times. It is only fair to assume that the stockholders considered the entire project merely as a temporary diversion, and looked forward to no such length of occupancy as the fifty-three years which have passed since the building's erection. On that basis, the consideration of external appearances was scarcely important, as long as the house contained the all-important boxes inside, a platform on which the singers could make their entrances and exits, and a certain number of additional seats for the admiring throngs. It is further interesting to note that the first official use of the building, as soon as it was possible to hold a meeting within its walls, was for the apportionment of the boxes on 24 May 1883.

To avoid any suspicion of preferment, to indicate the characteristically American spirit of democracy within this tight, though not so little, oligarchy, the disposition of the boxes was made according to chance. The names of the stockholders were inscribed on slips of paper, and inserted in a hat ; the numbers of the boxes were similarly inscribed and placed in another hat. Thereupon Miss Warren drew forth a name, and Miss Townsend a number alternately, the two then matched together and recorded for posterity. Boxes 9, 24, and 35 were not drawn, since there were then seventy-three boxes and only seventy stockholders. It is not irrelevant to point out that this outward gesture of solidarity post-dated by a few weeks Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt's historic fancy dress ball of 26 March 1883, at which Mrs. William Astor, famous as the watchdog of New York society, called upon a Vanderbilt for the first time. Once this epoch-making *rapprochement* had been achieved, the status of the Vanderbilts, and, incidentally, of the opera house with which they were identified, was assured.

At the same meeting at which the boxes were apportioned, it was decided to form the Metropolitan Improvement Company, to underwrite the completion of the building's corners. The capital stock for this amounted to $350,000, which implies an average subscription of $5000 apiece by the stockholders. Not all

of them participated, however, and this was considered a venture apart from the actual opera-house company itself. One shadow alone hung over the building. On the preceding 27 January, the block of real estate had been mortgaged with the Bowery Savings Bank, for the sum of $600,000 for five years.[5] But it is not recorded that this was considered an insurmountable obstacle by the Messrs. Vanderbilt, Vanderbilt, Vanderbilt, Morgan, Whitney, Gould, Rockefeller, Drexel, Baker, French, Rhinelander, Goelet, Warren and their humbler co-parishioners when they gathered for the opening performance of *Faust* on 22 October 1883.

[5] At an early point in the history of the institution the attitude of the stockholders was expressed by the president of the board, James A. Roosevelt, thus : 'We never expected that it would pay. No opera house in the world has ever paid as an investment, and none ever will.' (*The New York Times*, 14 March 1882.)

II

WHY A HORSESHOE?

THE NAME of Josiah Cleaveland Cady would very likely have already perished from the memory of man had he not designed, in 1880, the new Metropolitan Opera House. It is not known that Mr. Cady was the leading theatre architect of his day, nor that he was possessed by any deep-seated convictions about model opera houses. In fact, Mr. Cady had in all his career never previously designed even a smallish theatre. His record displays, indeed, the following accomplishments: St. Andrew's Church, the Hudson Street Hospital, the Protestant Half Orphan Asylum, the Gallatin Bank, and the American Museum of Natural History. His talents for these may or may not establish his right to have drawn the plans for what was to be the largest theatrical auditorium yet constructed in America.

If in a backward glance, this seems a theme for wonder, it cannot have appeared so at the time. For Mr. Cady was not chosen blindly, out of an affection held by an influential friend for his ability. He was one of a group of four architects who had been invited to submit designs for the project; and his was the creation deemed the most impressive by the stockholders of the organization. One can only regret that the competing designs were not perpetuated for the amusement of posterity.

The mention of 1880 — 15 October — as the date of Mr. Cady's appointment suggests that the competition preceded the selection of the present site. Designs were originally invited for the Forty-third Street and Madison Avenue plot, from G. E. Harvey, G. B. Post, the Messrs. Potter and Harrison, as well as from

Mr. Cady. Each draughtsman was paid a retaining fee of three thousand dollars and given three months in which to create his design. From these were then selected the plans of Mr. Cady, which called for an auditorium to seat approximately 3100 persons ; distributed through a *parquet* of 800 chairs, a balcony of 580 places, and a gallery accommodating 1100. The remaining 674 seats were to be found in the three tiers of boxes that rose, in banks of 36, between the *parquet* and the balcony. These were contemplated to face a stage 70 feet deep and 120 feet wide.

However, the site finally selected was considerably different from the square of two hundred feet which was the Madison Avenue plot. It measured on Broadway 205 feet, on Seventh Avenue 197 feet, on Fortieth Street 229 feet and on Thirty-ninth Street 284 feet ; but Mr. Cady's adaptation of his original plans was hardly revolutionary. He clung tenaciously to the central focus that had engrossed him from the first moment he approached the drawing board. He kept the three tiers of boxes, and outdid even that original bounty by adding twelve more boxes on the *parquet* floor itself, six on each side, immortalized as *baignoire* boxes. The *parquet* he reduced to six hundred chairs ; the balcony gained considerably, to total 735 ; and the gallery, renamed 'the family circle,' also was reduced, to 978 places. The house thus had a seating total of 3045, with a stage measuring 86 feet deep by 101 feet wide. That portion of the house known for long as the dress circle — in reality it is the first balcony, though it is two tiers above the main floor of the house — did not come into existence until 1884, when it became apparent that not even the Gold Rush of the 80's into New York provided enough millionaires to occupy three tiers of boxes simultaneously during the four performances a week then in vogue.[1]

[1] More recently it has been suggested that the elimination of the third tier of boxes should be copied in relation to the so-called Grand Tier, which has been recently a constant economic problem. But no progress to that end has yet been achieved.

Mr. Cady was deeply grieved when the opening of the new house failed to earn him the encomiums that he felt were his due. In a letter to *The New York Tribune* of 12 November 1883, he asserted rather plaintively, 'Probably no other building in the country has received so much care and thought.' Also it was said that more than seven hundred drawings for sight lines were made before the finished drawing was produced, and that deep study had been devoted to the plans of other operatic auditoriums for the purpose of incorporating their variously superior features. On the latter point, there is the testimony of Colonel Mapleson, the impresario of the Academy of Music, whose partner, Ernest Gye, of the Covent Garden theatre in London, had extended the plans of that house to the American directors under the illusion that they would aid him in obtaining the producing rights in the Metropolitan.

Probably no other aspect of the building received so much consideration as its fireproofing. The memory of recent theatre fires in both the United States and Europe cautioned the architect to incorporate every 'modern' precaution in the building. Even a primitive sprinkler system was devised to dangle high above the stage, fed by a tank on the roof. In place of wooden supports beneath the stage were some four thousand sectional irons ; iron and mortar comprised the materials of the house itself and even the partitions between the boxes were of sheet metal. To conform to the specifications for the boxes, the contractor for the iron work was compelled to erect a mill of his own in which to bend as well as roll the beams. So confident were the proprietors of the security of their property that little insurance was carried on the structure, a situation that proved disastrous when the great fire of 1892 demolished its interior. But by that time, the demands of practical theatre operation had compelled the alteration of one and then another of Mr. Cady's prized precautions. The water tank had been emptied to prevent freezing during the winter, and, as heating it by steam was expensive, it was never refilled. A number of the iron supports for the stage

had been replaced by timbers to facilitate certain necessary movements under the stage so that the theoretical security amounted finally to little more than an illusion.

As the exterior of the building was in 1883, so it is today, save for the elimination of the *porte cochère* on the Thirty-ninth Street side of the structure (then reserved for use by the boxholders) ; the addition, at the rear, of a rehearsal stage which altered the dimensions of the roof ; the construction of several shops on the Broadway side of the house. Though the interior has gone through several sieges of decoration, the stage apron eliminated, and the lines of the boxes changed to permit their occupants greater visibility of the stage, these mutations have been in no way great enough to conceal the idea that motivated its peculiarities of design. In the studies for his plans there is no evidence to indicate that Mr. Cady devoted serious thought to the easily accessible ideal of an opera theatre . . . the Bayreuth *Festspielhaus,* which had been, by 1880, already four years open to the public, and which remains to this day a superlative example of practical ingenuity. There was some attempt made to incorporate a sunken orchestra pit in the Metropolitan, but it was poorly designed and has never yielded really satisfactory results. In other details, the Metropolitan with its triple band of boxes, was clearly modelled on the royal theatres of Europe. However, the American aristocracy of wealth being more inclusive than an aristocracy of birth, the provisions were necessarily more elaborate.

Since the genesis of the Metropolitan was in a social situation, rather than in an artistic one, it is not surprising that the chief feature of the theatre was not the stage, or the best seating arrangements for a large number of persons, or an even distribution of advantage in relation to the price charged for admission. The house was built for the boxes. Lest it be thought that these strictures are merely the regrets of a generation removed by fifty years from the problems and from the prejudices of the builders, the words of Henry T. Finck, written in the New York *Evening*

Post of 23 October 1883, may be quoted : 'From an artistic and musical point of view, the large number of boxes in the Metropolitan is a decided mistake. But as the house was avowedly built for social purposes rather than artistic, it is useless to complain about this, or about the fact that the opportunity was not taken to make of the building itself an architectural monument of which the city might be proud.'

III

PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP FOR PROFIT

1883–1884

'Das Faustspielhaus'

THOUGH the celebrated witticism [1] of W. J. Henderson was not given to the world until 18 February 1897 (on the occasion of the tenth performance in that season of Gounod's masterwork) it was prepared for by the selection of *Faust* for the opening night performance, 22 October 1883. Probably the choice was dictated by the presence, in the company assembled by Henry E. Abbey, of Christine Nilsson, the original Marguerite of the *première* in the Paris Grand Opéra. Present as her associates were Mmes. Scalchi and La Blache, the latter having been released from her obligations to Mapleson and the Academy by a court order obtained on the day of the opening, and Messrs. Italo Campanini, Del Puente, and Novara. The outcome of the competition between Abbey and Mapleson for singers indicates that the final power lay, not surprisingly, in the wealth of Abbey's backers.[2] Mapleson retained Gerster and Patti, who were loyal to him because of personal sympathy. In other respects the procedure of Abbey and his supporters at the Metropolitan reminds one of the famous note penned by

[1] His reference to the Metropolitan as *'Das Faustspielhaus.'*

[2] On the previous 31 December, when the announcement of Abbey's appointment had aroused speculation as to the company he could assemble, a director of the Metropolitan was quoted by *The Times* as saying: 'I don't believe that singers will stay with Mapleson. It is a question of dollars and cents. I believe that the artists will go where they can get the most money. I don't think Col. Mapleson's contracts will be found to be worth so much waste paper.'

Cornelius Vanderbilt, Sr. to a group of associates who had tried to outwit him :

'Gentlemen : You have undertaken to cheat me. I will not sue you for law takes too long. I will ruin you.

Sincerely,

Cornelius Van Derbilt.' [3]

The opening performance began a half hour late and was in progress until 12:45, five and a half hours later. During the long intermissions the glittering, somewhat self-conscious spectators had an opportunity to marvel at the magnificent gas-lit chandelier, to study the mural decorations by Francis Lathrop and Francis Maynard, and to admire the interior decorations by E. P. Tredwill. However, it is far more likely that box-holders and non-box-holders alike devoted considerably more attention to the assembly in the hundred and twenty boxes, for whose complete surveyal even the four intermissions of *Faust* would be insufficient. To assist the public, the newspapers of 22 October printed the two lower horseshoes in diagram, with the names of the box-holders. The helpful practice of including the diagrams and numbers of the boxes in the programme was not initiated until the 1886–1887 season.

In the orchestra pit was an eminent Italian *maestro*, Signor Vianesi of Covent Garden, who had brought with him fifty men from the *Teatro Fenice* in Venice, thirteen from the 'Wagner Opera House' (so it was referred to in the papers of the day) in Leipsic, five from London, fifteen from the San Carlo in Naples, and one from Brussels. They were rewarded for their labours at a wage scale running from a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars a month. As for the conductor's qualities, a contemporary journal reported, breathlessly, an achievement which has for us today an oddly reminiscent sound : 'Signor Vianesi is said to discard all references to the score of any opera.' His own response to interviewers announced him to be truly a

[3] Matthew Josephson, *The Robber Barons*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1934, p. 15.

forward-looking musician : 'Frankly,' he said, 'I belong to the modern school. . . I admire Gounod, Wagner, Mozart, Meyerbeer, Berlioz and Boïto.'

On the same evening, twenty-five blocks to the south, another opening was being solemnized at the Academy of Music, in the presence of an equally brilliant audience. Or, perhaps, the patrons who gathered to hear Etelka Gerster in *La Sonnambula* would have preferred to be called 'distinguished.' For they included a number of New York's 'oldest' families, indicating a heritage of at least fifty years.

In proscenium box A were the Lorillard and Travers families, with Mr. and Mrs. W. Duer, Mr. and Mrs. Kent, and Miss Bulkley. Apparently J. N. A. Griswold, who had been chosen the first president of the Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd., on 28 April 1880 had been enticed back into the Academy fold,[4] for he occupied box 21 at the Academy opening, together with his wife and Dr. and Mrs. Gasper Griswold. Also present were the Dinsmores in box D, the Astors in P, the Belmonts in M, the Beckwiths in B. In other boxes were the Robert Cuttings and General William Cutting, as well as various branches of the Bayard, Beekman, Schuyler, Livingston, Van Horne, and Townsend families.

There is a legend [5] that Mrs. Paran Stevens divided the evening between the Academy and the Metropolitan, unwilling to jeopardize any portion of her social prestige. Dr. Leopold Damrosch and Theodore Thomas, then New York's two most prominent resident musicians, spent the evening with Bellini rather than with Gounod. Colonel Mapleson, however, had expressed the divergent emphases of the two occasions a week before when he said : 'My audience is the *Faubourg St. Germain* of the town. My rival is supported, I understand, by a number of rich persons who want some new way of spending money.' Also of the same mind was the critic of the New York *Dramatic Mirror* (issue of 27 October 1883) who reported of the Metropolitan's opening : 'The Goulds and the Vanderbilts and people of that ilk perfumed the air with the odor of crisp greenbacks. The

[4] He had been succeeded as president by James A. Roosevelt.
[5] Cited by Owen Buttolph (Henry C. Adams) in the *Spur*, November 1933.

tiers of boxes looked like cages in a menagerie of monopolists.'

It is, however, somewhat curious to observe who the 'monopolists' were that constituted the strength of the Metropolitan's opening audience. Ranged in the two tiers of stockholders' boxes at that historic *Faust* were : Ogden Goelet, Adrian Iselin, Elbridge T. Gerry, Cornelius Vanderbilt, W. K. Vanderbilt, James A. Roosevelt, George F. Baker, William C. Whitney, Cyrus Field, G. G. Haven, J. W. Drexel, Luther Kountze, William Rhinelander, J. P. Morgan, and their families.

In the third tier boxes (rented at $1200 for the season) were J. H. Rutter, Dr. W. A. Hammond, Austin Corbin, William Steinway, Professor R. Ogden Doremus, and the Portuguese Consul.

To be sure, there were also Jay Gould, C. P. Huntington, James Gordon Bennett, D. O. Mills, James Harriman, and William Rockefeller, whose commercial careers were yet close upon them, but one cannot disguise a belief that the vast social schism depicted by the contemporary journalists was considerably more fictitious than real. One has merely to consider how closely allied the business interests of the two groups were to realize that their public appearance at one opera house or the other was more likely in conformity with precedent and habit than it was the reflection of a conscious prejudice. Certainly if the latter were the case, the Academy would have endured for more than the brief three years it achieved after the opening of the Metropolitan.

1883–1884

THOUGH Mme. Nilsson had received the tribute of a gold wreath — which, it was duly reported, 'could also be worn as a girdle' — at the opening performance, the brightest artistic laurels of the season were earned by Mme. Marcella Sembrich, who made her American debut in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the second performance, Wednesday 24 October. Sembrich had been recommended to the *cognoscenti* by her record in the preceding season at Covent Garden, but her qualities were, as demonstrated, quite

beyond any reasonable expectation. H. E. Krehbiel, in *The Tribune* of 25 October 1883, described her as a 'lovely singer' who commands 'nearly all the graces of beautiful singing in the old Italian sense.'

She was heard as Elvira in *I Puritani* on the 30th ; as Violetta in *La Traviata* on 6 November ; as Amina in *La Sonnambula* on the 15th ; in *Rigoletto* on the 17th ; and finally as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* on the 29th. In this last she was associated with Fursch-Madi (Donna Anna) and Nilsson as Elvira, one of the memorable groupings for the women's parts that this opera has enjoyed in New York. The men, however, (Campanini as Ottavio, Kaschmann as the Don, and Mirabella as Leporello) were not regarded as matching the qualities of their collaborators, and the instrumentalists made 'a sad mess' of the orchestral score, particularly the first act finale.[6]

One of Mme. Sembrich's most impressive performances occurred in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* on 15 December, when she interpolated the Queen of the Night's 'Gli angui d'inferno' from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* [7] into the lesson scene, with Proch's 'Air and Variations' and a ballad 'Some Day' in English. However, it was reported that 'the band broke down in the Mozart air and left Mme. Sembrich to end a dazzling feat of vocalization to the discordant scrapings of a half dozen fiddlers.' [8]

The season adhered to the familiar repertory that was the previous experience of New Yorkers at the Academy of Music and elsewhere, with but one 'novelty' to test the adventurousness of the audience. This, however, was Ponchielli's *La Gioconda,* which has fared rather better than a good many later novelties. It was introduced to America on 20 December with the following cast :

La Gioconda	Nilsson
Laura Adorno	Fursch-Madi
La Cieca	Scalchi
Enzo Grimaldo	Stagno

[6] *Tribune,* 30 November.
[7] The author has deemed it advisable to retain the usual designation for a work regardless of the language of a particular performance.
[8] *Tribune,* 16 December.

Barnaba .....Del Puente
Alvise Badoero .....Novara
Conductor, Vianesi

The work was staged with a lavishness that had no precedent in American operatic experience, and the performance itself was meritorious though given with but nine days' preparation. There is to be added the fact that the first performance of the 'Dance of the Hours' led by Mme. Cavalazzi [9] 'evoked loud applause . . . and Director Vianesi was rewarded by a personal ovation after the third act.'

The Academy of Music enjoyed a brief flurry of prosperity following the return of Adelina Patti, after twenty years' absence from America. Her reappearance was made on 10 November in Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra.*

During the fall season Mme. Patti was also heard in *La Traviata* on 16 November, and in *Aïda* on the 28th. During the winter season she appeared in the opening performance of *Aïda* on 1 January, and later in the Ricci brothers' *Crispino e la Comare* (at the conclusion of which, to the vast delight of the audience, she sang Arditi's 'Il Bacio' with the composer conducting ; in Rossini's *Semiramide*, Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, and a revival of *Roméo* (in Italian).

To the artistic record of the Academy must also be added the introduction of Lillian Norton-Gower, on 26 Novemb[illegible] in *Faust* (Marguerite). She achieved a much more permanent celebrity a decade later as Mme. Lillian Nordica. Her performance even then was noted as 'meritorious beyond . . . any of Mr. Mapleson's women singers, Mmes. Patti and Gerster excepted.' [10]

In compassionate tribute to the losses suffered by Abbey during his first season, the directors of the Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd., extended their tenant the use of the auditorium for a benefit on 21 April 1884. In addition to yielding a sum of sixteen thousand dollars to the unfortunate Abbey, the event was the setting of Mme. Sembrich's renowned feat of

[9] Mme. Cavalazzi later became ballet mistress of the Metropolitan, a post she retained for many years.
[10] *Tribune.*

musicianship, which included violin and piano performance, as well as vocal. It was part of the following program :

Part I

I—*Guglielmo Tell* Overture ..... Rossini
II—Selection from the second act of *Lucrezia Borgia* ..... Donizetti
Lucrezia ..... Fursch-Madi
Duca Alfonso ..... Novara
III—Selection from the third act of *Il Trovatore* ..... Verdi
Leonora ..... Goldeni
Ruiz ..... Grazzi
Manrico ..... Stagno
IV—Second Act of *Il Barbiere* ..... Rossini
Including the Lesson Scene in which Mme. Sembrich will sing a) Proch's 'Air and Variations'
b) Solovej (Rossignol) Russian National Air
Almaviva ..... Capoul
Figaro ..... Del Puente
Don Basilio ..... Mirabella
Dr. Bartolo ..... Corsini
Rosina ..... Mme. Sembrich
(To conclude with the Quintet)
V—Selection from *Aïda* ..... Verdi
Aïda ..... Fursch-Madi
Amneris ..... Trebelli
Amonasro ..... Kaschmann
Rhadames ..... Campanini
VI—Concerto for violin No. 7 (Adagio and Rondo-finale) .. De Beriot
(with orchestral accompaniment)
Mme. Sembrich,
who, out of personal compliment to Mr. Abbey and on this occasion only, has consented to play)

Part II

VII—Overture and Chorus from *Dinorah* ..... Meyerbeer
VIII—*Ave Maria* (on Bach's Prelude) ..... Gounod
Voice ..... Mme. Nilsson
Violin obbligato ..... Mme. Sembrich
Pianoforte, Sig. Vianesi Harmonium, Sig. Azzoni
IX—Fourth Act of *Les Huguenots* ..... Meyerbeer
Raoul ..... Campanini
St. Bris ..... Kaschmann
de Nevers ..... Del Puente
Valentine ..... Nilsson

X—Fourth Act (the trial scene) from Shakespeare's comedy 'The Merchant of Venice'

Shylock ..... Henry Irving
Duke of Venice ..... Howe
Antonio ..... T. Wenman
Bassanio ..... W. Terriss
Salanio ..... Lyndall
Salarino ..... Harburg
Gratiano ..... F. Tyers
Clerk of Court ..... Louther
Nerissa ..... Miss Payne

and

Portia ..... Miss Ellen Terry

XI—Grand Ballet Divertisement

'Farewell' ..... Mascheroni

(Arranged especially for this performance by Cav. Vianesi)
Mme. Cavalazzi and corps de ballet.

When Mme. Sembrich appeared with a violin, there was furore, of course ; and when she had completed a remarkably artistic performance, the enthusiasm of the audience could not be checked without an encore. Mme. Sembrich seated herself at a piano on the stage and played a Chopin Mazurka. More applause, and even greater wonder. The artist returned, whispered a few words to Vianesi, and climaxed her performance by singing 'Ah! non giunge' from *Sonnambula*. W. J. Henderson, present critic of the New York *Sun* has declared that both of her instrumental performances were artistically comparable to her accomplishments as a vocalist. Mme. Sembrich's ability as a pianist was not unknown, but her violin-playing was utterly surprising to all save those who were acquainted with her earliest musical training.

In a season that included sixty-one performances (divided into two periods, from 22 October to Christmas 1883, from 10 March to 12 April 1884), Abbey managed to lose a sum of money estimated to be as much as six hundred thousand dollars. The theory is advanced by Krehbiel that this took in as well his losses in a post-season tour that carried the company to Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Washington, and Baltimore, in which

MARCELLA SEMBRICH

cities a total of fifty-eight performances was given.[11] However, in addition to the generous fees for the performers — more than a thousand dollars a night to Nilsson and Campanini — there must also be considered the outlay for scenery, costumes, etc., which, on the basis of a single season's operations, might have amounted to a considerable portion of that loss.[12] It is true, however, that Abbey lost the profits of three other theatrical ventures for which he was also the impresario in paying off his debts ; and the Metropolitan's directors were called upon for the full guarantee of sixty thousand dollars which they had posted in leasing the theatre to Abbey.

[11] Henry Edward Krehbiel, *Chapters of Opera*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1908, p. 110.

[12] In her valuable autobiography Mme. Lehmann states : 'Aside from the immense salaries, every costume, every shoe and stocking was provided . . . by Worth of Paris.' P. 340.

IV

STOCKHOLDER SPONSORSHIP

1884–1891

Seven Years of Opera in German

ABBEY'S financial fiasco had made him willing to serve as director in 1884 only if full responsibility for the deficit of the first season was borne by the directors. As an inducement he offered his services for another season without salary. There was no lure for the Metropolitan Opera-house Company in this ; and they invited the attention of Ernest Gye of London, who, they hoped, still retained the interest that had inspired him to bid for the privilege during the previous year. After delaying his decision until well along in the summer of 1884, Gye asserted the impossibility of assembling a company to compete with the singers Mapleson already had under contract for the Academy, and withdrew his name from consideration. It was only then that opera in German presented itself as a reasonable substitute to the directorate.

Thus, one of the most distinguished periods of the Metropolitan's history was actually the result of an *impasse*. No reputable director was willing to undertake the management of the Metropolitan's vast auditorium without substantial financial assistance from the directors. They, in turn, were opposed to committing themselves to any scheme that would involve such an expense as in the first season. In this situation the proposition of Dr. Leopold Damrosch might well have appeared irresistible. He outlined a company without such stars as Nilsson, Sembrich, or Gerster — a company composed of singers familiar with the

more practical of the Wagner dramas, to provide New York with a type of operatic enterprise with which it had had no previous experience. That Hilborn Roosevelt, president of the New York Symphony Orchestra then conducted by Damrosch, was also a nephew of James A. Roosevelt, who headed the Metropolitan's directorate, was no doubt of prizable advantage to Damrosch. And the relative inexpensiveness of the singers Damrosch desired also played its part in the decision. As manager and the only regular conductor, Damrosch received a salary of ten thousand dollars for the season.

It was paradoxical for so cosmopolitan a city as New York to support for seven years an opera company whose official language was German. But there was an even greater paradox in the kind of opera that was presented. An opera house that had originated as an expression of social ambition became almost unwittingly the agency through which the most exacting works in the literature of the musical theatre — those of Richard Wagner — were made known to the New York public. However, the first season demonstrated that some plan of production had to be found which would keep the house open, and not incur too large a deficit, for the fixed charges in taxes and maintenance were no insignificant burden.

Out of these circumstances arose one of the most impressive cycles in the history of the Metropolitan. Whether by intent or by accident there was provided, thus, the background for a taste in serious opera which has had its cumulative effects to this day. It is a rare example of the vitality inherent in a great cultural seed, this transplanting of a foreign growth in the soil of America. Though the blossoms were plucked and the trunk destroyed in 1891, the roots had taken hold, and lived to flourish triumphantly again.

It was not an era of virtuoso voices among the German artists of the day ; there were, indeed, admirable singers, but the emphasis was on the great works that were waiting to be produced, for which the interpreters had a sacrificial zeal that has had no

parallel in operatic history. Though the introductory work was divided between Leopold Damrosch and Anton Seidl, the two men were united by a devotion to their materials which has indeed established them as evangelical figures. With Leopold Damrosch as the instigator and Seidl as the propagator of this gospel, the artistic history of the Metropolitan fairly begins.

1884–1885

THE basis of Damrosch's organization was the orchestra of the Symphony Society in the pit, his own skill as a conductor, and the collaboration of a company of German singers who all had won solid reputations in the musical centres of Germany, Austria, and England. Among them were Amalia Materna, the first Kundry in the Bayreuth *Parsifal*, and her successor in that role, Marianne Brandt ; Auguste Kraus (wife of Anton Seidl), Marie Schröder-Hanfstängl, Anna Slach, and Anna Stern. The principal male singers were Adolf Robinson, baritone ; Anton Schott, tenor ; Otto Kemlitz, tenor, and Josef Staudigl, baritone. Acting as assistant conductors and chorus masters were John Lund and Walter Damrosch.

Mapleson had opened the Academy on 10 November with Patti in *Il Barbiere* (surrounded by a group of inferior male singers — Vicini as Almaviva, Di Pasqualis as Figaro) but the significant opening of the season was that of the Metropolitan a week later with *Tannhäuser*. With Kraus (Elisabeth), Schott (Tannhäuser), Robinson (Wolfram), Slach (Venus), and Kögel (Landgraf Hermann), the work was given a performance that effaced whatever memories might have remained of the tentative Wagnerian offerings of the 60's and 70's. There was, further, an audience that filled every seat in the theatre, and several hundred prospective customers were refused admission.

Dr. Damrosch proceeded on 19 November to give Beethoven's *Fidelio*, in which Brandt made her debut as Leonore. Regarding this performance it was the melancholy duty of *The Tribune*

to report : 'The only portion of the house not filled was the stockholders' boxes.'

There followed then *Les Huguenots, Der Freischütz, Guglielmo Tell, Lohengrin, Don Giovanni, Le Prophète, Masaniello,* and finally even *Rigoletto,* all of them sung in German. Dominating each of these, except perhaps the last, was an ideal of ensemble that had not been known before in New York opera. By 12 January the receipts were estimated to be twice as great as those for the parallel period in the preceding year, even though the top price was but four dollars, in contrast with Abbey's two, three, four, six, and seven dollar scale.

In estimating the demonstration of popular approval that was earned by the first season of opera in German, consideration must be taken of the large German population which New York then included.[1] It had long waited for just such an opportunity as this. By 19 January it was settled that Damrosch would direct the season of 1885–86, at a salary of eight thousand dollars, plus a percentage of the profits.

Of outstanding importance in this season was the first adequate presentation in New York of *Die Walküre.* After elaborate preparation, it was given on 30 January with the following cast :

Siegmund ..... Anton Schott
Sieglinde ..... Auguste Kraus
Hunding ..... Josef Kögel
Fricka ..... Marianne Brandt
Wotan ..... Josef Staudigl
Brünnhilde ..... Amalia Materna
Walküren ..... Mmes. Brandt, Stern, Gutjar, Morse, Robinson, Slach, Kemlitz, and Brandl
Conductor, Dr. Leopold Damrosch

The production was designed in close conformity to that of Bayreuth, save that stage-director Hock permitted himself the liberty of substituting a falling drapery for the great door which 'springs open' — according to Wagner's stage directions — just before the love duet in the first act. The precise reason for this change has never been determined ; but it is interesting to ob-

[1] It was approximately a quarter of a million at this time.

serve that its use was perpetuated at the Metropolitan as late as 1927–1928, to the annoyance of all devoted Wagnerites. By 20 February seven performances of *Die Walküre* had been given, but the exertions of the season had taken their toll of Dr. Damrosch's strength. He contracted pneumonia on 11 February and died four days later. On the eleventh his place in the pit was taken by his son Walter, who made his debut as an operatic conductor with the evening's *Tannhäuser*. The operas of the supplementary season (including eight performances that had not been scheduled when subscriptions were solicited) were directed by Lund ; and Walter Damrosch returned to the company to share the operas given on a tour that carried the company as far west as Chicago.

The confusion in the affairs of the Metropolitan that followed the death of Leopold Damrosch was not mitigated by the precipitate action of the tenor Schott, who proposed himself as artistic director of the company on 19 February, the day after the funeral of the pioneer Damrosch. He suggested the engagement of Anton Seidl as chief conductor, with Walter Damrosch as subordinate, and also proposed a list of singers. Though the portion of the plan that included himself was rejected, Schott's suggestion was followed to the extent of Seidl's engagement. Some years later in a memorial tribute, Schott wrote :

> In conclusion, I cannot refrain from expressing the pride I feel in having been instrumental in bringing Anton Seidl to America. Having been with him so long [Schott toured in the Angelo Neumann Wagner Opera Company with Seidl in 1882] I knew his value and after the death of Dr. Leopold Damrosch I kept recommending him as the one man to appoint in his place. He was . . . engaged and brought over ; but I had broken my own neck, for what I had done was never forgiven me in certain quarters. My plans and proposals were accepted, but I myself was left out in the cold.[2]

The finances of the season showed a loss of about forty thousand dollars, which was scarcely a measurable burden when

[2] In *Anton Seidl, A Memorial by His Friends*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899, p. 255.

spread among the then seventy stockholders of the ownership company. Thus, from an economic standpoint alone, the further toleration of opera in German was justified ; and the directors at length settled upon a plan which had the secretary of the Board of Directors, Edmond C. Stanton, as a salaried executive director, and Walter Damrosch, then twenty-three years old, as second conductor. In the next six years, Stanton won a reputation as the 'most gentlemanly' director of opera that New York had yet known, but his equipment for the task in hand was something less than all-embracing. However, with the proposals of Schott as a guide, and a definite knowledge of the company necessary to perpetuate the work so auspiciously begun, Stanton went abroad in the summer of 1885 to engage his singers. Damrosch had preceded him by a number of weeks, obtaining commitments from Max Alvary, Emil Fischer, Anton Seidl, and Lilli Lehmann. The last had been invited earlier by Leopold Damrosch, but was only now free to accept an American engagement. Stanton consummated the engagement of these singers, and added Albert Stritt as principal tenor in place of Schott. From the company of the preceding year were retained Mmes. Brandt, Kraus, and Slach ; Messrs. Kemlitz and Robinson.

1885–1886

HAD there been any doubt of the musical basis for Schott's agitation of the *cause Seidl*, it must certainly have been eliminated by Seidl's first appearance in the Metropolitan pit, conducting the performance of *Lohengrin* which inaugurated the season of 1885 on 23 November. The contemporary record is that his 'conducting opened many pages that had hitherto been closed to the public and even to many musicians,' [3] but there was more to the matter than merely Seidl's inherent gifts. He was the first veracious representative of Wagner to acquaint the opera-going public of New York with the gospel of Bayreuth, where he had

[3] *Tribune*, 24 November.

served a long and brilliant apprenticeship under the eyes of Wagner himself. It is altogether likely that New York had been hearing *Lohengrin* with all of the hundred and eighty-six textual errors that Hans Richter had eradicated from the score when he conducted the work for the first time in London.[4] No doubt Seidl exercised a similar curative treatment in the rehearsals that preceded his debut.

The good fortune that brought Seidl to New York at this particular period in its operatic development cannot be overestimated. The depth of his learning, the warmth of his understanding, his devotion to the great works he was privileged to conduct all contributed to establishing standards that endured for long as touchstones of accomplishment in this field. During his first six years at the Metropolitan he introduced the remaining dramas of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, as well as *Die Meistersinger* and *Tristan und Isolde*. In addition he applied the same gifts of penetration to numerous other works — to 'put them through the Wagnerian sieve' was the description of Albert Niemann, the first interpreter of Tristan for America. Nothing illustrates the musical and mental qualities of Seidl better than a tale perpetuated by Victor Herbert, which had for its setting a group of musicians who were discussing the philosophical differences between German and Italian opera. After listening quietly for a time, Seidl interrupted to say :

> In the property room of the Metropolitan Opera House, gentlemen, is a helmet. It may be tarnished, but a year or two ago it was brightly burnished. If you were to hunt it up you would find that this specimen is much like other helmets, save for the '*Schwanritter*' emblem which it bears. It was made for *Lohengrin*, and my dear friend Campanini wore it in a truly magnificent performance of the role. Yet if you were to find that helmet today, you would discover that in addition to the prescribed dimensions and insignia, Campanini had put on it a blue plume, probably three feet in length. That, my dear gentlemen, is Italian opera.[5]

[4] Albert Steinberg in *Anton Seidl — A Memorial*, p. 107.
[5] Herbert, in *Anton Seidl — A Memorial*, p. 126.

Seidl's first appearance was followed, on 25 November, by the debut of Lilli Lehmann. Though her reputation in Germany was constantly growing as a Wagnerian soprano (if not on the heroic roles she was to make her own in New York), she was introduced to America in *Carmen*, in a performance in German, with spoken dialogue ! Alvary also made his debut in this performance, with Robinson (Escamillo) and Kraus (Micaëla). Seidl was the conductor. The third subscription opera, on Friday 27 November, was *Le Prophète*, with Damrosch conducting. It did not match the quality of the performances in the previous year.

Following a repetition of *Carmen* on Saturday afternoon, Mme. Lehmann participated in a rehearsal of *Die Walküre* that was in progress from eight o'clock that evening until one o'clock. In her memoirs she explains : 'The orchestra had to be paid extra for work on Sunday.' [6] Her first appearance as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* occurred on 30 November, under the baton of Damrosch, Seidl being occupied with the rehearsals for Goldmark's *Die Königin von Saba.* In addition to singing in the *première* of the Goldmark work on 2 December and a repetition on 4 December, Mme. Lehmann was heard again in *Die Walküre* on the following afternoon—a total of merely four performances plus arduous rehearsing in her first week in a new country !

In the cast for *Die Königin von Saba* when it was given for the first time, in the production which was said to have cost seventy-five thousand dollars, were :

Sulamith ..... Lehmann
Königin ..... Krämer-Weidl
Solomon ..... Robinson
Assad ..... Stritt
Hohepriester ..... Fischer
Baal Hanan ..... Alexi
Conductor, Anton Seidl

Following a two weeks' pause after 19 December for the Christmas season, the company resumed its performance on 4 January with the American *première* of *Die Meistersinger.* In addition to marking the introduction to New York of the greatest comic opera in the literature of music, the event also inaugurated

[6] *My Path Through Life*, p. 341.

the custom, thereafter followed by Seidl, of introducing at least one of the previously unheard scores of Wagner in his subsequent seasons. If Wagner had written as many operas (of his own quality) as did Rossini, the history of opera in German, in New York, might well have been longer — for its end followed shortly after the exhaustion of the unperformed literature of the greater Wagner.[7]

The persons of the first performance of *Die Meistersinger* on 4 January 1886 were :

Walther von Stolzing	Stritt
Eva	Seidl-Kraus
Magdalene	Brandt
Hans Sachs	Fischer
Veit Pogner	Staudigl
Kunz Vogelgesang	Dworsky
Konrad Nachtigal	Sänger
Sixtus Beckmesser	Kemlitz
Fritz Kothner	Lehmler
Balthazar Zorn	Hoppe
Ulrich Eislinger	Klaus
Augustin Moser	Langer
Hans Foltz	Anlauf
David	Krämer
Ein Nachtwächter	Kaufman

Conductor, Anton Seidl

Though much of the music was familiar to New York audiences through its performance in the concert hall, there was considerable skepticism about the likelihood of its popularity before a miscellaneous attendance in the opera house. The attitude of mind that was prepared to accept such a work on the basis of the composer's intention was yet to be fostered. Indeed, a considerable portion of the audience must have approached *Die Meistersinger* in the same spirit as the commentator for *Town Topics,* who complained that the 'taking numbers . . . are unfortunately not very abundant.' Even the more erudite musical press deemed a knowledge of German life and customs essential

[7] Excepting, of course, the forbidden *Parsifal.* The very early operas were not considered.

for a complete appreciation of the work, not yet trusting the magnificent eloquence of the score itself. However, as the work was given three times within the first week, and eight times before the end of the season, the German population, at least, must have been aware of its qualities. After the first performance — which was not uncut — further emendations were made that reduced the work to a performing time of four and a quarter hours. As has since become customary, most of the cuts were in the first act, particularly in David's extended instructions to Walther.

During her first season, Lehmann appeared also as Marguerite in a German version of *Faust*, given almost in its entirety, seven acts. It was noted as 'probably the longest performance of opera ever given in New York,' with Stritt (Faust) and Fischer (Méphistophélès). *Rienzi*, which had seven performances in this season, was heard with Lehmann (Irene), Brandt (Adriano), and Sylva (Rienzi). As a climax to the season in the opera house was a performance of *Parsifal* as an oratorio on 4 March, with the principals singing in German, the chorus in English. The principals were from the opera organization — Brandt (Kundry), Fischer (Gurnemanz), Lehmler (Amfortas), and Krämer (Parsifal), — with the chorus of the Oratorio Society. The conductor was Walter Damrosch. Two days later it was announced that the stockholders had voted to continue opera in German for three more seasons, with Stanton as executive director, Seidl and Damrosch as conductors.

The losses for the season's operations approximated twenty-five thousand dollars, including, however, a considerable deficit that resulted from a two weeks' season in Philadelphia during the Christmas holidays. The season in New York, during which fifty-four performances were given, was therefore almost as successful financially as it had been artistically. The average attendance ranged from 2666 at fifteen performances of *Die Königin von Saba* to 2000 for seven performances of *Faust*, exclusive of the stockholders' boxes. *Die Meistersinger* was given eight times to an average attendance of 2500.

The numerical strength of the company that presented this season is of considerable interest in the light of the later size of the Metropolitan organization. There were twelve male and twelve female principal singers, with a chorus of fifty male and thirty-two female voices. For the performances of *Die Meistersinger* the chorus was reinforced by sixty members of the Arion and Liederkranz Societies. The ballet numbered twenty-four in all, the supernumeraries seventy-six, the stage-hands thirty-six, the wardrobe forces twenty-one, and the gasmen six. Sixty-three men comprised the regular orchestra under the direction of the two conductors, and twenty extra musicians were employed for the stage band. Two stage managers, a chorus master, and a ballet-master completed the organization. During the season there were one hundred and ten chorus rehearsals : sixty for the ballet, eighty solo rehearsals for the individual singers, nineteen orchestral rehearsals for the purpose of correcting the parts, and fifty-four stage rehearsals for the nine productions, plus a dress rehearsal for each.

1886–1887

MAPLESON's departure from the American scene after the season of 1885 had been equivalent to a confession that henceforth the 'new yellow brewery on Broadway' — as he described the Metropolitan — would be the sole home of pretentious opera in New York. His own words, on his retirement were : 'I cannot fight Wall Street.' An enterprising impresario known to history as Signor Angelo attempted a season of Italian opera at the Academy beginning on 18 October 1886, with Petrella's *Ione*, but his singers were not celebrated, nor was the work distinguished. Thus the opening of the Metropolitan on 8 November with *Die Königin von Saba* actually signified the beginning of the year's operatic activities. But the first event of artistic importance was reserved for the 10th, when Albert Niemann, the most famous German tenor of the day, made his debut in *Die Walküre*. An audience that was described as 'even more bril liant than that of the opening night' gathered to appraise the talents of the eminent visitor who was then fifty-seven years old, with a distinguished career in the court theatres of Germany behind him. His associates in that auspicious performance were

Lehmann (Brünnhilde), Brandt (Fricka), Kraus (Sieglinde), and Fischer (Wotan).

Though it is easy to believe that Niemann, in the words of contemporary observers, 'added many new elements to the work,' his great triumph was coincident with the introduction of *Tristan und Isolde* to America on 1 December. He established the memory of a performance which has served as the point of departure, in the experience of American opera-goers, for each new addition to the gallery of striking individual characterizations. 'Niemann's Tristan, Tamagno's Otello, Calvé's Carmen . . . down to Chaliapine's Boris' has been the accredited succession ever since. New York's Wagnerites were regaled with a cast that included Lehmann (Isolde), Brandt (Brangaene), Fischer (König Marke), Robinson (Kurwenal), Rudolph von Milde (Melot), Alvary (Stimme des Seemanns), Emil Sänger (Ein Steuermann), and Kemlitz (Ein Hirt), with Seidl conducting. Edgar Stillman Kelley, the American composer, writing in *The Theatre* for 20 December 1886, described the *première* as the 'most important event in the history of the lyric stage in America,' and H. E. Krehbiel was inspired to write a 'review' — really an exposition and appreciation of the work — which ran to seven chapters and was spaced over three successive issues of *The Tribune*, from the 2nd to the 5th of December.

In addition to eight performances of *Tristan* and appearances of Niemann in *Fidelio* (with Lehmann and Brandt alternately as Leonore) the season included what it was fondly hoped would be a successor to Goldmark's *Königin von Saba*, his *Merlin*. Given for the first time on 3 January, it was cast with Lehmann (Vivianne), Brandt (Morgana), Alvary (Merlin), Fischer (Dämon), Robinson (Artus), Kemlitz (Modrid), Basch (Lancelot), von Milde (Bedwyr), and Sieglitz (Glendower), with Damrosch conducting. Though it was given five times during this season, it has never been revived since. In response to the stockholders' demands for a ballet, *Vienna Waltzes* was staged on 12

November as part of a double bill that included Brüll's *Das Goldene Kreutz.* That the ballet had aroused a certain interest in other productions of the season is indicated by a bit of doggerel that appeared in a popular periodical of the day :

'You advertise *Merlin*
With singers from Berlin
A full *corps de ballet* and costumes galore;
But I frown without cant, on
One thing, Mr. Stanton,
The ballet shows more than it ought of the corps.'

However, the change in the emphasis of operatic activity in New York during this period is best demonstrated by the ceremonies that attended the farewell appearance of Niemann in *Tristan* on 7 February. The *Evening Post* of the following day compared the enthusiasm of the public to the 'triumphs of Patti and Lind.' Seats that fell into the hands of the speculators were sold for as much as fifteen dollars — against a face value of four — and dollar seats in the family circle were obtainable only plus a bonus of two hundred per cent. That a singer whose efforts were principally confined to Wagner and Beethoven should arouse so fervent a demonstration of popular approval was indeed a salutary occurrence — and its effect even extended to the society journal *Town Topics,* which recorded on 17 February : 'Whether the fashionable *penchant* for German music is going to extend over a longer period than a twelvemonth or so it is impossible to say ; but that it will cover next fall and winter is certain.' Whether the opera was *Rigoletto* or *Rienzi* seemed, however, to matter very little at the moment, for those whose whim had established the Metropolitan. The same faithful gazette reported a week later : '*Rienzi* on Friday showed few vacant boxes though many came very late. Mrs. Bradley Martin, in black, had with her Mrs. Robert Goelet, and her enormous diamond star — which, I understand weighs more than Bradley Martin himself — flashed rays of light across the house.' And

this *Rienzi* offered no less imposing a musical interest than a cast of Schott, Lehmann, Brandt, Robinson, and Fischer !

Also an accomplishment of this season was the first performance of *Aïda* in the Metropolitan, on 12 November 1886. It had been given many times at the Academy, of course, and by various travelling companies that visited New York, but it is rather ironic that the first of the 260-odd performances of the work that have been given in the Metropolitan was in German ! This is by far the largest total for any opera in the Metropolitan's history. In the introductory performance were :

Aïda ..... Herbert-Förster
Amneris ..... Brandt
Priestess ..... Better
King ..... Sieglitz
Rhadames ..... Zobel
Amonasro ..... Robinson
Ramfis ..... Fischer
Messenger ..... Kemlitz
Conductor, Anton Seidl

There was more to engage the tastes of the fashionable audience in the special Patti season under the direction of Henry Abbey, which occupied the Metropolitan during April, after the close of the German season sponsored by the directors. Abbey had conducted Patti on a festive tour of the country during the winter, and presented her, at a top price of seven dollars, at the Metropolitan beginning on 11 April. Though the opera was *La Traviata* and the role one of her most celebrated, the *parquet* was not full, with seats available from the sidewalk speculators at half-price before the first act was completed. She was heard in *Semiramide* on the 13th, *Carmen* on the 18th, for the first time in America ; *Faust, Lucia,* and *Marta* before the end of the month. Of her performance in *Carmen,* W. J. Henderson has said : 'Everyone had known that Carmen was a cat, but Patti made her a kitten.' The company did excellent business after the first performance, and two additional evenings were added to the

schedule — a performance of *Lucia* on 6 May, and a mixed bill including the first act of *Traviata* and the third act of *Aïda* as a farewell offering.

1887–1888

IT was the success of German opera in German and of Wagner in particular that had encouraged the directors of the Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd. to vote a continuance of that policy for three years, from 7 March 1886 ; but there was a retreat from this beautiful ideal scarcely more than a year later. Though the basis of the repertory for 1887–1888 was still Wagner, an attempt was made to lighten it with the inclusion of a larger proportion of non-Wagnerian works, in deference to the wishes of the box-holders. Halévy's *La Juive* (in this version, *Die Jüdin*), Nessler's *Trompeter von Säkkingen*, and Spontini's *Ferdinando Cortez* were added to the list. All of them were sung in German, of course ; but this fact, and the fact that the more familiar Italian repertory was not embraced, depended largely on the singers then under contract, and on their inability or unwillingness to learn new roles in Italian.

In general, however, the previous policies were continued, with the introduction to America of both *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. The season began auspiciously on 2 November with *Tristan*, cast as in the preceding year. It was given, the papers of the day took pains to note, 'in the presence of the Secretary of the Navy and a delegation of distinguished visitors from the Chinese Embassy.' What the Oriental impression of *Tristan* might have been was, alas, not preserved ; nor for that matter, the opinion of the Secretary of the Navy on Tristan's vessel, which would have been, one surmises, just as interesting. The first performance of *Siegfried* on 9 November aroused the same warmth of enthusiasm that had attended the introduction of the other dramas of Wagner, and encouraged Stanton to present the work eleven times during the season. In the first performance the following singers were heard :

Erda ..... Brandt
Siegfried ..... Alvary
Mime ..... Ferenczy
Der Wanderer ..... Fischer
Alberich ..... von Milde
Brünnhilde ..... Lehmann
Stimme des Waldvogels ..... Kraus
Fafner ..... Elmblad
Conductor, Anton Seidl

One of the Metropolitan's most persistent deficiencies, poor stage lighting, was noted in the comments on *Siegfried ;* even then it was remarked to be a 'detail in which American theatres are many years behind those of Continental Europe.' [8]

However, under the direction of Seidl, the company of German singers had triumphed almost completely over the 'star system,' that rugged spectre of the opera impresario's nightmares. 'It is rare that anything even bordering on the perfunctory can be found in a Metropolitan performance,' said the *Tribune* of 17 December 1887. Not often in subsequent years could so sweeping a generalization be applied to the Metropolitan !

The second permanent addition to the repertory as a result of this season's activities was made on 25 January with the *première* of *Götterdämmerung,* noted on the programme as *'Die' Götterdämmerung.* Both the Norn and the Waltraute Scenes were excised — a questionable sacrifice since the precedent thus established permitted them to languish unheard in New York for another dozen years. Niemann was by this time scarcely equal to the vocal rigours of the elder Siegfried, but his abilities as a musician and an actor were unimpaired, yielding a characterization that presented more of the essential qualities of the role than any younger man of his time could have conveyed. The others of the cast were :

Brünnhilde ..... Lehmann
Hagen ..... Fischer
Gunther ..... Robinson
Gutrune ..... Kraus
Alberich ..... von Milde

[8] *Tribune,* 2 November.

Woglinde .....Sophie Traubmann
Wellgunde .....Brandt
Flosshilde .....Louise Meisslinger
Conductor, Anton Seidl

Both of these later Brünnhildes were Lehmann's first essays of roles of which she became in America so renowned an exponent. Alvary's Young Siegfried in New York also marked a first performance.

Seidl supplemented his completion of the Trilogy with a presentation of Weber's *Euryanthe,* on 23 December. It had been given in New York previously only by a minor company in the old Wallack Theatre. Probably for the only time in the history of opera in New York, the work was given as Weber intended, with the tableaux during the *larghetto* section of the overture. On the occasion of its subsequent revival this was omitted. The usual cast for the four performances of *Euryanthe* during this season included Lehmann (Euryanthe), Brandt (Eglantine), Alvary (Adolar), Fischer (Lysiart), and Elmblad (The King). Neither *Der Trompeter* nor *Ferdinando Cortez,* the other novelties of the season, endured permanently in the repertory though Nessler's opera was given again two years later. As a climax to the year was the first sequential presentation of the Nibelungen Trilogy, beginning with *Die Walküre* on 31 January. Two complete presentations of the three dramas attracted enormous audiences, and an extra performance of *Götterdämmerung* was added to satisfy the public appetite for Wagner.

1888–1889

THE trend towards Italianization continued in 1888, with *Il Trovatore, Aïda,* and *Guglielmo Tell* brought into the repertory, as were *L'Africaine, Les Huguenots* and *Le Prophète.* Mozart and Weber were both abandoned, and *Fidelio* was given but twice. To offset this, the artistic prosperity of the season was enhanced by the first American presentation of *Das Rheingold,* the last of the later Wagner dramas — excepting *Parsifal* — to be per-

formed in New York. Stanton entertained some thought of presenting *Parsifal* despite the expressed wishes of the Wagner family, but he was dissuaded by the advice of his colleagues, particularly by Lehmann, who has written : 'My advice was *not* to produce *Parsifal*, to leave it to Bayreuth, where alone it belonged, as it required, more than any other work of Wagner's, the consecrational atmosphere of the Bayreuth setting.' [9] The *première* of *Das Rheingold* on 4 January was presented by a cast that included Fischer (Wotan), Alvary (Loge), Fanny Moran-Olden (Fricka), Hedwig Reil (both Erda and Flosshilde), and Katti Bettaque (Freia). Commencing at eight-thirty, the performance ran until ten minutes after eleven, with a quarter-hour intermission between the second and third scenes. The curtain was also lowered after the Nibelheim scene to permit the change of scenery, a departure from Wagner's directions for which the 'structural peculiarities' of the stage were blamed. The work was repeated on the 5th, 7th, and 12th ; in all, it was given nine times in that season, including two performances in complete presentations of *Der Ring des Nibelungen.*

Seidl's efforts to continue his inspired propaganda for the essential Wagnerian doctrine was also demonstrated in this season by his presentation of the Paris version of *Tannhäuser* on 30 January, for the first time in New York. Lehmann had rejoined the company during the previous week and appeared as Venus, with Paul Kalisch, her husband, as Tannhäuser, and Bettaque as Elisabeth. The marvellous new pages of Wagner that were thus revealed to New Yorkers did not, however, win unqualified approval ; even the commentator for *The Tribune,* who had campaigned unceasingly for German opera, remarked that the 'second scene has lost some of its simplicity and freshness with the change.' [10]

Interspersed with these heroic deeds were performances of *La Juive* (into the third act of which the *Pizzicato* from Delibes' bal-

[9] *My Path Through Life,* p. 380.
[10] *Tribune,* 21 January 1889.

let *Sylvia* had been interpolated), opportunities in *Trovatore* for Perotti (the company's tenor-of-all-work) to unloose his high C, and performances of *Faust* in which Perotti sang the title role in Italian, with the other principals and the chorus using German. For his purposes, also, *Guglielmo Tell* was presented ; and of this it is related that, the famous trio being handsomely applauded, Perotti advanced to the footlights to take a bow while his German associates, Robinson and Fischer, true to their training in the German theatre, remained firm in their places.

The three years' grace that had been voted for German opera on 6 March 1886 expired at the close of this season, and there was again to be considered the problem of what opera should be presented by the stockholders for their diversion and the sustenance of New York's opera-going public. The economics of the situation plainly indicated that the public of the moment was one that was largely devoted to the works of Wagner and the other comparable scores of the German literature ; indeed, the pre-season subscription had mounted to the then amazing figure of $59,607.50.[11] On 17 March the stockholders decided to retain opera in German, by a vote of forty-three to three.

1889–1890

'OPERA in German,' however, continued to mean less and less German opera. The projected repertory for the season included *Guglielmo Tell, Il Trovatore, Aïda, Un Ballo in Maschera, Le Roi d'Ys* of Lalo, *Faust,* and *La Gioconda,* of which the latter three were not presented when the events of the season indicated another course to be desirable. The addition of several new singers to the company permitted the revival of *Don Giovanni* — after a lapse of five years — under the direction of Seidl on 4 December 1889, when Lehmann appeared for the first time in America as Donna Anna. Her associates were Sonntag-Uhl (Elvira), Betty Frank (Zerlina), Theodor Reichmann (the

[11] *Chapters of Opera,* p. 186.

L. M. Lehmann

Don), Fischer (Leporello), and Kalisch (Ottavio). Though the quality of the singers and Seidl's direction both assisted towards a fuller appreciation of Mozart's score than it had received in any previous performance in the house, there was only a single repetition during this season.

With no unperformed work of the later Wagner available for production, Seidl turned instead to a disciple of Bayreuth for the season's principal embellishment. This was Peter Cornelius' charming *Barbier von Bagdad.* After devoting the first month of the season to rehearsals of it, Seidl was compelled to postpone the *première,* when Kalisch became ill, from Christmas day to 4 January. By the later date, Seidl was also ill, and Kalisch had not recovered, with the result that the first performance was conducted by Damrosch, with Josef Beck (Caliph), Wilhelm Sedlmayer (Mustapha), Sophie Traubmann (Margiana), Charlotte Huhn (Bostana), and Fischer (the Barber). The first reception encouraged a belief that the work was 'a failure less than a generation ago in Europe, a success in New York,' [12] but it waited until 1925 for a rehearing after the five performances in this season.

Though the season also included appearances of Lehmann in *Der Masken Ball* (as this version of *Un Ballo in Maschera* was designated) on 11 December, in *Aïda* — for the first time — on 15 January, and in *Norma* on 27 February,[13] the artistic future of the institution was considerably more influenced by a post-season enterprise that had no connection with the official Metropolitan venture. This was a series of twenty-one performances of opera in Italian by a company under the direction of Henry Abbey and Maurice Grau, with Patti as the *prima donna,* Albani and Nordica being her principal female associates. Francesco Tamagno, the original Otello of the Milan *première,* was the leading tenor.

[12] *Tribune,* 5 January 1890.

[13] Lehmann chose *Norma* as the opera for her benefit performance. It did not enter the regular subscription repertory of the Metropolitan until the season of 1891–1892. With Lehmann were Betty Frank (Adalgisa), Kalisch, Fischer (Oroveso), Meisslinger (Clotilda), and Albert Mittel (Flavius). Damrosch conducted.

He was heard in his most famous role on the opening night of the season, 24 March, with Albani (Desdemona) and Del Puente (Iago). During this season Nordica sang for the first time in the Metropolitan Opera House, making her first appearance on 27 March in *Il Trovatore*, and immediately taking rank as the best Leonora that had been heard in New York to that time. Patti's repertory was her usual list of Bellini, Rossini, and Donizetti, varied by the inclusion of *Lakmé*, *Roméo*, and *Marta*. If there were any desires aroused in the stockholders by this reappearance of Italian opera in the Metropolitan for a return to a similar plan of performance, their immediate fulfilment was effectively prevented by plans consummated some weeks before for another season of opera in German.

1890–1891

STANTON'S attempts to piece together the divergent pattern of Wagner well-presented and Italian opera given by a personnel that did not include the celebrated, expensive singers of the day reached its climax in what was predestined to be the final year of opera in German at the Metropolitan. He avoided a reversion to the conventional Italian repertory, presenting instead, as the feature of the season, three 'novelties' which do not persist now even as museum pieces. With the first, Baron Alberto Franchetti's *Asrael*, he opened the season on 26 November 1890 ; the second, *Der Vasall von Szigeth* by Anton Smareglia appeared on 12 December ; but the ultimate depths were reached with a work entitled *Diana von Solange* by the Duke of Saxe-Coburg (Ernest II) which had its first performance on 9 January 1891. That the last of these should be presented for the pleasure of the Duke in his private theatre would seem a harmless form of diversion for an aristocrat of the day ; but its appearance as part of the regular subscription season in the Metropolitan Opera House — ! No satisfactory explanation for its performance was

ever discovered.[14] The lasting memory of *Asrael* was the opportunity it provided for the debut of Andreas Dippel (Asrael), who was, in 1908, to become co-director of the Metropolitan in association with Giulio Gatti-Casazza.

The efforts of the management to subordinate the more important scores of Wagner in favour of works more pleasing to the tastes of the stockholders, was clearly apparent in the course of the season. *Tannhäuser* was given on 28 November, with Heinrich Gudehus (Tannhäuser), Antonia Mielke (Elisabeth), Fischer (Wolfram), and Reichmann (Landgraf Hermann), and *Der Fliegende Holländer* on 31 December ; but the later works of Wagner were not brought out until the season was two-thirds completed. The first of these to be presented was *Die Meistersinger* on 14 January. Then ensued one of the most striking anomalies in New York's operatic history. Scarcely a week later, on 20 January, came the announcement that opera in German would be replaced, in 1891–92, by Italian and French works. But the remainder of the season was given over almost wholly to Wagner, and particularly to the later works which the owners of the building had decided they would no longer tolerate !

During the week of 23 February, for example, the repertory was *Die Meistersinger* on Monday, *Tristan* on Wednesday and Friday evenings, and *Meistersinger* again as the Saturday *matinée*. In all, between 20 January and 21 March, thirty-five performances of opera were given, of which twenty-five were works by Wagner ! The paradox was the result, primarily, of a desire to show the best possible balance sheet for the dying season,[15] conditioned by a public interest in specific works which has never been so strongly manifested in New York since. There were cheers and aggressive plaudits for Seidl each time he took his place in the conductor's chair ; a repetition of *Diana von*

[14] Years later it was said that a royal decoration had influenced Stanton.

[15] For an illuminating discussion of the finances of this period, see *Chapters of Opera*, pp. 200–212.

Solange (which had immediately been dubbed *Diana von Solangweilich*) was cancelled in favour of *Fidelio*, in deference to a petition bearing the names of three hundred opera-goers (11 January); and the final performance of the season (*Die Meistersinger*) on 21 March was attended by an enormous audience that remained for half-an-hour after the performance to applaud each member of the cast individually — and the executives, Seidl, Damrosch, and Stanton, particularly. Both Fischer and Seidl finally made speeches; and thus the history of the Metropolitan as the home of opera in German came to a close.

Though the season brought forth nothing of enduring musical interest it did give to posterity a document which defines this period better than any discussion of repertory or singers would. It was a small printed card that appeared in the boxes on 21 January and read:

January 15, 1891

Many complaints having been made to the directors of the Opera House of the annoyance produced by the talking in the boxes during the performances, the Board requests that it be discontinued.

By order of the Board of Directors.

EPILOGUE

NO PERIOD in the history of the Metropolitan has been so fruitful to the music-lovers of New York as the seasons given over to the production of opera in German. Not only did these years see the first production in America of the complete *Ring des Nibelungen*, of *Tristan*, and *Die Meistersinger* — which alone would have marked them as glorious — it saw their production by artists peculiarly suited for the tasks in hand, under Anton Seidl, a conductor of genius.

Furthermore, the beginning made in New York was reflected, in its influence, in the important cities of the country as a whole. The presence of these artists in America presented the opportunity for the introduction of the important works of Wagner to the interior cities, through the tours organized by Walter Damrosch.

To be sure, such an enterprise would have been initiated at some time, through the vitality inherent in the works themselves. But it was hastened by the events in New York, which demonstrated that a large public existed for whom these operas were not 'the music of the future,' but, in truth, the music of the present as well.

It cannot be said that the years of opera in German corresponded to the ultimate ideal of how an opera season should be organized. The establishment of a balanced repertory was not among its achievements, for the predominating seriousness of the opera at that time is apparent merely from an examination of the works presented. There were still to be introduced the later works of Verdi ; the re-establishment of Mozart in the opera house was forced to await the singers of the succeeding generation ; and lack of interest in the repertory of classic opera — Gluck and Händel, particularly — was a deficiency of taste in New York then, as it is today.

But so far as the accomplishment of a particular objective is concerned, the seven years of opera in German may be regarded as the most satisfactory in all the history of the Metropolitan. A definite responsibility to the musical public was discharged, if involuntarily ; the corner-stone of the building was laid, even if the structure has never been completed.

V

PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP FOR PROFIT

1891–1908

The de Reszkes and the 'Golden Age of Song'

THE OPERA SEASON which succeeded the departure of the German artists from New York was one that had been in the making for several years.[1] It was inevitable that singers so accomplished as Jean and Edouard de Reszke and Jean Lasalle would extend their domain to America ; indeed it is rather surprising that they had not appeared earlier on the local scene. In 1888 Jean de Reszke had been in negotiation with Mapleson for an American tour (to include his brother and Lasalle) and in November of that year wrote to Hermann Klein, the English critic : 'My brother and I have arranged the bases of our contracts, the salary, the repertory, the number of representations, etc. ; but we are waiting in vain for our contracts . . . we talked over with Mapleson the whole of the project for

[1] In addition to opening an era at the Metropolitan which led eventually to the more nearly catholic repertories of Conried and Gatti, 1891 introduced to New York several artists who became important in the recent history of music in New York. On 7 November the Kneisel Quartet gave its first concert, in Steinway Hall on Fourteenth Street ; on the following day Olive Fremstad (then identified as Fremstadt) made her first appearance singing at a concert in the Lenox Lyceum under the direction of Seidl. Scarcely a week later, on the 17th, Paderewski made his New York debut in a concert with orchestra in Carnegie Hall, appearing twice more as assisting artist before giving his first solo recital on the 24th. Also, in the previous month occurred the celebrated Hammerstein-Aronson controversy for the privilege of presenting the New York *première* of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana.* Both managed to present the work on the first of October — Aronson in the afternoon, Hammerstein in the evening. Though Aronson's was technically a dress rehearsal, he won the honours by a matter of five hours. His stage manager was Heinrich Conried, who thus made his first venture in serious opera.

America, discussed figures, and separated good friends.'[2] Also, in the same letter he declared, 'With Lasalle nothing has been settled. Mapleson has verbally settled the clauses of the contract, but no signatures have been exchanged.' Thus it is apparent that the impelling forces in the new era of the Metropolitan were preparing for an American career long before any decision of the stockholders turned the eyes of Abbey and Grau in their direction. That decision merely provided the mechanism for their appearance and established the Metropolitan as the scene of their activities. The pros and cons of the controversy regarding the success of opera in German thus diminish in their relationship to the future of opera in New York ; and the appearance of the de Reszkes and their collaborators was an historical necessity, which would have exerted, in any setting, its inevitable effects.

1891–1892

THE growth in operatic experience gained by Abbey since his first calamitous season was well demonstrated by the company he assembled for his return. However, it may merely have been an indication of the growing importance of Maurice Grau in the collaboration of Abbey, Schoeffel, and Grau. That 'all-star' opera reached its highest level when Grau became the sole director a half-dozen years later is ample evidence of his individual contribution. The principal female singers were Emma Eames (only twenty-four years old, but distinguished by her Parisian successes), Lillian Nordica, already a New York favourite though her appearances had not been numerous, Lilli Lehmann, Emma Albani, Marie Van Zandt, and Sofia Scalchi. The male singers were primarily the de Reszkes, Jean Lasalle, and Paul Kalisch, plus half a dozen others of greatly inferior ability. Vianesi was again the conductor. From the principal singers of the German company, only Lehmann and Kalisch were retained.

[2] Clara Leiser, *Jean de Reszke and the Great Days of Opera*, Minton, Balch and Company, New York, 1934, p. 64.

The opera that introduced this group to New York on 14 December, after a five-weeks' visit to Chicago, was *Roméo et Juliette*, given for the first time in New York in French, and with the ensemble prologue.[3] Eames was heard as Juliette, Jean as Roméo, and Edouard as Frère Laurent. Though the production lacked the strength in ensemble that had distinguished the best of those given in the preceding seasons, the individual qualities of the singers were a grateful surprise to those who had feared for the artistic future of the institution. W. J. Henderson, in *The Times*, pronounced Edouard to be a 'really great artist' and recorded that the 'audience was quick to recognize his superlative merit.' *The Tribune* described Eames as 'a strikingly beautiful Juliette' and found Jean's singing to be 'prompted by most admirable instincts' though adding that his 'voice was not sensuously beautiful.'

Another magnificent audience assembled to hear Lehmann's first venture in Italian, when she sang in *Il Trovatore* (Leonora) at the next subscription performance on 16 December, with Kalisch (Manrico), and Ravogli (Azucena). Though Albani and Scalchi were both ill for a performance of *Les Huguenots* on 18 December, the work was given brilliantly with Nordica (Valentine), Pettigiani (Marguerite de Valois), Jean (Raoul), and Edouard (Marcel), roles in which the brothers de Reszke were recognized as being without peers. On 1 January 1892 Lehmann appeared as Bertha in *Le Prophète* to Jean's Prophète and Edouard's Zacharias. It was the memory of such performances as this which caused Lehmann to write, long afterwards: 'In respect to purity of tone and nobility, Jean was musically the only one of his kind, and never before nor since have I heard any one like him.'[4] On 4 January a performance of *Lohengrin* in Italian with Eames (Elsa), Jean (Lohengrin), and Edouard (Heinrich) opened new vistas in the exposition of Wagner's *melos*, though the orchestra and Vianesi's direction were both

[3] When Patti appeared in *Roméo* at the Academy the work was given in Italian.
[4] *My Path Through Life*, p. 384.

inferior. (The New York Symphony Society had left the pit with the retirement from the Metropolitan of Walter Damrosch.)

On 11 January Jean de Reszke was heard in *Otello* with Albani (Desdemona), and Camera (Iago), but he had not yet developed the heroic qualities of his voice to the stature demanded by the role. Unfortunately, he did not return to the work in his later days. *Fidelio,* in Italian, with Lehmann (Leonore), Kalisch (Florestan), and Edouard de Reszke on 13 January, with Seidl conducting, was not, in this language, Beethoven's *Fidelio* to the German population of the city, and the work was repeated but once. The strength of the company was completed on 15 January by the first appearance of Lasalle, who chose Nelusko in *L'Africaine* as the role of his debut. His associates were Nordica (Selika), Jean (da Gama), and Edouard (Don Pedro). Thus were united for the first time in America the princely trio whose graces as men and whose skill as artists are so bright a memory of the era.

That the directors of the company were not insensitive to the virtues — commercial as well as artistic — of German opera in German, was demonstrated by their intention to produce *Die Walküre* in the original tongue with Lehmann and Fischer (who was not a member of the company) during February. Lehmann's arduous preparation for a first appearance in *L'Africaine* on 15 February resulted, however, in a breakdown which necessitated her withdrawal for the balance of the season, and the project was abandoned. The Wagner of this season was thus confined to *Lohengrin* and three performances of *I Maestri Cantori* (*Die Meistersinger* à la Milanese) with a polyglot cast in which were Jean (Walther), a Pole ; Lasalle (Sachs), a Frenchman; Albani (Eva), an American; Bauermeister (Magdalena), a German, as was also Seidl, who conducted. Henderson's description of Jean as 'the ideal Walther von Stolzing' had its inception in the first performance on 2 March, for Jean's artistry and intelligence discovered in the role qualities of which the Stritts and Schotts and Gudehuses had no conception, much less the ability to convey.

Edouard's recovery after a brief illness permitted him to offer his Méphistophélès in *Faust* for the first time on 1 February, in association with Eames, Jean, and Scalchi (Siebel). Though it

was given in Italian (as was the single *Carmen* of this season), the balanced cast thus provided aroused anew the traditional appetite of New Yorkers for the work, and a half-a-dozen performances in the remaining month and a half of the season accurately foreshadowed the later period when it was to become almost a weekly occurrence at the Metropolitan.

In contrast to the previous years of opera in German, the artistic qualities of the season were inherent largely in the individual qualities of the singers, rather than in any merits of ensemble or production. Messrs. Abbey and Grau did not hesitate to offer Gluck's *Orfeo* as a curtain-raiser for the first performance in the Metropolitan of *Cavalleria Rusticana* on 30 December, with Eames as Santuzza. Not only was this masterpiece mounted merely to exhibit the talents of two singers, Giulia Ravogli (Orfeo) and her sister Sofia (Eurydice), but it was presented with a hodge-podge of scenery that offered one set from the defunct *Merlin* of Goldmark, another from Franchetti's *Asrael.* The production of *Otello* was prepared by the brothers de Reszke and Albani, not one of the three stage managers of the company being familiar with the work.[5]

Definite announcement of plans for the next season's opera was not made public until the first of April, when it was learned that Abbey and Grau had signed a contract with the stockholders covering production of opera in the Metropolitan for the next two seasons. A post-season of opera, in which the talents of Patti were interspersed with those of the season's regular group, had begun on 30 March, with a performance of *Der Fliegende Holländer,* with Lasalle singing the Dutchman for the first time in his career, and Edouard de Reszke as Daland. The most brilliant day of the year was reached on Wednesday, April 3, when the afternoon offered a *Faust* with Eames, the de Reszkes, and Scalchi ; the evening was given over to a performance of *Lucia* with Patti. Fortunate, indeed, the generation that was bedevilled by such a necessity for choice !

[5] Leiser, *Jean de Reszke,* p. 118.

1892 — Fire and Reorganization

The workman who dropped a cigarette in the paint room of the Metropolitan Opera House on Saturday morning, 27 August 1892, exercised, it is incredible to note, even more influence on the future of the organization than did any of the eminent singers who had been heard in the house to that time. The fire which followed brought about not merely certain essential and necessary revisions in the structure of the building. It marked the death of the Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd., and the birth of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, which has ever since occupied a position of tremendous importance in the musical life of New York.

Though the fire was discovered at nine o'clock in the morning, shortly after it began, the stage was entirely aflame before the arrival of the firemen. In addition to the scenery which was being painted, according to the off-season custom, on the stage, the fire was fed by large quantities of discarded scenery which was stored in a cellar beneath the stage. A fireproof curtain, designed to protect the auditorium from just such a mishap as this, was no longer in use, and the flames quickly spread through the interior of the house. The only protection to any portion of it was the ballroom floor over the seats, but even this was of slight value. Though the fire was extinguished by noon, the interior of the building was damaged to an extent estimated to be as much as three hundred thousand dollars.

The stockholders, in their various summer retreats, were frankly incredulous of the report — for had they not been assured that the building was completely fireproof? Sentiment was divided on the question of rebuilding, for the insurance aggregated in all only sixty thousand dollars on a structure that had cost a half-million dollars to erect. It would require twice as much merely to restore it to usefulness. Of those who were available for comment, Luther Kountze, Henry Marquand, Calvin S. Brice, and Robert Goelet declared themselves in favour of

reconstruction. The most practical, if the least artistic view was taken by Henry Clews, who informed a reporter for *The Sun:* 'The opera house property is a good investment. The original cost, building and all, was about $2,000,000. Now the *ground alone* [italics mine — Ed.] is worth that much and the enhancement of values has been so great that I am sure that it has increased more than three times the original cost. In this way the stockholders are protected from loss in spite of the lack of insurance.' The truth of this observation seems not to have been obscured from the more far-seeing of his fellow-directors.

On 26 September Abbey and Grau announced that they would not give opera at the Metropolitan in the future without a subsidy, and that all contracts for the ensuing year had been abrogated. Simultaneously it was announced that the Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd., would not undertake the rebuilding, and that the property would be sold to satisfy the judgments outstanding. When the sale was actually consummated, the purchaser was the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, a corporation composed of thirty-five shareholders, of whom slightly more than half were members of the defunct company. This represented those who shared a love of opera, a recognition of a 'good investment' (in the words of Clews), and the money to indulge both.

Of the original seventy occupants of the two tiers of stockholders' boxes at the opening *Faust*, the following nineteen retained their interest in the newly formed company : Ogden Goelet, Robert Goelet, W. K. Vanderbilt, Cornelius Vanderbilt (who now had two boxes), J. J. Astor, George F. Baker (sharing with H. C. Fahnestock), Henry Clews, D. Odgen Mills, J. Hood Wright, G. G. Haven, Edward Cooper (sharing with Henry T. Sloane), Levi P. Morton (sharing with George Bliss), S. O. Babcock, W. C. Whitney, Luther Kountze, J. Pierpont Morgan, George P. Wetmore, Mrs. George H. Warren, and Adrian Iselin. Of the sixteen others who completed the new company, the most conspicuous new addition — in terms of later history — was A. D. Juilliard. His fortune comprised the estate which gave rise to the Juilliard Foundation, now the chief support of the opera. There were also Perry

Belmont and W. Bayard Cutting, both of whose families had been box-holders at the Academy ten years before.[6]

The new stockholders marshalled themselves into the parterre boxes — thirty-five in number — which inevitably became celebrated as *the* Diamond Horseshoe, in place of the *two* earlier Golden Horseshoes. For the privilege of owning a box and a thirty-fifth interest in the building and property, each stockholder subscribed to three hundred shares of stock, at a par value of one hundred dollars per share. Each additionally participated to the same total — thirty thousand dollars — in a bond issue for the purpose of reconstructing the building.[7] Out of the $2,100,000 thus raised, $1,425,000 was used to purchase the property at foreclosure proceedings. The stockholders also agreed to a yearly assessment 'up to an aggregate of $15 per share annually'[8] to provide for the expenses incidental to the maintenance of the property. In the by-laws of the company was incorporated a stipulation that 'no transfer of stock shall be made except to a person or persons previously approved by the directorate.'[9] As long as the Metropolitan Opera House retained its position at the pinnacle of fashion, the directors thus constituted the arbiters for social acceptability in New York.

Actual reconstruction was begun on 14 April 1893. As finally accomplished, the alterations included : the elimination of the *baignoire* boxes, enlarging the present orchestra circle (a gain of three hundred and fifty chairs) and providing more room for standees ; the removal of two plenum chambers at the sides of the orchestra seats, also increasing the space for standees ; the lowering of both the stage and the *parquet* floor by three feet, eliminating the sharp upward slope that had formerly led to the

[6] Among those who withdrew from sponsoring opera in New York were James Gordon Bennett, William Rockefeller, Cyrus Field, John W. Drexel, James Harriman, James A. Roosevelt, and Jay Gould.

[7] The assessment was not per individual, but per box. Thus, those who shared boxes also shared the assessment.

[8] *The New York Times*, 2 March 1926.

[9] *Ibid.*

parquet floor from the foyer ; the addition of the omnibus box on the grand tier ; the installation of electric lighting through the auditorium as well as on the stage. In general, the lower floor of the house has remained unaltered to this day ; save that two sections of orchestra chairs that jutted forward (on either side of the orchestra pit) to the stage, were removed in 1906 to provide space for the musicians necessary for *Salome*. Four electric elevators were also provided for the patrons of the dress circle and the balcony, though they did not, perversely, extend to the point where they were most needed. The Family Circle (gallery) was still reached by a tortuous climb.

In addition to establishing the parterre row of boxes as the only socially significant horseshoe at the Metropolitan, the emergence of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company as the owners of the building, in 1893, settled the essential basis on which all subsequent opera has been given in the auditorium. Through the terms of its lease with each producing agency since, the Real Estate Company has reserved for its stockholders the use of the parterre boxes for each subscription performance given in the house, in lieu of rental. Thus, while the operating company is deprived of the income it might receive, in prosperous times, from the sale of these boxes, it does not have the problem of meeting a fixed rental charge. It is the ramifications of this arrangement, superficially a simple one, which have complicated the recent presentation of opera in New York.

1893–1894

THE second grand opening of the Metropolitan occurred on 27 November 1893 under circumstances strongly reminiscent of the first opening ten years before. Again there was an unfamiliar structure to be inspected and admired ; again there was a 'brilliant' gathering to be observed in the boxes — though this time the scrutiny was made easier by the compressed number of them, and by the consciousness that only one tier really mattered. For

the convenience of the audience, the numbers of the boxes, a plan of the horseshoe, and the names of the owners were included in the programme, a detail that had been overlooked on the earlier occasion. There was, too, an air of familiarity and warmth in the auditorium which had been lacking when two opera seasons opened simultaneously in 1883 ; and the happiness of the large audience was consummated by the promise held forth by the programme, which proclaimed the evening's offering to be, again :

FAUST

Margherita ..... Emma Eames
Siébel ..... Olympia Guercia (debut)
Marta ..... Mathilde Bauermeister
Valentino ..... Jean Lasalle
Mefistofele ..... Edouard de Reszke
Wagner ..... Signor de Vassetti
Faust ..... Jean de Reszke
Conductor, Luigi Mancinelli

Thus, the era of the 'ideal casts' made its appearance in New York.

The emphasis on vocal virtuosity which was to dominate the operatic scene in New York for a large part of the next decade was even better exemplified at the performance on Wednesday, November 29. No fewer than five singers new to New York made their debuts during the evening, including Emma Calvé, Pol Plançon, and Sigrid Arnoldson. Gounod's *Philémon et Baucis* provided the opportunities for Arnoldson (Baucis) and Plançon (Jupiter) under the direction of Signor Bevignani ; and *Cavalleria Rusticana* for Calvé (Santuzza) and the others who were new — Dufriche (Alfio), and Vignas (Turiddu). Guercia was heard as Lola. The extraordinary abilities of Calvé were given a highly favourable setting by the opportunities of Santuzza, particularly since its previous interpreter at the Metropolitan, Eames, possessed little of the dramatic fire of the Frenchwoman. Plançon also enjoyed an enthusiastic reception, though his virtues were better revealed in his later appearances.

An Italian *Lohengrin* on 1 December though it included Nordica, Edouard de Reszke, and Lasalle (Telramund), suffered by the poorness of Vignas' Lohengrin ; and a repetition of the opening *Faust* the following afternoon preceded the season's next auspicious debut — that of Nellie Melba, in *Lucia di Lammermoor* on 4 December. *The Tribune* of the following day proclaimed her to be 'the finest exponent of vocalization since Sembrich' ; and noted that she was accorded 'a superb greeting.' Her next appearance was unfortunately in Thomas' *Hamlet* with Lasalle (Hamlet) and Plançon (Polonius), a work which has never acquired much respect in New York, and the impetus of her debut was somewhat lost. She participated in the first performance of *Pagliacci* at the Metropolitan on 11 December, (Nedda) with De Lucia (Canio), and Ancona (Tonio) under the direction of Mancinelli, again without striking popular success, for the Leoncavallo work was juxtaposed with *Orfeo.*

The first of the great performances of *Les Huguenots* which were to distinguish this era also occurred in the early weeks of the season, on 18 December. Included in the cast were Nordica (Valentine), Jean (Raoul), Edouard (Marcel), Lasalle (St. Bris), Arnoldson (Marguerite), and Scalchi (Urbain). The audience, however, was not large. But the first appearance of Calvé in *Carmen* (the first time the work had been given in New York in the original tongue) on 20 December, with Jean de Reszke (Don José), Lasalle (Escamillo), Eames (Micaëla), and Dufriche, the creator of the role, as Zuniga, brought to the house an audience of a size usually reserved for *Faust.* Calvé's triumph was instantaneous, and her historic relationship to the role was established permanently, to endure despite the liberties she later permitted herself. Grau's use, too, of Eames as Micaëla was characteristic prodigality, which later took the form of alternating her with Melba. No one marvelled more at this generosity than the singers themselves ; indeed, on one later occasion, Eames encountered Grau while on her way to dress for a performance of *Carmen,* stopped and said : 'You must be

a very rich man, Mr. Grau, to pay me eight hundred dollars to sing Micaëla.'

That *Carmen* led the season's list with twelve performances was ample indication that it made money for Abbey and Grau, regardless of the expense involved in mounting it. As Calvé had been engaged for a comparatively small fee, the large receipts well covered the cost of the other artists engaged in the cast. Her seven appearances in *Cavalleria* also contributed much to the prosperity of the season. Less attractive to the public was Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz* which was presented for Calvé on 10 January, but not repeated. Later in this month were two events very highly regarded, however ; a *Maestri Cantori* on the 8th with Eames (Eva), Jean (Walther), Lasalle (Sachs) and Plançon (Pogner), and the first of the Melba-Jean de Reszke performances of *Roméo et Juliette*, on the 19th, with Plançon (Frère Laurent), and Dufriche (Capulet).

The Metropolitan was not barren of opera even after the Abbey and Grau company had completed its season and departed to Boston. It was, moreover, the banished opera in German which returned to the auditorium, under the sponsorship of Walter Damrosch. He took advantage of the fortunate presence of Materna, Anton Schott, and Emil Fischer to organize a performance of *Götterdämmerung* on 28 March. So welcomed was the first opera in German at the Metropolitan in three years, that plans were immediately proposed for an elaborate season of German opera in 1894–1895 under the direction of Anton Seidl, who was fretting for just such an opportunity while he spent his time with the Philharmonic Society and the Sunday night concerts at the Metropolitan. The plan was to give a season running concurrently with that of the Metropolitan's regular Italian and French performances, making use of the auditorium on its vacant nights. The friends of Damrosch also proposed an extended season. Attempts to bring the two efforts under a joint direction failed because the two conductors could not agree on a division of the repertory, and Seidl withdrew, having asserted his belief that Damrosch was not, as his friends claimed him to be, 'one of the great leaders' — a term which Seidl conceived to mean 'Richter, Mottl or

Levi.' Henry Finck later declared that the proposals made for Seidl's participation 'were not consonant with his dignity and his artistic conscience.' [10] Damrosch, however, pushed his plans and spent the summer in Europe gathering a company.

While these matters were under discussion, the Abbey and Grau company returned for a supplementary season, during which the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth performances of *Carmen* were given, as well as the first American performance of Massenet's *Werther*, on 19 April. *Werther* was presented with Eames (Charlotte), Arnoldson (Sophie), Jean de Reszke (Werther), Carbone (Le Bailli), and Martapoura (Albert). As an appropriate conclusion to this historic season was the first of the gala nights (which were to become a memorable chapter of this era) on 27 April. It offered these items : the third act of *Roméo* with Eames, the two de Reszkes, and Bauermeister ; the second act of *Carmen* with Calvé ; the third act of *Werther* with Eames, Jean de Reszke, and Arnoldson ; the third act of *Aïda* with Nordica ; and Melba in the 'Mad Scene' from *Hamlet*.

The regular prices for this and the subsequent season under the direction of Grau were :

550	Orchestra seats	$5
100	Orchestra circle seats	$5
250	Orchestra circle seats	$4
420	Dress Circle seats	$3
530	Balcony seats	
	First three rows	$2.50
	Other rows	$2
670	Family Circle seats	
	First three rows	$1.50
	Other rows	$1

For the seats in the grand tier boxes, special financial arrangements were made.

[10] *Anton Seidl — A Memorial*, p. 25.

1894–1895

THOUGH Metropolitan audiences were again deprived of opera in German during this season, the year was not devoid of comparable music in the opera house. For the first time both of Verdi's masterworks, *Otello* and *Falstaff*, were included in a Metropolitan subscription season. They were, moreover, embellished by the presence of the original Falstaff, Victor Maurel, and the original Otello, Francesco Tamagno. Whether the decision to give the works was conditioned by the presence of the artists in the company, or whether they were engaged specifically for this purpose remains obscure even today ; but it is apparent that a growing taste for serious opera was reflected by these events, regardless of their motivation. It also indicates the manner in which worthy works ultimately force themselves to be presented — in this instance, by the reaction against the overgenerous portion of Wagner that had been lavished upon the opera-goers of New York during the preceding years.

With Eames, the two de Reszkes, and Campanari, Grau opened his season with *Roméo et Juliette* on 19 November, the strength of the cast once more gaining for the opera a favour that it has rarely enjoyed in a later era. Though Calvé was absent from the company, *Carmen* was offered as the second Monday night opera a week later, with Zelie de Lussan (Carmen) making her debut, Jean (Don José), Edouard de Reszke singing Escamillo for the first time, and Melba as Micaëla.

On 3 December Maurel made his first New York appearance as Iago, to Tamagno's Otello and Eames' Desdemona, under the direction of Mancinelli. Within the week were offered *Lohengrin* on the fifth with Nordica, Jean de Reszke, Mantelli as Ortrud, Ancona as Telramund, and Plançon as Heinrich ; *Rigoletto* on the seventh, with Melba, Russitano (debut, The Duke), and Maurel as the Jester for the first time ; and *Faust*

on the twelfth, with Melba, the two de Reszkes, Scalchi, Bauermeister, and Ancona. Eames added one of her most characteristic roles, Aïda, in a performance of that work on Christmas Eve with Tamagno, Mantelli, Maurel (Amonasro), and Plançon (Ramfis). On 26 December Grau experimented for the first time with a type of performance that was thereafter established as one of his recurrent features — the grouping of half-a-dozen of his outstanding singers in a single cast, at an advanced price. At a top price of seven dollars, the New Yorker of the nineties was offered *Les Huguenots*, with :

Marguerite de Valois ..... Melba
Valentine ..... Nordica
Urbain ..... Scalchi
Raoul ..... Jean de Reszke
Marcel ..... Edouard de Reszke
St. Bris ..... Pol Plançon
de Nevers ..... Maurel
Conductor, Luigi Mancinelli

Never before had such an amazing group of singing actors been gathered in New York — particularly when it is observed that four days later half of them were to be heard in so different a work as *Don Giovanni*, which was presented with Nordica (Donna Anna), Eames (Donna Elvira), de Lussan (Zerlina), Maurel (Don Giovanni), Edouard (Leporello), Russitano (Don Ottavio), and Carbone (Masetto). Though Maurel was hardly gifted with a great voice, his impersonation of the Don was composed with an artistry that has been approached by no singer of the last forty years, save, perhaps, Maurice Renaud. Maurel was heard as Telramund in a performance of *Lohengrin* on 9 January, but it was not a role in which he ever achieved a substantial celebrity. Variety to the repetitions of *Otello, Les Huguenots,* and *Don Giovanni* that ensued was provided by the debut of Sybil Sanderson in *Manon* on 16 January, with Jean de Reszke as the Chevalier des Grieux for the first time, Plançon (Comte des Grieux), and Ancona (Lescaut). This was the first performance of *Manon* in French that New York had heard.

The season's climaxing artistic event occurred on 4 February when *Falstaff* was given its first performance in North America, with Maurel in the role with which he is most completely identified.[11] His associates were :

[11] *Falstaff* had been given in Buenos Aires during the season of 1893.

Mistress Ford	Eames
Mistress Page	de Vigne
Nannetta	de Lussan
Dame Quickly	Scalchi
Fenton	Russitano
Ford	Campanari
Pistol	Nicolini
Dr. Caius	Vanni
Bardolph	Rinaldini

An innovation that was to achieve a fuller fruition twenty years later in a revival by Gatti was the introduction of Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* in operatic form on 8 February. It had been heard previously as an oratorio, but this was its first performance in New York as a theatre piece. The cast included Tamagno (Samson), Mantelli (Dalila), Campanari (The High Priest), and Plançon (who appeared as both Abimelech and an Old Hebrew). It was given again but once, to be retired until the Caruso-Matzenauer revival of 1915 supplied a new impetus to its career in the Metropolitan.

As a gesture to their friend Hermann Bemberg, the de Reszkes participated in a presentation of his *Elaine* on 17 December. Together with Melba (Elaine), and Plançon (Astolat), Jean had the role of Lancelot and Edouard that of L'Ermite, uniting the quartet which had appeared in the London *première* of *Elaine* on 5 July 1892. In the New York cast were also Mantelli (Queen Guinevere), Bauermeister (Torre), Mauguière (Lavaine), and Castlemary (Gauvain). There was one repetition during this season, and no subsequent revival. Mme. Bauermeister's rare utility to the company was publicly displayed for the first time on 13 February, during a performance of *L'Africaine.* Lucille Hill, who was singing Inez, fainted during the second act ; and Mme. Bauermeister, though engaged in the performance as Anna, assumed her role and finished the performance. That cast offered Nordica (Selika), Tamagno (da Gama), Edouard de Reszke (Don Pedro), and Ancona (Nelusko).

The agitation which had involved the musical connoisseurs of both New York and London in their attempts to persuade the brothers de Reszke to undertake the great Wagnerian roles in German achieved its end during the next few months. When the resident company surrendered the Metropolitan Opera

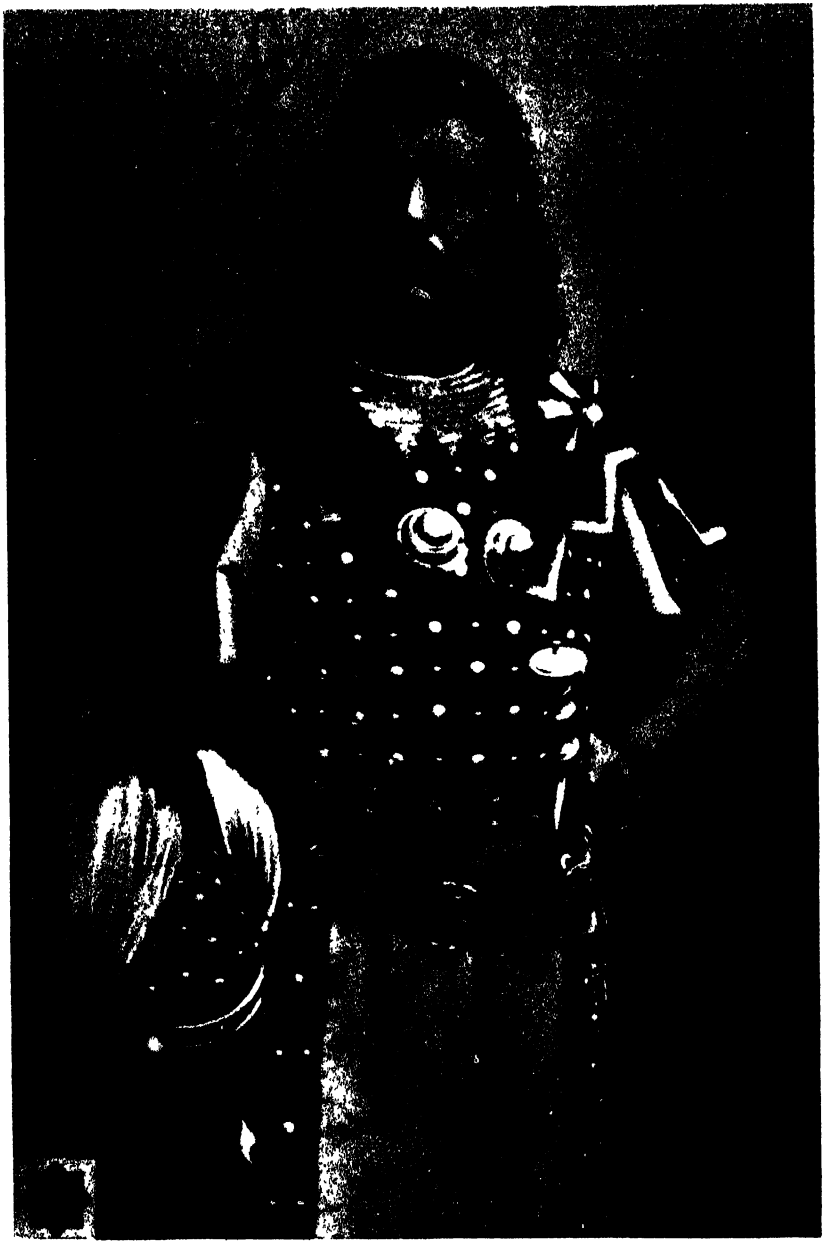
House to the Damrosch German Opera Company and left for Boston at the end of February, Jean quietly asked a few of his musical intimates in New York to keep him informed about the artistic qualities of the new venture, and the public response to it. Among those of whom he requested this favour were W. J. Henderson and H. E. Krehbiel. To the former he said, 'I go to Boston to sing Faust, but I will cry.' Whether or not it was Shaw who exercised the greatest pressure in urging the de Reszkes toward their new repertory is yet a matter of vexed discussion ; [12] but it is true that after the opening performance of *Tristan* on 25 February (conducted by Walter Damrosch, with Sucher, Brema, Alvary, and Fischer) Henderson wrote to Jean : 'The sooner you and Edouard sing in German, the better it will be for you, for Wagner, and for the public.' A full two years before, indeed, on 24 January 1892, *The Tribune* had implored Abbey and Grau to produce opera in German with the de Reszkes, Lehmann, Kalisch, and Lasalle, a week after the latter's American debut.

A post-season of two weeks, in April, gave New York its first opportunity to hear Edouard de Reszke as Hans Sachs, in *I Maestri Cantori* on the 22nd, with Eames, Bauermeister, Jean (Walther), Plançon (Pogner), Carbone (Beckmesser), Lloyd d'Aubigne (David), and Campanari (Kothner), Mancinelli conducting. The season ended with one of the most notable performances of *Le Nozze di Figaro* that the Metropolitan had yet heard, with Eames (Countess), Nordica (Susanna), de Lussan (Cherubino), Maurel (Figaro), and E. de Reszke (Almaviva). The conductor was Louis Saar.

1895–1896

THE longest step towards truly international opera that the Metropolitan had yet taken was recorded in the annals of the institution on 27 November 1895. This was the first appear-

[12] Clara Leiser's *Jean de Reszke* gives that impression, p. 131.



JEAN DE RESZKE

ance of the two de Reszkes in *Tristan,* with the authentic language. As well as restoring the greatest of musical tragedies to the stage of the Metropolitan, it signalized a departure in the singing of these roles which was to establish standards not only for New York but for all the musical world. The view of certain historians that Metropolitan Opera of the time was no more than a reflection of the events at Covent Garden is somewhat shaken by the fact that the most important event in the decade's history of musical performance occurred in New York. The persons of the cast were :

Isolde ..... Nordica
Brangaene ..... Brema
Tristan ..... Jean de Reszke
Kurwenal ..... Kaschmann
König Marke ..... Edouard de Reszke
Ein Hirt ..... Riedel
Conductor, Anton Seidl

The perfection of Jean's singing, for those who were discerning, had been foreshadowed by his Walther and his Lohengrin, as well as in his Italian and French roles. But the ease and fluency of his German were no less amazing than his feeling for the most exacting part he had yet undertaken. Here, too, the characteristic thoroughness of the brothers' preparation had been of inestimable advantage ; for they had, according to Henderson, carried on all their personal conversation for the *two* preceding years in German.[13] Five times more in that season the de Reszkes and Nordica were heard in *Tristan,* all the performances under the direction of Anton Seidl, whose re-engagement as conductor had been made a condition of their appearance in German works by the de Reszkes. To this, Jean and Edouard added their first German performance of *Lohen-*

[13] From the same source I learn the following : Seated next to Paderewski at a dinner during this year, Henderson chanced to remark on the quality of Jean's German. Paderewski exclaimed : 'But that is not so. Jean does not speak German.' Henderson suggested that Paderewski try his compatriot's ability ; and when Jean appeared to greet him, the pianist returned the salutation in German. Jean answered him, and conversed fluently in that tongue for the rest of his visit.

grin on 2 January, with Nordica (Elsa), Brema (Ortrud), and Kaschmann (Telramund).

The predestined success of their first venture in German had encouraged Messrs. Abbey and Grau to schedule a series of ten evenings of opera in German, given on Thursdays (which had not then been incorporated in the subscription series). In addition to *Tristan*, the list included *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, *Fidelio*, and *Die Walküre*, but none of these were of a quality comparable to *Tristan*, for the company lacked sufficient versatility for so diverse a repertory. *Die Meistersinger* remained *I Maestri Cantori*, but was given but once, with Lola Beeth as Eva, the balance of the cast as in the preceding year.

For the rest the season consisted of familiar virtues. Calvé was again associated with the company, and the result was eleven performances of *Carmen*, the first of them on 20 November, with Lubert (José), Maurel (Escamillo), and Frances Saville (Micaëla) ; seven of *Cavalleria Rusticana* ; and the presentation of Massenet's *La Navarraise*, which had been written for her, on 11 December. In the cast of the one-act opera, one of the few 'novelties' of the period of Abbey and Grau, were Calvé (Anita), Lubert (Araquil), and Plançon (Garrido). It was given again on 11 January, with two acts of Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*. Grau's fondness for *Orfeo*, if fondness it may be called, was demonstrated anew by its reappearance as the rest of the evening's entertainment, with Brema (Orfeo), and Marie Engle. On 4 December Calvé was heard in *Hamlet* for the first time (with Mantelli, Kaschmann, and Plançon) and on 15 January *Mefistofele* was revived for her, with Edouard de Reszke (Mefistofele), and Cremonini (Faust). The staple repertory was compounded of such elements as an *Aïda* on 16 December, with Nordica, Brema, Jean (Rhadames), Edouard (Ramfis), Maurel (Amonasro), and Arimondi (The King) ; *Faust* with Melba or Nordica, the de Reszkes, and Maurel ; *Manon* on 23 January with Melba (Manon), Jean (des Grieux), Maurel (Lescaut), and Plançon (Comte des Grieux) ; and five

performances of the amazing *Huguenots*, in its gala array of the year before.

1896–1897

IN the season of his first appearance as *Tristan*, Jean had also sung Lohengrin in both Italian and German ; Roméo, Faust, Rhadames, the Chevalier des Grieux, and Raoul in their original tongues. But the desire of this singer and his brother to include the whole of the great Wagnerian repertory among their accomplishments before they retired brought them new laurels in this year, and contributed further to the establishment of the Metropolitan as an international opera house. Their first *Siegfried* on 30 December was the setting also for one of the most dramatic incidents in the history of the institution — Melba's futile attempt to encompass the music of Brünnhilde.

There has long been a legend that it was the de Reszkes who urged this rash course on her, but the explanation advanced recently by Miss Leiser (in her *Jean de Reszke*) has the sound of truth. It was apparently, the Voice of the Forest Bird which Jean suggested for Melba, and *not* Brünnhilde ; and for that, it is easy to believe, her voice would have been ideal. Melba's prejudice against singing the smaller role has never been explained, especially in the light of her willingness to sing Micaëla — but the fact that one is an *off*-stage and the other an *on*-stage role may not be an unrelated circumstance. The cast for the first *Siegfried* in a Metropolitan season since 11 March 1891 was :

Siegfried ..... Jean de Reszke
Mime ..... von Hubbenet
Der Wanderer ..... Edouard de Reszke
Alberich ..... David Bispham
Voice of the Forest Bird ..... Sophie Traubmann
Brünnhilde ..... Melba
Conductor, Anton Seidl

Melba's aspirations to Brünnhilde affected the season more than merely through the disability which prevented her appearance for two weeks and brought an early curtailment of her engagement.[14] She had persuaded Grau to assign exclusive right to the role to her, which Nordica conceived as a cabal against her. As a result, Nordica was not a member of the company in this season. But the superabundance of singers that Grau had at his command contributed, nevertheless, a number of interesting events to the musical prosperity of New York. Preceding her collapse, Melba appeared in the opening night performance of *Faust*, on 16 November, with the de Reszkes and Lasalle (Valentin) ; in *Roméo*, with the usual cast of the de Reszkes, Bauermeister, and Plançon, on 23 November ; and in *La Traviata* for the first time on 21 December.

During this portion of the season Eames was heard in *I Maestri Cantori* on 18 November, with the de Reszkes, Plançon, and Bispham (Beckmesser, debut) ; two days later in *Tannhäuser*, given in a mixture of Italian and French, with Plançon (Landgraf Hermann), and Lasalle (Wolfram) ; on 27 November in a performance of *Lohengrin* in German, with the de Reszkes and Bispham (Telramund), the chorus singing in Italian ; in *Carmen* (Micaëla) with Calvé, Thomas Salignac (José, debut), and Lasalle (Escamillo) ; and on 23 December in *Faust*, with the supporting cast of the opening night.

The third of the season's distinguished Marguerites was presented on 4 January, when *Faust* was given with Calvé as the principal female singer. Thus, within a space of six weeks, New York was favoured with the appearance of Melba, Eames, and Calvé as alternating Marguerites, an impetus which gave the work ten performances by 18 February, and inspired W. J. Henderson to write in *The New York Times* of that date :

Far hence in the future when a guide of cosmopolitan misinformation is escorting Macaulay's New Zealander through the excavations on Manhattan Island, they will pause at the ruins of a vast auditorium on upper Broadway, and the New Zealander will say: 'I suppose this

[14] She reappeared in *Roméo* on 16 January.

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was the arena.' The guide will reply : 'No, it was the sacred *Faustspielhaus.*' Macaulay's New Zealander, knowing German, will reply : 'You mean Festspielhaus, don't you ?' And the guide will answer : 'No, honored sir, the Festspielhaus was in Germany where they played dramas by one Vogner. Here they played *Faust* and it is therefore the *Faustspielhaus.*' And the New Zealander will marvel greatly.

Thus, the origin of the *Faustspielhaus.*

The season concluded, however, with considerably less brilliancy than it had started. Melba's withdrawal and the lack of a first-rank *hochdramatischesopran* lowered the qualities of the other performances of *Siegfried,* which was given five times again with Felia Litvinne and Georgine von Januschowsky as alternating Brünnhildes. As this had been the dramatic event of the season, so there was also the tragic — the death, during a performance of *Marta,* of Armando Castlemary, the Tristan of the evening and a member of the company since 1891. The exertions of his pursuit at the close of the second act struck at his heart ; and he died in the arms of Jean de Reszke, while the audience applauded their impression of a masterly characterization.

To permit New York a view of the three original figures of Massenet's *Le Cid* (the de Reszkes and Plançon) the work was given on 12 February as the season's novelty. It had been for several years an intention of Grau's to produce the work. In addition to Jean (Rodrigue), Edouard (Don Diegue), Plançon (Le Comte de Gormas), and Lasalle (Le Roi), the cast included Bars (St. Jacques *and* L'Envoye Maure), Corsi (Don Arras), de Vaschetti (Don Alonzo), de Vere (L'Infante), and Litvinne (Chimène).

There were rumours during the supplementary season beginning on 2 April that Grau was planning a year's vacation from operatic production in New York. Though the New York season had earned a profit [15] the operations in Chicago and the other cities of its tour had compiled a deficit said at that time to be $12,383.48. Furthermore, the death of Henry Ab-

[15] Miss Leiser gives it as 'about $30,000' in her *Jean de Reszke,* p. 177.

bey had ended the old firm of Abbey, Schoeffel, and Grau in one of its numerous transformations, and it was necessary to reorganize the enterprise. Thus, the new Maurice Grau Opera Company was formed. On 20 April the directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company met in the board-room of the Mutual Life Insurance Company and approved a lease of the auditorium to it for three years. The lease would be effective beginning in the fall of 1898. During the year that intervened the Grau company held the lease, to rent the auditorium as it might.

1898–1899

THE gradual ascent that had been made in the first thirteen years of the Metropolitan's history towards a balanced repertory continued its progress when Grau resumed his presentations on 29 November 1898. Grau had gathered a company that was the strongest he had yet presented ; and though the death [16] of Anton Seidl had deprived the music lovers of New York of the finest conducting of Wagner they had yet been privileged to experience, the engagement of the excellent Viennese director, Franz Schalk, indicated that there was no intention of slighting the works of the German repertory.[17] His presence amounted to but a transient influence, for Schalk remained for only one

[16] His death happened suddenly on 28 March 1898, following an attack of ptomaine poisoning. A funeral service on the 31st in the Metropolitan was marked by one of the most impressive ceremonials in the history of the house.

[17] Though there was no official tenant of the Metropolitan Opera House during the season of 1897–1898, there were several events that merit entry in a history of the auditorium. Mme. Sembrich was heard in a recital on 26 October 1897, in the course of which she sang three of the most imposing arias in the soprano's literature : 'Martern aller arten' from Mozart's *Il Seraglio* ; 'Ah ! non giunge' from *La Sonnambula*, and 'Casta Diva' from *Norma*, as well as Schumann's 'Nussbaum' and 'Die Forelle' of Schubert. Bispham was the assisting artist and among the selections he offered was 'Non piu andrai' from *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Beginning on 17 January 1898 the Damrosch-Ellis Opera Company presented a five weeks' season with a company that included Melba, Nordica, Gadski, Mattfeld, Bispham, Campanari, Fischer, and Kraus. During this season Melba demonstrated that her experience with Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* had not completely ended her aspiration to dramatic roles, for she appeared in *Aïda* on 24 January, with results almost as disastrous as those of the winter before.

season, but during this season he accomplished a feat that had been many years delayed — the first performance in New York of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in its entirety. How long that innovation might have waited had Seidl continued his Metropolitan career can be only a conjecture — but his prejudice against uncut performances of Wagner is well-known.

Even the opening of the season on 29 November was indicative of the new dispensation towards Wagner, for the work was his *Tannhäuser,* in which Nordica returned to the company, and Ernest Van Dyck made his debut as Tannhäuser. Nordica was heard as Venus, with Eames (Elisabeth), Plançon (Landgraf Hermann), and Albers (Wolfram), Mancinelli conducting. On 31 November Marcella Sembrich returned to the Metropolitan in opera for the first time since the opening season, appearing as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* with Salignac (Almaviva), Campanari (Figaro), Edouard de Reszke (Don Basilio), and Carbone (Dr. Bartolo). Sembrich's choice for the Lesson Scene on this occasion were the Strauss waltz 'Voce di Primavera,' 'Ah! non giunge,' and the 'Maiden's Wish' of Chopin. On 2 December Saléza made his debut in *Roméo* with Melba, Edouard de Reszke, and Plançon. Anton Van Rooy joined the company on 14 December to sing Wotan in *Die Walküre,* the cast also including Eames (Sieglinde) and Nordica (Brünnhilde). Dippel ended his long absence from the company on the same evening, appearing as Siegmund ; and the performance was conducted by Schalk, who thus made his debut.

One of the great weeks in the history of the Metropolitan began on 26 December with a *Roméo* in which were Sembrich (her first appearance as Juliette), both de Reszkes, and Plançon. This was followed by *Die Walküre* on 28 December with Lehmann (Brünnhilde), Eames (Sieglinde), Van Dyck (Siegmund), and Van Rooy (Wotan) ; and *Tristan* on 30 December, with Nordica, the de Reszkes, Bispham (Kurwenal), and

Meisslinger (Brangaene), both performances of Wagner conducted by Schalk. The week concluded on 2 January with *Don Giovanni* cast thus :

Donna Anna ..... Lehmann
Zerlina ..... Sembrich
Donna Elvira ..... Nordica
Leporello ..... Edouard de Reszke
Don Giovanni ..... Maurel
Don Ottavio ..... Salignac
Il Commendatore ..... Herman Devriès
Conductor, Luigi Mancinelli

Jean's first Tristan to the Isolde of Lehmann occurred shortly afterwards, on 7 January, with Van Rooy (Kurwenal), Brema (Brangaene), Edouard de Reszke (Marke), and Pringle (Melot). Schalk was the conductor. It was a Saturday *matinée* — a detail, but a highly significant one ; for, years afterward, while on a visit to Germany, W. J. Henderson asked Mme. Lehmann if she remembered a certain performance of *Tristan* when (I quote Miss Leiser) 'everything was perfection, when the audience seemed breathless, and the representation was one long thrill.' '"I remember it well," replied this great Isolde. "It was the ideal *Tristan* performance of my life." '[18] Since this was the only year in which Jean and Lehmann sang the work in New York, the performance could have been no other.

Jean de Reszke also participated in the debuts of two singers whose subsequent careers at the Metropolitan were both memorable ; in a *Roméo* on 4 January, in which Suzanne Adams made her first appearance, and a *Lohengrin* on 9 January, in which Ernestine Schumann-Heink joined the company to sing Ortrud, with Nordica (Elsa), Bispham (Telramund), and Edouard (Heinrich). It was this performance that inspired *The Tribune* of the following day to exclaim : 'Fortunate public, destined to be the envy of future generations !' — to which one can only add a fervent 'Amen !'

[18] Leiser, *Jean de Reszke*, p. 214.

The uncut performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* began on 13 January, with Van Dyck acquainting New York opera-goers with the characterization of Loge which has remained unapproached. Others in that performance of *Das Rheingold* were Van Rooy (Wotan), Bispham (Alberich), Brema (Fricka), Schumann-Heink (Erda), Meffert (Mime), and Dippel (Froh). *Die Walküre* on 17 January was presented with Van Dyck (Siegmund), Van Rooy (Wotan), Eames (Sieglinde), Brema (Brünnhilde), Schumann-Heink (Fricka), and Pringle (Hunding). Though Lehmann was heard in *Les Huguenots* on 18 January, she sang the Brünnhilde of the following evening's *Siegfried*, with Dippel (Siegfried), Van Rooy (Der Wanderer), Meffert (Mime), Bispham (Alberich), and Schumann-Heink (Erda). As a climax to the cycle, both chronologically and artistically, was the *Götterdämmerung* of 24 January, in which Jean and Edouard added Siegfried and Hagen to their accomplishments. They were associated with a cast including Nordica (Brünnhilde), Schumann-Heink (Waltraute), Mühlmann (Gunther), Bispham (Alberich), and Saville (Gutrune). Schalk conducted the entire cycle and two repetitions of it. When *Das Rheingold* was repeated on 27 January, one of its strongest assets, the Fricka of Marie Brema, was absent. But it can scarcely be said that her substitute did not uphold the traditions of the role — for it was Lilli Lehmann.

The increased activity in this season called forth from the press the first mention of a phrase which has since been recurrently attached to the Metropolitan — compassion for 'the overworked orchestra.' From January 6th to 29th, the orchestra played an opera or a concert on twenty-four successive days, and on four of these days, twice. These activities were divided among three conductors — Schalk, Mancinelli, and Bevignani.

This season's version of the 'ideal cast' for *Les Huguenots* was Lehmann or Nordica (Valentine), Adams or Sembrich (Marguerite), Jean (Raoul), Edouard (Marcel), Maurel (de Nevers), Plançon (St. Bris), and Mantelli (Urbain). A month's enforced absence ended for Lehmann on 8 March with a performance of *Le Prophète*, in which, as Bertha, she was associated with Brema (Fides), Jean (Le Prophète), Edouard (Zacharias), and Plançon (Oberthal). Mancinelli's *Ero e Leandro*, presented on 10 March, was the sole novelty of the sea-

son, and marked the first time that a composer had conducted his own opera in the Metropolitan. The principal singers were Eames (Ero), Saléza (Leandro), and Plançon (Ariofarno). The work was notable chiefly for the libretto, which was by Boïto. It disappeared from the repertory after the departure of Mancinelli from the house.

Thus the first year of the Maurice Grau Opera Company, which according to Henry B. Dazian, one of the stockholders, 'never had a losing year.' Of the vocal qualities of these performances one need not inquire. It was, indeed, the 'Golden Age of Song.' The productions, the ensemble, and the orchestral playing did not achieve the quality attained in certain later seasons ; but in the ways that opera flourishes through the presence of artists who are superbly equipped for their tasks and who are as well serious students of their life's work, these presentations were of their own monumental splendour.

1899–1900

THOUGH Grau continued to enlist his artists in the *Fausts, Roméos, Carmens*, etc., which comprised the best-sellers of his operatic stock, the character of the company he had assembled nevertheless exerted its influence on the more serious musical culture of New York. In this season, for the first time in the history of the Metropolitan, all three of the greatest operas by Mozart were included in the active repertory. In only one later season in the entire history of the auditorium has this service to the music-lovers of New York been duplicated. Despite the departure of Schalk for Europe, Emil Paur found time from his labours with the Philharmonic Society to direct the Wagner performances, and to perpetuate, briefly, the policy of an uncut *Ring* cycle.

The 'greatest Roméo that ever walked on the stage' [19] was not a member of the company during this season, but *Roméo*

[19] Henderson on de Reszke.

was nevertheless chosen for the opening opera on 18 December, with Alvarez (Roméo, debut), and Eames, Mantelli, Plançon, and Edouard de Reszke in their familiar roles. Calvé was heard in the first of the season's eleven performances of *Carmen* at the next subscription performance on 20 December, with Saléza (José), Plançon (Escamillo), and Eames (Micaëla). Eames made her third appearance in as many evenings of opera on 22 December, when *Le Nozze di Figaro* presented her as the Countess, de Vere-Sapio (Susanna), de Lussan (Cherubino), Campanari (Almaviva), and Edouard de Reszke (Figaro).

The thirty-three successive years of Antonio Scotti's career at the Metropolitan began on 27 December in *Don Giovanni ;* and Scotti, in the title role, was hailed by *The Tribune* of the following day as 'an important acquisition' who was 'an artist in the highest sense of the word.' With him as the Don, were Nordica (Donna Anna), Sembrich (Zerlina), Adams (Elvira), Salignac (Ottavio), and E. de Reszke (Leporello). A Valentin in *Faust* two days later with Calvé, Alvarez, and E. de Reszke supported completely the impression of Scotti's debut. Emma Eames established one of the landmarks of her career on 3 January when she re-appeared in *Aïda,* and infused the role with a dramatic intensity that most of her previous characterizations had lacked.[20] Scotti (Amonasro *),[21] Alvarez (Rhadames), and Plançon (Ramfis) participated.

The illness of Ternina and Van Dyck had delayed the introduction of the Wagnerian repertory ; and when the tenor recovered, for *Die Walküre,* on 5 January, Eames was indisposed and Susan Strong was the Sieglinde, with Nordica, Schumann-Heink, Van Rooy, and Pringle (Hunding). Paur made his debut as a conductor at the Metropolitan in this performance. On the following day, *Der Fliegende Holländer* was given for the first time at the Metropolitan since 16 March 1891,

[20] It is a little difficult, however, to credit the intimation in her autobiography that the popularity of the work at the Metropolitan dated from that moment.

[21] From this point forward the asterisk (*) indicates that the role so designated was sung on this occasion for the first time at the Metropolitan by the artist named.

with Johanna Gadski [22] (Senta) making her debut as a member of Grau's company with Bertram (Van der Decken), Schumann-Heink (Mary), Dippel (Erik), and Pringle (Daland). Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* was revived for Sembrich on 8 January, sharing the evening with *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Calvé, Dippel, and Dufriche) ; and the latter made one of its first appearances in blood-brotherhood with *Pagliacci* on 20 January when the two works attracted 'more people into the opera house than it had ever held before.' [23] In the Leoncavallo work, de Lussan (Nedda), Scotti (Tonio *), and Salignac (Canio) were the principals.

Jean de Reszke's absence deprived the season of his talents for the Wagnerian repertory, but there were nevertheless performances of high merit. On 24 January *Die Meistersinger* was presented with Eames (Eva), Schumann-Heink (Magdalena), Dippel (Walther), Van Rooy (Sachs), Breuer (David), and a new Beckmesser, Fritz Friedrichs. Its repetition on 2 February had Gadski as Eva,* and on 19 March, Sembrich,* in the only Wagnerian role she ever sang at the Metropolitan.[24] The cast was as before save for the substitution of Bertram (Sachs). This year's performance of the *Ring* cycle, without cuts, began on 20 February, with the succeeding performances on February 22nd and 27th, and 1 March. Van Dyck aroused considerable critical enthusiasm in his first *Tristan* on 2 March, with Ternina (Isolde), Schumann-Heink (Brangaene), Van Rooy (Kurwenal), and E. de Reszke (Marke). Nordica's feats of the season included a performance of Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre,* on 13 February in Philadelphia, and an appearance as Violetta in *La Traviata* in New York less than twenty-four hours later, with Salignac and Campanari. She replaced Sembrich, who was indisposed.

Grau's interest in 'ideal casts' was manifested this season in a direction he had hitherto not explored — Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte,* given in Italian, with such a roster of singers as the work has never been blessed with since. It was given for the first time on 30 March, in this fashion :

Queen of the Night ..... Sembrich
Tre Damigelle ..... Ternina
Mantelli
Carrie Bridewell [25]

[22] She had appeared in the house during the German season directed by Damrosch in the spring of 1895.

[23] *Tribune,* 21 January.

[24] Elsa was in her repertory, but she did not sing it at the Metropolitan.

[25] Schumann-Heink had been scheduled to sing the part of the Third Lady, but could not prepare the role in time. The second of the Tre Geni later became rather more celebrated as Eleanore de Cisneros. She married Count Francesco de Cisneros.

Papagena ..... Zelie de Lussan
Tre Genii ..... Adams
Eleanore Broadfoot
Olitzka
Pamina ..... Eames
Tamino ..... Dippel
Papageno ..... Campanari
Sarastro ..... Plançon
Monostatos ..... Pini-Corsi
Conductor, Luigi Mancinelli

Mühlmann, Dufriche, Vanni, Meux, and Maestri sang the minor roles.

Whether it was the chance of hearing *nine* of the company's leading female singers, plus Plançon, Campanari, and Dippel, in one evening ; the new scenic production from Munich ; the monkeys, snakes, giraffe, crocodile, and bear that were included in the spectacle ; or merely the immortal score that drew five audiences to the theatre in two weeks, one cannot say — but the record is nevertheless impressive. On 9 April Edouard de Reszke was heard as Sarastro.

The additional new production of the season was Nicolai's *Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor* given for the first time at the Metropolitan on 9 March, with Sembrich (Frau Fluth), Schumann-Heink (Frau Reich), Friedrichs (Falstaff), Dippel (Fenton), and Bertram (Herr Fluth). Despite the interest of the work and the excellence of the cast, there were no further performances in this season, nor has it been revived. Perhaps the most apt illustration of the public attitude towards opera during these last five years of Grau's management was the welcomed ruling made on 2 February, which decreed that persons who purchased tickets at the box office could ask for a refund of their money if there were an important change in the cast, even though it did not necessitate a withdrawal of the opera. This was the outcome of a lawsuit in Louisville, Kentucky, by a disgruntled native while the company was on tour in the fall of 1899. Circumstances, however, compelled Grau to revoke this generous offer not long afterwards.

1900–1901

THE turn of the century brought with it two events that were destined greatly to influence the character of the repertory even to the present day, despite alterations of directors, singers, and even the financial organization of the institution. These were the first performances in the Metropolitan of any scores by Giacomo Puccini. To opera-goers of the present day, who know Puccini as the inevitable successor, in the season's records, to Wagner and Verdi, it may seem unbelievable that *La Bohème* waited for nearly two years after its New York *première* for admittance to the Metropolitan.[26] When it was finally given on 26 December 1900, it was regarded more as a vehicle for Albert Saléza, the Rodolfo, rather than as a likely prospect to be a fireside favourite.[27] The Metropolitan's first Mimi was Nellie Melba ; and the cast included Occhiolini (Musetta), Campanari (Marcello), Gilibert (Schaunard), and Journet (Colline). *Tosca,* however, was imported with much more celerity. Its *première* in Rome during 1900 was followed by the first performance in North America on 4 February 1901 in the Metropolitan, embellished by two performances that have remained vividly memorable during the ensuing years — Scotti's Scarpia, and the Tosca of Milka Ternina. She was the first of nearly a dozen and a half Toscas with whom Scotti was associated at the Metropolitan. The other singers included Cremonini (Cavaradossi), Dufriche (Angelotti), Gilibert (A Sacristan), Viviani (Sciarrone), and Cernusco (Spoletta).

At the moment, however, these affairs could not have appeared so significant as they seem in retrospect. More to the immediate point was the reappearance of Jean de Reszke, for what turned out to be his final season of opera in America. There had been rumours that his season's absence had not been wholly voluntary

[26] It was first given at Wallack's Theatre by a travelling company on 16 May 1898.

[27] *The Tribune* indeed, declared it 'foul in subject and fulminant but futile in its music.' — 27 December.

— that the voice which had superbly supported the utterances of Tristan, Siegfried, Lohengrin, Raoul, Faust and the rest was permanently injured. Finally W. J. Henderson, then critic of *The New York Times*, was prompted to write to Jean, inquiring for his personal satisfaction, the state of his voice. Jean responded that his trip to the Riviera (publicly viewed as evidence of a collapse) was merely for purposes of his general health — and that when he returned, he would demonstrate the rumours to have been false. His reappearance on 31 December in *Lohengrin* settled any latent doubts, and the first act was followed by an ovation rarely duplicated in the history of the auditorium. The extraordinary supporting cast included Nordica (Elsa), Schumann-Heink (Ortrud), E. de Reszke (Heinrich), and Bertram (Telramund). Walter Damrosch, who had resumed the direction of the German works at the Metropolitan, conducted.

These events were preceded by another opening with *Roméo* on 18 December, with Melba, Saléza, E. de Reszke, Plançon, and Charles Gilibert (Duke of Verona, debut) ; an *Aïda* on 22 December, in which Marcel Journet (Ramfis) and Louise Homer (Amneris) both appeared for the first time ; a *Tannhäuser* on 24 December, with Gadski, Nordica (Venus), and Robert Blass (Landgraf) ; a *Fidelio* on 28 December, in which Fritzi Scheff — who had been scheduled for the first Musetta two days before but was indisposed — made her debut as Marzelline.

There is no evidence to indicate that Jean had decided that this season should be his last in America, but the roles he undertook almost signify an intention to leave a memory of unforgettable versatility behind him. His Lohengrin was followed by an appearance in *Faust* on 4 January, with Melba, E. de Reszke, and Scotti (Valentin) ; an *Aïda* three days later, with Gadski, Homer, Edouard, Scotti (Amonasro), and Journet (The King) [28] ; before his first *Tristan* of the season, on 25 January with Ternina, Schumann-Heink, Edouard, and Bispham (Kurwenal). Jean's first Walther in German was reserved for this final season, on 25 March, when he appeared in *Die Meistersinger*

[28] In which, contrary to his custom, Jean included 'Celeste Aïda.'

with Gadski (Eva), Schumann-Heink (Magdalena), Bispham (Beckmesser), Blass (Pogner), and Edouard de Reszke (Hans Sachs, also for the first time in German).

Other appearances of Jean during this season included a performance of *Roméo* on 30 January with Melba ; *Tristan* on 11 February with Nordica ; *Les Huguenots* with Nordica, Melba, Homer, Plançon (St. Bris), Scotti (de Nevers), and Journet as Marcel in place of E. de Reszke, who was indisposed, on 11 March ; *Siegfried* on 19 March, with Ternina and Edouard ; and *Götterdämmerung* on 22 March, with the same singers as Brünnhilde and Hagen. Another *Götterdämmerung* on 27 March with Nordica was the prelude to what was virtually Jean's swan-song to America — a *Lohengrin* on the final afternoon of the season, 29 March, with Ternina (Elsa), Schumann-Heink (Ortrud), Bispham (Telramund), and E. de Reszke (Heinrich). To complete the cycle, *Lohengrin* was the first role in a Wagner drama that Jean had sung in New York, on 5 January 1892, nine years before.

Not merely the feat of singing ten roles within a dozen weeks, nor the equal fluency in three languages makes the record of Jean's last season an extraordinary one. The art and intellect that could accommodate themselves to Tristan *and* Roméo, Rhadames *and* Walther von Stolzing, Faust *and* both the Siegfrieds clearly demonstrate the unexampled breadth of his musical outlook.

Though both *Die Zauberflöte* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* were omitted from this season's repertory, *Don Giovanni* was offered twice — the first time on 23 January — with Nordica (Donna Anna), Gadski (Elvira), Scheff (Zerlina), Salignac (Ottavio), Scotti (the Don), E. de Reszke (Leporello), and Journet (Il Commendatore). The practice of giving the *Ring* dramas in an unabridged form was abandoned, not to be restored to the Metropolitan until after the reappearance of Bodanzky, in the season of 1929–1930. Grau's aversion to other than established composers — though he had made an exception for Puccini — suffered still another concession when he presented Reyer's *Salammbô* on 20 March. The production was primarily for the display of Lucienne Bréval (Salammbô), who had made her debut on 16 January in *Le Cid*. Her associates in Reyer's

opera were Bridewell (Taanach), Saléza (Matho), Salignac (Shahabarim), Journet (Narr-Havas), Sizes (Spendius), Gilibert (Giscon), Dufriche (Authorite), and Scotti (Hamilcar). Mancinelli was the conductor. *Salammbô* was Grau's most ambitious attempt in spectacular operatic production, but it enjoyed little public success.

Uncommon difficulty with indisposed singers affected the quality of the season that Grau had planned, and led to considerable alteration of his schedule ; the first repetition of *Tosca* on 9 February had to be deferred because of the illness of Ternina, and *Aïda* was substituted, with Dippel as Rhadames for the first time ; on 15 February *L'Africaine* was announced, and *Lohengrin* substituted — when the audience reached the theatre, they discovered that *Mefistofele* was actually the production of the evening. Dippel replaced Jean in both *Siegfried,* on 1 March, and *Götterdämmerung,* on the 6th ; Robert Blass was also called upon to sing for Edouard as Hagen in the latter. Earlier, on 20 February, the de Reszkes had been scheduled to appear in their first German performance of *Die Meistersinger,* but Edouard was not yet ready to sing Sachs in the original tongue, and the performance was given with Dippel and Bertram instead. Thus, the first performance by the brothers on 25 March was also their last together, in *Die Meistersinger,* in New York. One of the season's most interesting musical events occurred in a Sunday night concert on 17 February, when Nordica, Schumann-Heink, Salignac, and Plançon were heard as the solo quartet in a performance of Verdi's *Manzoni Requiem,* with the opera house chorus. The performance was conducted by Mancinelli.

1901–1902

THE passing of Jean de Reszke and the introduction of *La Bohème* and *Tosca* imply that Grau's third year marked the high level of his career at the Metropolitan, and the opera given under his direction. The subsequent career of Caruso in New York well

suggests that the period of all-star casts might have been perpetuated longer, had that artist made his first appearance under Grau, who held the original contract for his services in New York. But the distinction between 'all-star' casts and 'ideal' casts here becomes strikingly apparent ; for, lacking a tenor of Jean de Reszke's especial distinctions — which is to say, lacking Jean de Reszke — the 'ideal' cast became merely a figure of speech, implying a wish rather than a prospect ; and another period of New York's operatic history entered the phases of its decline.

It was, however, only a decline in relation to its own extraordinary standards. Grau's company still included Sembrich, Eames, and Calvé ; Ternina and Gadski, Homer and Schumann-Heink ; Van Dyck, Dippel, Alvarez, Edouard de Reszke, Scotti, Campanari, Gilibert, and Bispham — and from these he constructed his season. It opened bravely on 23 December with *Tristan ;* bravely, for it is the only instance in recent seasons of Metropolitan Opera that Wagner's tragedy of romantic love has greeted a characteristically 'brilliant' opening night audience. In it Grau presented Ternina, Van Dyck, Schumann-Heink, Bispham, and E. de Reszke in their accustomed roles, with Albert Reiss (debut) singing both the Sailor's Voice and the Shepherd. However, as if to atone for that brazen gesture, *Roméo et Juliette* was given twice during the opening week ; on 25 December, with Eames, Alvarez, Edouard de Reszke (Frère Laurent), and Journet (Capulet), and again three days later for Sybil Sanderson (her only appearance of the season). Gilibert as Capulet was the only variant from the previous cast.

Calvé added six more performances in *Carmen* to her Metropolitan record, the first of them on 30 December with Alvarez, Scotti, and Scheff (Micaëla). She was also heard in the season's first *Faust,* which did not occur until the fourth week, on 15 January, with Alvarez, Journet (Méphistophélès), and Scotti ; and in one of the two novelties of the season, Isidore de Lara's *Messaline,* on 22 January. It was the first American performance of the work which Grau's company had given during the preceding season in London. With Calvé (Messaline), were Van Cauteren (La Citharode), Alvarez (Helion), Journet (Myrtille *and* Olympias), Gilibert (Myrrhon), and Scotti (Harés), with

Flon conducting. Also an American *première* was Paderewski's *Manru*, presented on 14 February under Walter Damrosch, with Sembrich (Ulana), Homer (Hedwig), Scheff (Asa), Alexander van Bandrowska (Manru, debut), Mühlmann (Oros), Blass (Jagu), and Bispham (Urok).

The social life of New York, as it was reflected in the Metropolitan, was marked by the famed 'gala' for Prince Henry of Prussia, brother to the Kaiser of Germany, on 25 February 1902. The auditorium was blanketed with smilax ; and the exterior of the house was strung with electric lights, the design artfully intertwining the American flag and the Prussian eagle. Atop the building floated a replica of the royal yacht, also in electric bulbs, on a sea of blue incandescence. In keeping with the aristocratic character of the evening, the prices were scaled downward from a top price of thirty dollars in the orchestra. The family circle, together with the balcony, was nearly a third empty. The rest of the auditorium was completely filled.

The royal guest was scheduled to arrive at nine o'clock, and the musical programme began an hour earlier, in the presence of scarcely a thousand of the eventual audience. For reasons best known to Mr. Grau, the principal German artists of the evening's musical programme were included in the first act of *Lohengrin*, which began the festivities. These included Gadski, Schumann-Heink, and Dippel. (Edouard de Reszke and Bispham were the others in the cast.) Thus, when the prince arrived at 9:40, his compatriots had already completed their performance. His Royal Highness was greeted with 'Heil dir im Siegerkranz' ; and the programme proceeded with the second act of *Carmen* (sung by Calvé, Alvarez, Scotti, and Gilibert) ; the third act of *Aïda* (with Eames, Homer, Campanari, Journet, and de Marchi as Rhadames) ; the second act of *Tannhäuser* (with Ternina, Van Dyck, Van Rooy, and Blass) ; and the first scene of act four of *Le Cid*, with Bréval and Alvarez.

Somewhere between the Nile and the Wartburg the Prince departed, accompanied by a goodly portion of the audience ; and Sembrich, who was scheduled to precede the excerpt from *Le Cid*

with the first act of *La Traviata,* decided that the circumstances were not compatible with her dignity as a *prima donna* and refused to appear.

It is scarcely likely that the Metropolitan had ever sheltered so large a company of dignitaries. In the Royal Box were included : Baron von Holleben, Admiral von Tirpitz, Admiral von Seckendorf, Admiral von Eisendecker, Mayor Seth Low, ex-Governor Levi P. Morton (one of the original stockholders in the Metropolitan enterprise), Chauncey Depew, General Corbin, Rear-Admiral Robley D. Evans, and Colonel T. A. Jessup. The first calls made by the Prince, it is recorded, were to greet Mrs. Grover Cleveland and Mrs. Seth Low.

For Sembrich, Grau presented a revival of *La Fille du Regiment* on 6 January, its first appearance in New York in the French version of the Opéra Comique *première* in Paris. Previous presentations in New York for Jenny Lind, Patti, and Sonntag were in Italian. With Sembrich as Marie, one of her best-remembered roles, were Salignac (Tonio), Van Cauteren (La Marquise de Birkenfield), Gilibert (Sulpice), Dufriche (Hortensius), and Viviani (Un Caporal), with Flon conducting. *Cavalleria Rusticana,* with Calvé, was the other half of the double bill. Sembrich also was heard in this season's presentation of *Le Nozze di Figaro,* with another of Grau's fortunate casts. It was first offered on New Year's Day with Eames (Countess), Sembrich (Susanna), Scheff (Cherubino), Campanari (Figaro), and E. de Reszke (Almaviva), under the direction of Seppilli. Also *Die Zauberflöte* was restored to the repertory, still in Italian, with Sembrich (Queen of the Night), Scheff (Papagena), Eames (Pamina), Dippel (Tamino), Campanari (Papageno), E. de Reszke (Sarastro), and Reiss (Monostatos). Ternina, Homer, and Bridewell were the Three Ladies, and Damrosch the conductor. On 8 February Eames was replaced by Gadski as Pamina. A revival of *Otello* on 31 January permitted Eames (Desdemona) and Scotti (Iago) to acquaint New York with

their view of these roles, both of them well conceived and admirably sung. Alvarez was the Otello.

An indication of the direction in which opera was inevitably tending in New York during this period, and was to continue subsequently may be seen in the record of the final week of the season, during which nine performances of ten operas were given. This was the largest total for any week in the Metropolitan's history to that time. Beginning on 3 March with *Aïda,* in which were offered Eames, Homer, Scotti, de Marchi, and Journet, the week presented *Siegfried* at the *matinée* on Tuesday, *Le Cid* on the evening of that day, *La Fille du Regiment* and *Cavalleria* on Wednesday, a *matinée* performance of *Götterdämmerung* and *Aïda* in the evening on Thursday, *Faust* on Friday, and, to complete the season, *Manru* at the Saturday *matinée* and Calvé in *Carmen,* for the farewell performance in the evening. The earlier exertions of the 'overworked orchestra' were hardly comparable with this.

1902–1903

GRAU'S final season contained ambitious plans for both a Mozart and a Verdi cycle, but neither project was fully realized. Of the two, the Verdi cycle achieved its end most nearly, augured by the opening night *Otello* on 24 November, with Eames, Alvarez, and Scotti. To be sure, it was no difficult task to construct a Verdi cycle from the operatic schedule of that day, no more than it would be now. To the customary four works in the repertory, it was necessary merely to add two or three others. Grau embellished his previous season's revival of *Otello* with restorations of *Ernani* and *Un Ballo in Maschera,* and lo, there was a Verdi cycle ! *Aïda* made its first appearance in this season on 27 November, and *La Traviata* on the 29th, with Sembrich and Scotti (Germont *). When *Ernani* was given on 28 January, it marked the first appearance of the score in the Metropolitan, its last previous hearing having been at the Academy of Music during the season of 1882. The cast offered by Grau was :

Elvira ..... Sembrich
Giovanna ..... Bauermeister

Ernani ..... de Marchi
Don Carlos ..... Scotti
Don Ruy Gomez ..... E. de Reszke
Iago ..... Bégué
Don Riccardo ..... Vanni

The cycle was completed by the revival of *Un Ballo in Maschera* on 23 February, with Scheff (Amelia), de Marchi (Richard), Homer (Ulrica), Campanari (Renato), E. de Reszke (Sam), and Journet (Tom). It was the intention of Grau to include *Falstaff* in the series, but the illness of Eames, which also restricted the Mozart cycle to the three familiar works, prevented that. *Il Trovatore* had but one performance in this season, on 11 March, with Nordica, Homer, Campanari, de Marchi, and Journet.

Alfred Hertz, who participated in a number of the most important events at the Metropolitan in the next dozen years, made his debut on 28 November, directing a performance of *Lohengrin* that also introduced a new German tenor, Georg Anthes (Lohengrin). The cast further included Gadski (Elsa), Schumann-Heink (Ortrud), Bispham (Telramund), and E. de Reszke (Heinrich). Hertz was declared to have 'succeeded in ridding the performance of much of the perfunctoriness that has weighed upon the Metropolitan performances for years.' His subsequent Wagner included *Tannhäuser* with Anthes, Gadski, Homer, and Bispham on 14 December, and the return of Nordica in *Tristan* on 3 January after two seasons' absence. Both Anthes (Tristan) and Homer (Brangaene) sang their roles for the first time on this occasion, with Bispham (Kurwenal) and E. de Reszke completing the cast.

Grau's search for a German tenor of Van Dyck's quality — a successor to Jean de Reszke was scarcely to be hoped for — led him to import two others in addition to Anthes. One, Emil Gerhäuser, made a debut in *Tannhäuser* on 1 December, with Gadski (Elisabeth), Schumann-Heink (Venus), Van Rooy (Wolfram), and Blass (Landgraf), to retire thereafter until the same work called him forth on 17 January with Gadski, Marylii

(Venus), Bispham, and Blass. He was not a sensation. A much more fortunate discovery was Alois Burgstaller, who brought with him a Bayreuth reputation when he made his debut in *Die Walküre* on 17 February, with Nordica, Schumann-Heink, and Bispham (Wotan *).

In his performance of *Götterdämmerung*, Hertz reverted to Seidl's custom of omitting the Norn scene when he presented it on 23 January with Nordica, Anthes, Homer (Waltraute *), E. de Reszke, Mühlmann (Gunther), and Bispham (Alberich). The other dramas of the *Ring* cycle had been presented in order, beginning with *Das Rheingold* on 14 January, in which Schumann-Heink sang both Flosshilde and Erda, with Anthes (Loge), Van Rooy (Wotan), Reuss-Belce (Fricka), and Bispham (Alberich). Two days later Nordica was heard as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, with Gadski (Sieglinde), Schumann-Heink (Fricka), Anthes, Van Rooy, and Elmblad (Hunding). Nordica was again the Brünnhilde in a *Siegfried* that included Anthes, Van Rooy (Der Wanderer), Schumann-Heink (Erda), Bispham (Alberich), Reiss (Mime), and Scheff as the Voice of the Forest Bird.

In the *Siegfried* of the *Ring* cycle Anthes suffered one of the major misfortunes that can befall a Wagnerian tenor, for at the climax of the *Schwertlied* the anvil refused to yield to the blows of the 'highest hero' until he had assaulted it three times. This mishap was not without its precedent, however ; for at a *Lohengrin* performance during the previous week, on 10 January, he had suffered a theoretical submersion when the collapse of the Swan-boat propelled him into the painted Scheldt.

Despite Eames's recurrent indisposition, which resulted in the alteration of several of the season's projects, she added Floria Tosca to her roles at the Metropolitan on 12 December in collaboration with Scotti, Gilibert (A Sacristan), and de Marchi (Cavaradossi). Another auspicious event occurred on 15 December when Sembrich made her first appearance as Mimi in *La Bohème*. The role had had but one previous interpreter at the Metropolitan, Melba having appeared in all the performances in the season of two years before. Eames's withdrawal for the last portion of the season — the announcement was made on 11

February — and the preoccupation of Sembrich with other roles caused Grau to experiment with several Marguerites for the indispensable *Faust* (Seygard on 9 January, Suzanne Adams on 4 February, and Scheff on the 14th) before Nordica was induced to resume the role on 18 February. It had been a half-dozen years since Nordica had attempted the part. Some conception of her versatility may be deduced from this : her two previous performances, on the 12th and 14th, had been as the Brünnhildes in *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried !*

In addition to the Verdi revivals the season also offered a brief restoration of Mancinelli's *Ero e Leandro* on 4 March with Gadski (Ero), de Marchi (Leandro), E. de Reszke (Ariofarno), and Schumann-Heink in the prologue ; and a first performance in America of Dame Ethel Smyth's one-act opera *Der Wald* on 11 March. In this appeared Gadski (Roschen), Reuss-Belce (Iolanthe), Anthes (Heinrich), Bispham (Rudolf), Blass (Der Hausirer), and Mühlmann (Peter), with Hertz conducting. The season's only performance of *Il Trovatore* completed the evening.

The failing health of Grau made it imperative, before the season was half-completed, that he should retire ; and the persons in consideration for the lease to produce opera at the Metropolitan narrowed finally to Walter Damrosch and Heinrich Conried.[29] On 14 February it was announced that by a vote of seven to six, the favour of the committee representing the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company had been bestowed on Mr. Conried.

Grau's luminous career as an opera impresario came to a close on 21 March with an afternoon performance of *Faust,* with Nordica, Alvarez, Scotti, and E. de Reszke (Méphistophélès), the final appearance of the last-named in the Metropolitan ; and an evening performance of *Die Meistersinger* under Hertz with Gadski, Schumann-Heink, Anthes, Bispham (Beckmesser), Van Rooy (Sachs), Blass (Pogner), and Reiss (David).

On 27 April Grau's company tendered him a 'gala' farewell that was truly in the tradition of the decade over which he had presided.

[29] Henry Russell and Charles A. Ellis were also considered.

EDOUARD DE RESZKE

Scheff, Van Cauteren, Salignac, Gilibert, Dufriche, and Bégué were heard in the first act of *La Fille du Regiment ;* Gadski, Schumann-Heink, Van Rooy, Burgstaller, and Blass sang the second act of *Der Fliegende Holländer ;* the second act of *La Traviata* was presented with Sembrich, Van Cauteren, Bauermeister, de Marchi, Gilibert, Dufriche, Bars, and Vanni ; the fourth act of *Les Huguenots* was given with Gadski replacing Nordica who was ill, Alvarez, Scotti, and Journet ; Eames, Edouard de Reszke, and Alvarez were heard in the fifth act of *Faust ;* and the first scene from the third act of *Lohengrin* completed the evening with Reuss-Belce, Anthes, Blass, and Bispham. Hertz and Flon divided the conducting.

During this season there were the first public rumours of a type of transaction peculiarly associated with the Metropolitan. In the press of 4 December it was reported that one hundred thousand dollars had been offered and refused for a box in the parterre. This was said to represent an increase of thirty-five thousand dollars over the last quoted price (the original investment was sixty thousand dollars). For a half-interest, on lease, the usual price then was six thousand dollars, representing the interest at five per cent on one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, the owner's conception of what a box was worth at that time.

Epilogue

The quality of the opera that was presented in the Metropolitan between 1891 and 1903 is self-evident from a survey of the roster of any season during that period. Nordica, Eames, Sembrich, the de Reszkes, Lasalle, Scotti — these are indeed the metaphors for great singing. And yet, in that listing we have not mentioned Calvé, Melba, or Ternina ; Salignac, Saléza, or Alvarez ; neither Plançon, Journet, nor Victor Maurel ! And still there are more beyond these ; Gadski, Brema, Schumann-Heink, Lilli Lehmann, Scalchi, Mantelli, Arnoldson, Sanderson, and Bréval ; and among the men, Campanari, Gilibert, Tamagno, Bispham, Van Rooy, Van Dyck, and Dippel.

The distinction of the era, thus, was not merely the quality of

the singers — but the extraordinary profusion of them, and the strikingly high level of excellence they attained. There have been, in each period of the Metropolitan, unusual artists ; artists of fine voices, splendid presence, and superior intelligence. But there has been at no other time so abundant a flow of them ; so uncommon a succession of new personages, of individualities so strongly developed, who were yet so conscious of their obligations to the art which they served.

Even among the minor singers of the day the same high devotion to their calling may be observed. Our roster has not yet taken notice of Suzanne Adams, Camille Seygard, Jane de Vigne, Fritzi Scheff, Zelie de Lussan, Carrie Bridewell, de Vere-Sapio, Susan Strong, or Mathilde Bauermeister — all of whom were generally to be heard only in secondary roles. Yet no fewer than six of these would have been honoured with leading parts and generous celebrity in any other era. In this period, they were fairly overshadowed by the personalities who towered above them.

There has been no lack of fine voices among the singers of the Metropolitan companies since — and it must not be thought that the brilliance was quenched merely by the passing of Grau. But the replacements came in no such abundance ; and many of the finest voices were the endowment of singers who had no understanding of how to utilize their gifts, or, if they did, lacked the patience to be content with a slow and measured development. Certainly the attitude of the singers in that day was different, as may be exemplified by a remark of Eames to a music critic whom she encountered in New York within the last few years : 'What is the matter with the singers at the Metropolitan today ? Don't they study ? Yes — there is Bori. But the rest of them — !' Perhaps a little of the sighing for 'the good old days' *is* reflected in that observation. But it is palpable to any one who knows the capacity of the human voice that the singers of today regard study as merely a necessary hardship preliminary to their pub-

lic success rather than as an indispensable part of their career, at whatever point.

Given this historical group of singers, Grau nevertheless followed the unvarying course of every opera director who has a public to please — expediency. He produced few novelties ; he minimized ensemble and orchestra ; he ventured scarcely at all from the traditional methods of presenting opera. But he did give to New York an opportunity to hear such vocal excellence in the works he produced as it had never experienced before, nor since. Also, during his management was restored the practice of singing the works of Wagner in German ; *Carmen* was given for the first time in French, as were a number of other works (*Roméo* and *La Fille du Regiment* among them) thus taking the first step in the direction of the proudest accomplishment of the recent Metropolitan — the presentation of the major portion of its repertory in the language used by the composer ; *Der Ring des Nibelungen* was allowed its first unabridged presentation in New York ; *La Bohème* and *Tosca* were given for the first time in the Metropolitan ; and the works of Mozart were accorded a larger place in the arrangement of the repertory than they have ever had since.

It is only necessary to add that this era, in many respects the most distinguished that the Metropolitan has yet known, was also the most profitable to its sponsors. According to Henry B. Dazian, who was a director of the Maurice Grau Opera Company, and executor for Grau's estate after his death in 1907, Grau left over six hundred thousand dollars — *all* of it acquired, following his earlier bankruptcy, in his final five years of Metropolitan production, from 1898 to 1902–1903. Though a portion of this sum was made by fortunate investments, much of it was made through opera at the Metropolitan. Thus it can hardly be said that the production of opera in the manner espoused by him was uneconomical ; or that the public was not cognizant of what was being offered to them.

THE CONRIED METROPOLITAN OPERA COMPANY

1903–1908

THOUGH it is the common impression that the 'Metropolitan Opera Company' has produced opera at the Metropolitan Opera House for all of its fifty-two years, the actual first occurrence of those words in such a juxtaposition dates from March 1903, when the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company was incorporated at Albany.[30] As it was from this group that the subsequent de-Conriedized Metropolitan Opera Company was evolved, in 1908 — to persist thereafter for twenty-four years, until the Metropolitan Opera Association was created — the circumstances of its origin are of more than ephemeral significance.

In order to secure possession of the lease for the auditorium and the right to produce opera therein, Conried was required to supply $150,000 as a guarantee to the ownership company against losses. It was his plan to find fourteen men who would join him in subscribing the necessary amount. Among those he approached was Henry Morgenthau, who has related the story in his memoirs.[31] Conried had already established the interest of Jacob H. Schiff, Ernest Thalman, Daniel Guggenheim, Randolph Guggenheimer, and Henry B. Ickelheimer, and displayed his list to Morgenthau. The latter records, 'Knowing as I did the management of the Metropolitan Opera House, I jokingly said to Conried : "If you could only secure a Mr. Hochheimer and a Mr. Niersteiner you would have a complete wine list, but you could never secure the opera house through it."' Conried inquired what course he would suggest, and Morgenthau replied that he had conceived a plan, but would require a free hand in

[30] There had been, of course, the Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd., which passed out of existence after the fire of 1892.

[31] Henry Morgenthau, *All in a Lifetime*, Doubleday, Page and Company, New York, 1922, pp. 99–100. Mr. Morgenthau locates the time of his meeting with Conried as 'Shortly after the death of Maurice Grau in 1902' — a slip of the memory, of course, since Grau did not die until 1907.

selecting associates. He told Conried : 'I shall see Messrs. A. D. Juilliard and George G. Haven, who have the final say in the matter, on Tuesday, and can tell you that evening whether I can accomplish anything or not.'

Morgenthau proceeded with his plan, which was to interest the 'younger social leaders and communicated with Mr. James Hazen Hyde. He was most favourably impressed and suggested that he and I obligate ourselves for $75,000 each, secure the lease, and then secure our associates.' Hyde was at that time first vice-president of the Equitable Life Insurance Company, and the board of directors of the Conried Metropolitan Company, as finally constituted, also included William McIntyre and Henry Rogers Winthrop, both of whom were associated with Hyde at the Equitable Life Insurance Company. The additional members were George J. Gould, Eliot Gregory, Robert Goelet, Clarence H. Mackay, Robert H. McCurdy, J. Henry Smith (famous in his day as 'Silent' Smith), Alfred G. Vanderbilt, H. P. Whitney, and Otto H. Kahn. This association marked the entry of Kahn into the affairs of the Metropolitan, a participation which was to be of salient importance in the later history of the organization. His inclusion, Montrose J. Moses states in the official biography of Conried, was suggested by Jacob Schiff. Schiff 'was invited to join the directorate . . . but was obliged to decline, requesting however that a member of his firm, Mr. Otto Kahn, be accepted in his stead.' [32]

The company was organized on a stockholding basis, with Conried holding half the capitalized amount ($150,000), the other directors an average of five thousand dollars each. As the financial success of the Grau Opera Company was well known, the directors who participated had reason to expect a financial return on their investment, after Conried's salary of twenty thousand dollars yearly was paid. 'It was also agreed,' records

[32] Montrose J. Moses, *Heinrich Conried*, Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, New York, 1916, p. 174.

Moses, 'that as additional compensation for his services one-half the profits for each and every year . . . was to be paid to him, after all expenses were met, together with six per cent dividends upon all common stock outstanding and issued and sold for actual cash at par at the time of such payment.' [33] As the basis for a company, Conried acquired the contracts of a number of Grau's singers, among whom were Bauermeister, Calvé, Gadski, Sembrich, and Ternina, sopranos ; Homer, contralto ; Burgstaller, Dippel, and Reiss, tenors ; Bégué, Campanari, Dufriche, Mühlmann, Scotti, and Van Rooy, baritones ; Blass, Journet, and Plançon, bassos ; Hertz and Hinrichs, conductors. Caruso, too, had been under contract to Grau, as will be discussed later. Felix Mottl, who had been engaged for this season by Grau, appeared for the first time in the Metropolitan under the direction of Conried.

The manager's training in the theatre and his desire to produce *Parsifal* made necessary a considerable revision of the facilities of the Metropolitan stage, carried out under the direction of Carl Lautenschläger, of Munich. The expense, which was borne by the ownership company, amounted to approximately $150,000. It provided for a mechanical system of counterbalances for flying scenery, to replace the antiquated devices which required several times as much man-power ; a new stage floor was installed, with the traps necessary for *Parsifal* ; a new proscenium arch, with the front of the stage cut back on a line with it, was constructed ; the small doors at either side of the proscenium arch, from which the singers formerly took curtain calls, were eliminated, and ornamental bases were added to the pillars. These improvements were the last permanent mechanical additions to the equipment of the Metropolitan's stage, subsequent changes having been in the electrical resources. New seats were provided in the auditorium, in the deep maroon which has since become traditional, and the interior of the house was redecorated, emphasizing the gold background which has remained a char-

[33] Moses, *Conried*, p. 175.

acteristic of the Metropolitan's appearance. A smoking-room and foyer were also provided on the grand tier floor. The contractors were Carrère and Hasting, who had built the Empire Theatre.

The basic relationship with the ownership group remained as it had been in the days of Grau, with the stockholders retaining the use of the thirty-five parterre boxes, in lieu of rental. Also there remained the stipulation by which the box-holders designated six of the company's members, two of whom were required to be in every performance of each subscription series. That Monday had finally become established as the official society night may be deduced from the understanding with Conried that the number of performances of works by Wagner, on Monday nights, should be definitely limited.[34] It was stipulated in the lease that not more than forty per cent of the performances during the season should be of works by Wagner.

1903–1904

Two musical events less related than the first American production of Wagner's consecrational *Parsifal* and the debut of the greatest popular idol the New York opera-going public has ever known could scarcely be conceived. But the first season under Conried saw both of these. In the journalistic furore that accompanied the growing popularity of Enrico Caruso it was in-

[34] It was not always thus. In *The Tribune* of 8 December 1894 one finds the comment : 'It seems to be the policy of the Metropolitan management to reserve the old-fashioned Italian repertory for the most fashionable night of the week, that is, Friday.' That some night should, by common understanding, be recognized as 'fashionable' beyond all the others was necessary from the extensive schedule of the Metropolitan, and the impossibility of the entire social group attending every performance. In order that the opera might fulfil its function as the place where society could gather for display and appraisal, one night was set aside as 'the' night on which each box-holder was certain to be present. Monday was finally arrived at since it generally served for the opening night of the season ; and, further, because the calendar of receptions, formal dinners, balls, etc. was less likely to be congested on Monday than it was at the middle or towards the close of the week. This feature of the opera has remained constant, despite essential alterations in every other phase of it.

evitable that his advent should be romanticized and embellished with those colourful details to which the public feels entitled. But the facts are as prosaic as are most of the business dealings associated with opera.

Grau's contract with Caruso had been entered upon at the suggestion of Henry Dazian, who had heard the tenor during a visit to Monte Carlo in 1901, and cabled the advice that he be engaged. The agreement specified forty performances during the season of 1903–1904, at a fee of 5000 francs per performance — at the prevailing exchange, $960.[35] This contract Grau cancelled when it became apparent that he would retire from the Metropolitan ; and it devolved upon Conried to decide between Caruso and Bonci, who had also been offered to him. When the accession of Conried to the directorship of the Metropolitan was confirmed, on 19 February, Pasquale Simonelli,[36] who had been delegated to act for Caruso in America, called upon the director in the Irving Place Theatre. The matter of Caruso's contract was thoroughly discussed ; and Conried finally offered to guarantee twenty performances, at the salary previously agreed upon. He was not willing to commit himself for the full forty, even though Caruso had appeared twenty-four times in Covent Garden during the season of 1902 with great success. The offer was transmitted to Caruso who countered with a proposal for twenty-five performances ; and to this Conried agreed. Upon receipt of pre-payment for five appearances, Caruso entered into the agreement. In the biography by Moses, it is stated that Conried heard the voice of Caruso for the first time from a record of 'Vesti la giubba' while he was in Berlin during the summer of 1903. Simonelli holds that the identical incident occurred in Conried's New York home, subsequent to which Conried implored Simonelli to have Caruso agree to the forty engagements previously stipulated. He wired this request

[35] I am indebted for these details to Bruno Zirato, the tenor's secretary at the time of his death.

[36] President of the Italian Savings Bank, New York.

to Caruso at Buenos Aires on 12 May 1903, but Caruso had arranged to appear in Monte Carlo after his Metropolitan engagement, and could not accept the extension. It is definite, however, that Caruso came to New York and sang the first of his six hundred and seven performances at the Metropolitan on 23 November 1903.

The opera was *Rigoletto ;* and it opened a fresh chapter in the history of the institution. There was a new directorate to appraise, new decorations to admire, new seats to enjoy, a new conductor (Arturo Vigna, of La Scala) to overlook ; and a new tenor. Caruso was very nervous and 'La donna è mobile' was encored but once, which constituted a success, but scarcely a triumph. The *Tribune* objected to his 'tiresome Italian mannerisms,' but recognized Caruso to be 'a manly singer, with a voice of fine quality and marvellous endurance.' His principal associates were Sembrich (Gilda), and Scotti (The Jester).

For the only time in its career the Metropolitan presented a *Generalmusikdirektor* (the English equivalent was offered in the prospectus) when Felix Mottl made his debut at the Metropolitan on 25 November, directing a performance of *Die Walküre.* The work was provided with new settings, Gadski was heard as Brünnhilde,* Fremstad made her debut (Sieglinde), and Ernst Kraus (Siegmund) also made his first appearance as a member of the company, though he had sung with the Damrosch organization in 1894. Van Rooy was cast as Wotan, with Blass as Hunding. Between these two events, on 24 November, Judge Lacombe in the United States Supreme Court refused to grant an injunction against Conried's production of *Parsifal,* as requested by Gilbert Ray Hawes representing Cosima Wagner. Conried's case was argued by A. J. Dittenhoefer.

Caruso's illness prevented another appearance until 30 November, when he was heard as Rhadames in *Aïda,* with Gadski, Edyth Walker (debut, Amneris), Scotti, and Plançon (Ramfis). In a *Rigoletto* of 28 November, Agostini replaced him with Sembrich, Scotti, and Josephine Jacoby (debut, Maddalena) in the cast.

Conried exhumed a portion of Grau's settings for *Salammbô* to grace the triumphal scene of *Aïda* in his production of this season, to the vast discontent of the archeologists in the audience.

Ternina's reappearance on 2 December in *Tosca* was also the occasion of Caruso's first Cavaradossi, and the setting for his first genuine triumph at the Metropolitan. Never had the role been so well sung, though Caruso's dramatic efforts were scarcely more than primitive. Scotti appeared as Scarpia, with Vigna conducting. Despite the emphasis on Italian works, there was a pause for the season's second new production of a work by Wagner on 4 December, a restudied *Tannhäuser* in which appeared Ternina, Fremstad (Venus *), Kraus (Tannhäuser), Van Rooy (Wolfram), and Plançon (Landgraf Hermann), with Mottl conducting. The first of Caruso's seventy-six appearances as Canio in *Pagliacci* occurred on 9 December, with Sembrich (Nedda *) and Scotti (Tonio). In the accompanying *Cavalleria*, Gadski, Dippel, Homer, and Campanari were the singers. There were cheers after the first act of *Pagliacci* from a group of the tenor's countrymen behind the rail — who were numerous enough to be noticeable and a sufficiently unfamiliar spectacle in the opera house to be commented upon — and Caruso repeated 'Vesti la giubba.' At a subsequent *Cavalleria* on 15 January Fremstad was the Santuzza.*

Meanwhile, rumblings of the impending *Parsifal* were not lacking. On 19 December the Reverend Doctor David J. Burell, of Marble Collegiate Church, called upon Mayor Seth Low to intercede, and Bishop Burgess in a noon service at St. Paul's Church also denounced the project. With a rare sense of the unfitting, which was later to manifest itself in connexion with the dress rehearsal of *Salome*, Conried scheduled the first *Parsifal* for Christmas Eve, which no doubt contributed further to the anguish of the pious. Since the work began at five o'clock, the prospective auditors were forced to decide what clothes were appropriate to the occasion. The majority of them finally decided in favour of evening dress, which, the papers of the day

record, was a fashion instituted by King Edward and Queen Alexandra in their attendance at an afternoon-evening *Nibelungen* cycle at Covent Garden during the previous summer. 'Owing to the unusual cost of this long awaited production,' the season's prospectus read, 'special prices will be charged' — which meant a scale ranging downward from ten dollars in the orchestra. A large share of the credit for the success of the production belongs to Anton Fuchs, of Munich, under whose direction *Parsifal* had been prepared for the stage. There was an intermission of an hour and three-quarters after the first act, and no one was admitted to the auditorium while the conductor was in his chair. The cast :

Kundry ..... Ternina
Parsifal ..... Burgstaller
Amfortas ..... Van Rooy
Gurnemanz ..... Blass
Klingsor ..... Otto Goritz (debut)
Titurel ..... Journet
Esquires ..... Mmes. Moran and Braendle
Messrs. Reiss and Harden
Knights ..... Bayer and Mühlmann
A Voice ..... Homer
Conductor, Alfred Hertz

At the second repetition on 7 January, Marion Weed was heard as Kundry, and also at the fifth performance on 21 January and the seventh on 4 February. Dippel sang Parsifal on 10 February. At the other of the season's eleven performances, the original cast was heard, and in each case the charge for admission was that of the *première.*

Die Zauberflöte finally made its appearance in German at the Metropolitan on 11 January — following the lead of the Damrosch company of 1897, which had presented it thus — but there was a reversion to Italian when the work was next presented, on the 20th. The casts were largely the same, and retained some of the striking features of the various revivals by Grau — Sembrich's Queen of the Night, Gadski's Pamina, Ternina's First Lady (in the German version), Reiss' Monostatos, and Plançon's Sorastro ; but aside from Goritz as Papageno,* the

alterations were not impressive. Mottl conducted both performances, and introduced *recitativo secco* instead of spoken dialogue into the Italian version. The season's only other Mozart was a performance of *Figaro* on 4 March, with Gadski (Countess), Seygard (Cherubino), Sembrich (Susanna), Scotti (Almaviva), and Campanari (Figaro), also directed by Mottl. Sembrich was the singer collaborating with Caruso when *L'Elisir d'Amore* was given for the first time in the house, on 23 January, with the tenor's singing of 'Una furtiva lagrima' ample excuse for the restoration. Scotti and Rossi were also in the cast. Calvé returned after a two years' absence, on 1 February, her introduction being, of course, in *Carmen*. The lack of a strong cast for the subordinate roles reduced the effectiveness of her and Scotti's (Escamillo) performances. Dippel was José, with Marguerite Lemon as Micaëla. The final appearance of Caruso for the season — *Lucia di Lammermoor* on 10 February, with Sembrich — brought the largest non-*Parsifal* attendance of the year to the theatre.

In addition to assisting in the preparation of *Parsifal* — it was his copy of the score that was used [37] — Mottl also presented a revival of Boildieu's *La Dame Blanche* on 13 February, in German. Fran Navál (George Brown), Gadski (Anna), Homer (Margarethe), Mühlmann (MacIron), Blass (Gaveston), Seygard (Jenny), and Reiss (Dickson) were the principal singers. Of more musical significance were performances of *Tristan* on 22 January and 3 February, with Ternina, Kraus, Homer (Brangaene), Blass, and Van Rooy (Kurwenal). An earlier *Tristan*, on 9 January, for which Ternina was indisposed, presented Weed (Isolde), Walker (Brangaene), Victor Klöpfer (Marke), Kraus (Tristan *), and Van Rooy (Kurwenal). The third Wagner drama to be embellished by new scenery in this season was *Siegfried*, first given under Mottl on 18 January with Gadski, Homer (Erda), Van Rooy, Reiss (Mime), Kraus (Siegfried), Goritz (Alberich), and Klöpfer (Fafner). A performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* during the week of 4 March closed the season, and the brief but highly impressive career of Mottl. For the director's benefit, Conried demonstrated his customary shrewdness by choosing *Parsifal*, which

[37] In *The New York Tribune*, 21 August 1903, an interviewer of Conried reported: 'What was new in Mr. Conried's statement was the fact that Herr Mottl . . . has not only promised to aid in the New York production, but has lent his score, with the marks and directions of previous conductors, and of Wagner himself.'

drew a large audience on 23 April (during a post-post-season week) and box-office receipts in excess of fifteen thousand dollars. The eleven performances of *Parsifal* were believed to have fetched nearly two hundred thousand dollars in box receipts for the company.

The season's income amounted to $1,107,068, and showed a profit of $60,000 to the management.[38] The profit would undoubtedly have been larger had it not been the policy of the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company to charge off the new productions of the season to the immediate income, rather than *pro rata*, over a period of years.

1904–1905

THE return of Caruso for his first full season at the Metropolitan — thirty engagements, each at six thousand francs, or $1,152 — marked the actual beginning of the long period during which he was the dominating influence on the career of the institution and the repertory it presented. The presence of the extraordinary singers Grau possessed set his course in one direction ; the presence of the extraordinary Caruso influenced Conried's course in quite another.

It is perhaps a corollary that the first years of Caruso also intitiated a new era of society's interest in the Metropolitan, but it is also true that the period of experimentation was over — that Grau's final years had established opera not merely as an obligation, but as a source of enjoyment as well, for those whose lives are ordered largely by their obligations. And the reflection in public interest was, characteristically, automatic.

The 'Caruso opening night' which was to endure at the Metropolitan, as a tradition, for the next sixteen years almost without interruption, made its appearance this year on 21 November. He was heard as Rhadames, with Eames (Aïda), Walker, Scotti, and Plançon. The auditorium had been sold out for days in advance of the event ; and the following morning's press reported

[38] Moses, *Conried*, pp. 219–220.

that eighty dollars had been asked and paid for two orchestra seats from the speculators, with a modest eleven dollars in the dress circle for those who felt irresistibly urged to be present. The scheme of decorations which had been instituted in 1903 for the walls and sides of the proscenium arch was this year extended to the ceiling ; the opera, too, had been refurbished, and for the first time at the Metropolitan, the ballet in the Temple scene was included.

Following Caruso's second appearance, at the next subscription performance on 23 November, in *Lucia*, with Sembrich, Taurino Parvis (debut, Enrico Ashton), and Journet (Raimondo), Conried presented a Thanksgiving *Parsifal*. There was the attraction of Nordica's first appearance as Kundry, and the presence of two visiting dignitaries, Prince Friedrich Karl and Prince Johann von Hohenlohe-Oehringen, but the auditorium was scarcely two-thirds full.

Fremstad's first Carmen on 25 November (in which Saléza returned to sing Don José, after three years' absence, with Ackté as Micaëla, and Journet as Escamillo, preceded a revival of *La Gioconda* on 28 November. This score had not been heard at the Metropolitan since the opening season of 1883. The settings were a heritage of one of Grau's projects of 1902, a revival planned for Ternina ; but she had not appeared in the role, and the production had remained unused. Conried's revival employed Nordica (La Gioconda), Walker (La Cieca), Homer (Laura), Caruso (Enzo Grimaldo), Plançon (Alvise), and Giraldoni (debut, Barnaba), with Vigna conducting.[39] Despite the qualities of this ensemble, the work did not really become a part of the Metropolitan repertory until after Gatti's revival of 1909. Caruso also had an important part in this season's pres-

[39] Henderson relates of the dress rehearsal of *La Gioconda* that the conductor of the stage band on the balcony seemed incapable of bringing his men in to the beat of. Vigna. Finally, when expostulations had yielded no results, Conried emerged from the auditorium and said : 'What's the matter, can't you see his baton ?' And the bedevilled musician responded : 'No, sir, I can't' — a detail of practical stage management that none of the opera-minded directors had considered in stationing him there.

entation of *Lucrezia Borgia*, given for the first time in the Metropolitan on 5 December, with Maria de Macchi (debut, Borgia), Walker (Maffio), and Scotti (D'Este). Vigna conducted.

Conried's embellishment of the Wagnerian repertory continued in this season with a new production of *Die Meistersinger* on 3 December. Heinrich Knote made his debut (Walther), and the cast included Ackté (Eva), Homer, Van Rooy (Sachs), Goritz (Beckmesser *), Blass (Pogner), and Reiss (David), with Hertz conducting. Goritz remained a notable exponent of his part for a dozen years, until the entrance of America into the European war banished the German repertory. Another artist added a well-remembered characterization to her list at about the same time ; on 1 December Fremstad appeared for the first time as Kundry. For many persons she has remained the ultimate interpreter of the role. Journet was the Gurnemanz * of this performance of *Parsifal*.

Fremstad was also nominated for Fricka in the performance of *Das Rheingold* that began an evening *Ring* cycle on 5 January, but an indisposition compelled her retirement in favour of Homer. Her associates were Van Rooy (Wotan), Burgstaller (Loge), Goritz (Alberich), Reiss (Mime), Walker (Erda), and Weed (Freia). Both of the subscription performances of *Tristan* were sung with Nordica as Isolde, on 11 January and 11 February, with Van Rooy (Kurwenal), Walker (Brangaene), and Blass (Marke). Knote was the Tristan of the first, Dippel of the second.

During this season Andreas Dippel accomplished the amazing feat of appearing at least once in *sixteen* different roles, which included the three languages of the repertory and a wide variety of musical styles. His most publicized feat occurred on 18 January, when he rescued a performance of *Tannhäuser* from distress. *Tristan* was the work scheduled for the evening, but Burgstaller reported his voice would not carry him through that score, and *Tannhäuser* was substituted. The change also resulted unfortunately, for Burgstaller was forced to retire after the first act. Frantic alarums for Dippel found him, finally, enjoying a heavy dinner ; and he was rushed to the theatre, to appear as the penitent

in the Wartburg though he had been denied the delights of Venusberg, and the hospitality of Fremstad therein. Ackté (Elisabeth), Goritz (Wolfram), and Blass (Landgraf Hermann) were the other singers, with Hertz conducting.

Conried cast a covetous eye on *Les Huguenots* as the material for an exhibition of his company, à la Grau, presenting it on 3 February, in Italian, with :

Marguerite	Sembrich
Valentine	Nordica
Raoul	Caruso
St. Bris	Plançon
Marcel	Journet
Urbain	Walker
de Nevers	Scotti

There was no Jean or Edouard for Raoul and Marcel, nor a Scalchi for Urbain ; but Caruso was superb in the set pieces, and the opera was given three times again in the remaining month of the season (with de Macchi as Valentine on 18 February).

Conried's *coup de saison*, however, was the production of *Die Fledermaus* on 16 February for his annual benefit as arranged in his contract. To justify the double prices initiated in the preceding season for *Parsifal*, Conried provided not only a regal cast, but the sight, in the ballroom scene, of all the members of the company not engaged in the actual performance. Conried's idea of embellishing *Die Fledermaus* was to present it with Sembrich (Rosalinde), Edyth Walker (Prince Orlofsky), Bella Alten (Adele), Dippel (Gabriel), Reiss (Alfred), and Goritz (Warder of the Prison). In minor roles were Greder (Dr. Falk) and Hänseler (Frosch), of the Irving Place Theatre. It was given twice again on subscription nights, but the benefit offered an interpolated concert in the second act, during which Nordica, Homer, Caruso, and Giraldoni sang the quartet from *Rigoletto*, and Scotti, Ackté, Fremstad, Eames, and Plançon also performed. There was much objection among the critics to the appearance of stars as supers — but it was very likely the most brilliant per-

formance of *Fledermaus* that New York has ever seen. The only comparative cast was that of a benefit performance given for the German Red Cross, on 8 May 1915, in which Frieda Hempel, Margarete Ober, and Elisabeth Schumann were the women, with Reiss (Gabriel), and Goritz again as the Warder.

Melba returned briefly, reappearing on 16 December in a performance of *La Bohème* with Caruso, Alten (Musetta), Scotti, Parvis, Journet, and Rossi, but she was in poor voice and was indisposed for the next two performances for which she was announced. Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* was restored for two performances, the first of them on 6 February with Eames, Alten, Homer, Caruso, Journet (Tom), Plançon (Sam), and Scotti (Renato). Also brief in its repertory appearance was *Le Nozze di Figaro*, which had one performance on 30 November, with Sembrich (Susanna), Eames (Countess), Bella Alten (debut, Cherubino), Blass (Figaro), and Scotti (Almaviva). Nahan Franko was the conductor.

The opera became front page news on the morning of 8 January, for in a performance of *Carmen* on the previous evening, the bridge across which Carmen escapes in the first act collapsed during the entry of the soldiers, propelling fifteen members of the chorus to the stage eight feet below. There were cuts, bruises, and broken limbs, but no fatalities. The structure had been used in the afternoon's *Lohengrin* without mishap, and the accident was attributed to the tread of the soldiers in unison upon it, contrary to the approved practice which distributes the vibrations unevenly.

The season's receipts totalled more than $150,000 in excess of those of the previous year, amounting to $1,285,068, though the total number of performances — subscription and non-subscription — varied but little. The profit, however, was larger proportionately, amounting to $126,326.[40] A long tour to the Pacific Coast, extending until 1 May, followed the New York season.

Relevant to a discussion of the 1904–1905 season is a detailed accounting of the cost involved in conducting a season of opera at that time. It was put forth by Conried at the close of the 1905–

[40] Moses, *Conried*, pp. 219–220.

1906 season, in order to quiet talk that he was economizing in the production of opera, with an eye towards greater profits. The comparison with one of Grau's seasons was used to indicate that the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company was expending an average of ten thousand dollars a week *more* for the productions he presented than Grau had. No statistical method was advanced, however, to prove the implied greater merit of his productions.

PRODUCTION	*Grau 1902–03*	*Conried 1904–05*
Artists and staff	$522,315.13	$544,153.11
Chorus, ballet and supers	41,386.13	66,212.13
Orchestra and stage band	85,569.29	95,083.40
Steamship transportation	16,799.29	20,656.07
Railroad transportation, etc.	36,209.52	72,687.30 *
Costumes, wardrobe, wigs	18,110.59	15,953.33
Music and royalties	3,517.16	3,499.67
Commissions and sundries	2,356.62	4,371.54
Advertising	16,566.91	25,167.42
Totals	$743,031.71	$847,783.97

* Includes the post-season tour to the Pacific Coast.

MAINTENANCE		
Rent, taxes and insurance	$ 57,078.85	$ 60,300.23
Box office, ushers, doormen	5,844.50	5,723.65
Cleaners, porters, etc.	7,422.86	10,275.94
Engineer's depar't	9,934.79	9,763.43
Electrician's depar't	8,255.55	10,758.66
Scene painters	13,894.56	7,173.15
Carpenters and stagehands	22,723.38	45,894.59
Property depar't	9,487.19	16,365.95
Gas and electricity	8,626.34	14,372.84
Storehouse expenses	1,551.29	3,040.00
Tickets and sundries	2,559.61	4,140.46
Opera School	.....	5,712.04
Director's and office salaries, general and European expense accounts, etc.	41,779.12	43,497.58
Repairs, stage reconstruction, costumes from Europe	2,228.54	98,257.66
Grand totals	$933,468.54	$1,177,058.66

Balancing the total of expenditures as given against the receipts cited by Moses [41] yields a profit of but $108,010, leaving $15,990 in profits to be accounted for from 'other sources' than the receipts from operatic performances.

1905–1906

CONRIED'S third season as director of the Metropolitan Opera's presentations moved placidly in well-formed grooves for seven weeks before the incident occurred which gives it an individual significance in the history of the institution. This was the strike of the chorus, which began on 3 January, endured for three days, and ended with partial victory for both sides. It had no great significance in an immediate sense ; but it was an indication of the growth of unionization in fields related to operatic performance — a growth which was to influence the opera for the next score of years, and to the present day, both internally and in relation to the public.

When the chorus walked out, prior to the afternoon performance of *Faust* in which Eames made her reappearance for the season and Caruso was heard for the first time at the Metropolitan as Faust,[42] they were being paid fifteen dollars a week. The union had been organized but recently ; and it demanded twenty-five dollars a week for its members, plus recognition as a union, and better accommodations than day coaches, for the choristers, on overnight trips from New York. The strike failed to affect the other unionized groups in the performance, through the unwillingness of the Musical Mutual Protective Union (the orchestral players), and the Theatrical Protective Union (stagehands) to call out their members. Out of the hundred and forty members of the chorus, two men and six women did not strike, but this group was hardly sufficient for the soldiers' chorus and the kermesse scene, which were both omitted. The church scene

[41] Moses, *Conried*, p. 220.
[42] At $1344 per performance.

was given with the organ occupying the void left by the chorus.

A performance of *Tristan* on 5 January in which Nordica (Isolde), Burgstaller (Tristan *), Walker (Brangaene), Van Rooy (Kurwenal), and Blass (Marke) participated, found Knote, Blass, Mühlmann, Bégué, Reiss, Dufriche, Paroli, and Goritz among an impromptu chorus offstage! Some new scenery made its appearance (for the second and third acts) at this performance, but the ship was as it always has been — incredible. The chorus returned for the following afternoon's performance — a repetition of the previous cast for *Faust* — having been so instructed by Samuel Gompers, who refused his sanction for the strike. His action was said to be based on the fact that the strike violated contractual obligations. However, the members of the chorus were granted an increase of thirty-three per cent, to twenty dollars a week; also their demands for sleeping cars on overnight trips from New York. They were paid for the full week of the strike, though they had missed performances on Wednesday and Friday. The union, however, was not recognized.

The season's significant musical event was the first performance in the Metropolitan of Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, at the *matinée* of 25 November. The score had been introduced to New York in a production at Daly's Theatre on 8 October 1895, under the direction of Anton Seidl, but it had not been outstandingly successful. Performances were given over a period of six weeks, the singers using an English text. At the Metropolitan, however, with Humperdinck present to observe the production, which was sung in German, the merits of the lovely score were more fully apparent. In the first performance Bella Alten was heard as Gretel, with Lina Abarbanell (of the Irving Place Theatre) as Hänsel, and Weed (Gertrude), Homer (The Witch), and Goritz (Peter) in the cast. Hertz was the conductor. Abarbanell later became well-known as a light opera star, particularly in *Madame Sherry*.

The season had opened five days before with the previous season's revival of *La Gioconda.* In the cast were Nordica (Leonora), Walker (Laura), Jacoby (La Cieca), Caruso (Enzo), Scotti (Barnaba), and Plançon (Alvise), with Vigna conducting. An ornate revival of Goldmark's *Die Königin von Saba* was presented on 22 November, providing an opportunity for the debut of Marie Rappold (Sulamith), succeeding to a role which had been first sung in the Metropolitan, in 1885, by Lilli Lehmann. In Conried's cast were Knote (Assad), Walker (The Queen), Alten (Astaroth), Van Rooy (Solomon), and Blass (The High Priest), under the direction of Hertz.

Caruso's performances reached a new total during this season, numbering forty in New York. Indeed, in a review of the season published in *The Sun* of 18 March 1906, W. J. Henderson had commented :

> The fact now to be recorded is that the public has gone to the opera in the season just ended, almost solely for the purpose of hearing Enrico Caruso. The public has not cared a rap what opera was sung. The invariable request proffered at the box office has been 'Can you let me have seats for Caruso's next appearance ?'

For display of the tenor, Donizetti's *La Favorita* made an appearance in the repertory on 29 November, with Walker, Scotti, and Plançon. *La Sonnambula* was given for the first time in fourteen years on 15 December, with Sembrich, Jomelli (Lisa), and Plançon (Rodolfo) ; and *Marta* was restored after six years' absence on 9 March, with Sembrich, Caruso, Walker, and Plançon. During this season Caruso made his first appearance as Don José, that event occurring in a performance of *Carmen* on 5 March in which were Fremstad (Carmen), Abott (Micaëla), and Journet (Escamillo).

Fremstad added another of the heroic Wagnerian roles to her accomplishments in this season, her first appearance as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* occurring on 13 December. Her associates in the cast were Homer (Erda), Knote (Siegfried), Van Rooy, Goritz, and Reiss. An afternoon cycle of the *Ring* dramas during the week of 26 December began on that date with *Das Rheingold,* in which were Fremstad (Fricka), Van Rooy (Wotan), Burgstaller (Loge), Jacoby (Erda), Mühlmann (Fafner), and Blass (Fasolt). Edyth Walker was the Brünnhilde in *Die*

Walküre on the twenty-seventh, and Marion Weed had the same role on the twenty-eighth in *Siegfried*, but the cycle attained considerably greater distinction in the *Götterdämmerung* of the twenty-ninth, in which appeared Nordica (Brünnhilde), Homer (Waltraute), Weed (Gutrune), Burgstaller (Siegfried), Blass (Hagen), Mühlmann (Gunther), and Goritz (Alberich). An evening cycle with much the same grouping of singers was heard later in the season. Save for the first *Tannhäuser*, in which Jeanne Jomelli made her debut as Elisabeth, on 25 November, the usual cast for this work was Eames, Fremstad (Venus), Knote, Goritz or Van Rooy (Wolfram), and Blass (Landgraf), with Hertz conducting. *Die Meistersinger* on 2 March offered Alten (Eva), Homer (Magdalena), Knote (Walther), Van Rooy (Sachs), Goritz, Reiss, and Blass. The season's strongest cast for a score by Wagner, however, was that for *Die Walküre* on 9 December, in which were Nordica (Brünnhilde), Fremstad (Sieglinde), Homer (Fricka), Dippel (Siegmund), Van Rooy, and Blass (Hunding). On 11 January *Parsifal* was offered for the first time at the regular price of five dollars, with Fremstad, Burgstaller (Parsifal), Blass (Gurnemanz), Van Rooy (Amfortas), and Goritz (Klingsor).

To observe the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Mozart's birth, a new staging for *Don Giovanni* was brought forth when it was presented on 27 January. The Don's palace was demolished at the close of the supper scene, and the finale was sung before the churchyard set. Though the arias were sung as set pieces, they were done within the stage, and not in front of a drawn curtain. Nordica was cast in this revival as Donna Anna, which she sang excellently, though with less perception of the character's emotional qualities than she had displayed in previous revivals as Elvira. Also familiar from revivals by Grau were Sembrich (Zerlina), and Scotti (The Don). The others in the cast were Jomelli (Donna Elvira), Dippel (Ottavio), Journet (Leporello), and Rossi (Masetto), under the direction of Nahan Franko. *Le Nozze di Figaro* had also been planned for performance in this season, but an illness of Eames compelled its postponement.

Tosca, during this season, was cast with Caruso, Eames, and Scotti when it was given on 8 January; and *Aïda*, with Caruso, Nordica, Walker (Amneris), Campanari, and Plançon (Ramfis) on 15 January. A charming singer whose abilities were somewhat obscured by the abundance of more impressive female voices at that time was Bessie Abott.

She made her debut in *La Bohème* on 20 January, as Mimi, with Alten, Dippel, and Scotti.

For his benefit performance in this year the director remained loyal to Johann Strauss, chosing his *Zigeunerbaron* in observance of the twentieth anniversary of its first American performance. This had occurred at the Casino Theatre, also under Conried's sponsorship, in 1886. The Metropolitan cast offered Alten (Saffi), Rappold, Homer, Dippel, Blass, Mühlmann, and Bars. Though there was no ballroom scene in which the stars of the company could be introduced to enhance the 'gala' nature of the occasion, the director contrived to have them appear as 'captives,' to sing for their freedom in the third act, thus :

Journet ....'Couplets de Vulcain,' from Gounod's *Philémon et Baucis*
Sembrich ...'Parla Waltz' ..... Arditi
Fremstad ...'Les Filles de Cadiz' ..... Delibes
Eames .....Habanera — 'Tu' ..... Fuentes
Plançon ....'Serenade,' from *Damnation de Faust* ..... Berlioz
Abott .....'Comin' through the Rye.'
Walker .....'Brindisi' from *Lucrezia Borgia* ..... Donizett
Caruso, Scotti } ....Duo from *La Forza del Destino* ..... Verdi
Burgstaller, Knote, Van Rooy, and Blass ..... A Bavarian Quartet

Though double prices were charged, the audience was enormous, and the estimated receipts were nearly twenty thousand dollars.

Of somewhat specifically more musical interest was a concert devoted to Wagner on Sunday evening, 25 February, which included the rarely heard original version of the third act prelude to *Tannhäuser*, amounting to one hundred fifty-five measures, in place of the ninety-two included in the printed score of the opera. In this older form it was known as Tannhäuser's 'Pilgrimage.'

Meanwhile, on West Thirty-fourth Street, a theatre was being constructed by the enterprising and imaginative Oscar Hammerstein. On 13 February 1906 Hammerstein announced that

it was to be called the Manhattan Opera House ; that he would commence operatic production there in the fall, and that he was negotiating for the services of the de Reszkes. To Edouard, it was said, he had offered a twenty weeks' contract at one thousand dollars a performance ; and to Jean, guest engagements at thirty-five hundred dollars each. Though the musically informed who had been in touch with the declining activities of Jean in Paris had reason to doubt the probability of his appearance, the magic name had its effect with the public, and imparted a brighter glow of anticipation to the venture than the erratic earlier record of the impresario would have warranted. Regardless, however, of the beginnings of the Hammerstein enterprise, it finally became the most worrisome competition that the Metropolitan had ever known — artistically, without question, even though the social lustre was silver and rhinestones, rather than gold and diamonds.

The season's receipts at the Metropolitan amounted to $1,209,068, and the profits to $111,018.[43] However, the tour was curtailed abruptly through the mishap to the company during the San Francisco earthquake of 18 and 19 April ;[44] and the losses were a heavy drain on the next season's receipts.

In the director's private book for the season 1905–1906 there are these notes about his contracts :

Artists	*Number of performances or length of season*	*Fee per performance*
Alten, Bella	60 performances	$100
Eames, Emma	9 performances, plus 10 performances (on tour)	$1500
Fremstad, Olive	6 months' season (10 performances per month)	3333.33 marks per month

[43] Moses, *Conried*, p. 220.

[44] The story is told by Richard Conried (to whom I am indebted for many favours) that on the morning of the nineteenth, while his father paced the director's office in the Metropolitan, distraught, anxious, not knowing whether Sembrich, Caruso, and the others of his company in San Francisco were alive or dead, and unable to get word even through the intervention of Clarence Mackay, a member of his board of directors burst into the office and exclaimed, 'Good God, Conried ! How much is this going to cost us ?'

Artists	*Number of performances or length of season*	*Fee per performance*
Homer, Louise	5 months, 10 per month	$1500 per month plus $1000 at season's end
Nordica, Lillian	20 performances	$1250
Sembrich, Marcella	45 performances [45]	$1000
Walker, Edyth	40 performances	$500
Blass, Robert	60 performances	$150
Burgstaller, Alois	20 performances	$500
Caruso, Enrico	40 performances	7000 francs
Goritz, Otto	7 months' season, divided between New York and elsewhere (70 performances)	40,000 marks for the entire season
Journet, Marcel	63 performances	$10,000 for season ($158 per performance)
Knote, Heinrich	40 performances	$1000 per performance
Plançon, Pol	15 weeks 10 performances per month	2500 fcs. per performance
Scotti, Antonio	40 performances	$600 per performance
Van Rooy, Anton	40 performances	$500 per performance

It was further stipulated that Van Rooy was not to sing these parts in succession : Van der Decken, Der Wanderer, Hans Sachs, and Telramund.

The name of Luisa Tetrazzini (written, in the book, 'Louisa') also occurs in this volume, though this singer did not appear at the Metropolitan for the first time until after her success in the Manhattan Opera House. The original contract with Conried provided for forty performances, at 1250 francs per performance. This contract, it was later declared, was not effective, owing to the failure of the director to post a deposit to make it binding.

[45] Mme. Sembrich's contract also provided that the artist was to have 'two orchestra seats for each performance in which she sings.'

1906–1907

THOUGH the intrepid Oscar had persuaded neither of the de Reszke brothers to come to America, he had returned from Europe with a company that included Alessandro Bonci, Maurice Renaud, Clotilde Bressler-Gianoli, and Cleofonte Campanini, conductor. Calvé and Melba were also under contract to Hammerstein, though they did not make their first appearances until later in the season. The Metropolitan housed the important musical events of the season, with the *première* of *Salome*, and the first performance of *Madama Butterfly* in Italian,[46] also the debut of Geraldine Farrar ; but Hammerstein's enterprise and resourcefulness were the materials from which he fashioned a rivalry to the Metropolitan which gave to New York the four most active years of its operatic history.

Farrar's debut in *Roméo* occurred simultaneously with the opening of the Metropolitan season on 23 November. With her in the cast were Charles Rousselière (Roméo), Simard (Mercutio), and Samuel Bovy, conductor, all of whom were making their first appearances in the Metropolitan. *The Tribune* of 24 November noted Farrar as 'a beautiful vision,' with a 'voice of exquisite quality in the middle register.' Following the scandal in which he had been involved just before the opening of the season, the audience that greeted Caruso in *La Bohème* on 28 November was in a measure an affirmation of the public regard for him.[47] It was one of the largest and most enthusiastic in the history of the house. With Caruso in the cast were Sembrich, Alten (Musetta), Scotti, Journet, and Simard (Schaunard *). The damage of the scandal, indeed, had been greater to Conried's health than to Caruso's reputa-

[46] The New York *première*, in English, was given by the Savage Opera Company on 12 November 1906.

[47] Caruso had been arrested in the monkey-house in Central Park on a charge of annoying a Mrs. Hannah Stanhope on 16 November 1906. He contended that because he spoke no English and could not defend himself he had been victimized. Though she did not appear in court, the complaint of the arresting officer was accepted as testimony, and Caruso was convicted.

tion, for the director suffered a breakdown that restricted his activities for the remainder of the season. The opening week also included the first appearance of Riccardo Stracciari (Germont) in *La Traviata* on 1 December, with Sembrich and Caruso.

There was an attempt in the press of the day to confect an analogy between the Hammerstein opening and the conflict between the Metropolitan and the Academy in 1883, but the materials were palpably lacking. Hammerstein had no horseshoe, of whatever metal ; and though his opening night attendance included, in the boxes, Mrs. Charles Childs, H. H. Flagler, Rawlins Cottenet, Miss May Callender, James de Wolf Cutting, E. Berry Wall, Lloyd Warren, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Damrosch, they were scarcely present as participants in a social pageant. Opposed to Hammerstein's opening with *I Puritani*, with Bonci, Pinkert, Zaccari, Arimondi, and Ancona, on 3 December was a *Marta* at the Metropolitan in which appeared Sembrich, Caruso, Homer, and Journet. This performance found the following in the boxes :

> The W. K. Vanderbilts, both senior and junior, Mrs. Harry P. Whitney, Mrs. Payne Whitney, Miss Dorothy Whitney, the August Belmonts, the George J. Goulds, Mrs. Ogden Goelet, Mrs. Ogden Mills, the Goadby Lowes, the Charles B. Alexanders, the William D. Sloanes, along with a good many others of less social lustre.

Hammerstein's price scale matched that of the Metropolitan ; and despite a stormy night, both theatres were filled with opera-goers, if not with music-lovers.

The weaknesses of Hammerstein's organization which prevented him from ever competing completely with the Metropolitan in every phase of operatic production were more pronounced in this first season than they were subsequently. He never developed a German group in his company ; and, indeed, in the four seasons of his activity, gave no performance at all in that language. Even a few tentative efforts to give Wagner in French were unsuccessful. Thus no music-lover would find the Hammerstein company self-sufficient for his musical needs, but

would have to supplement a subscription at the Manhattan with attendance at the Metropolitan. This lack, as well as Conried's possession of the exclusive rights for the performance in America of all works by Puccini, forced Hammerstein's concentration upon the French artists and the unfamiliar French works which remain as the brightest memory of the Manhattan Opera Company. Thus, a necessity again takes a place in our history as virtuous in its outcomes, as in the German period and the early years of the de Reszkes and Grau. Hammerstein, in the languages he employed, reverted to the traditions of the early 90's in the Metropolitan — but neither the works he presented (after his first experimental season) nor the singers he engaged were restricted to the conventional. He gave to New York four outstanding operatic experiences — *Pelléas, Elektra, Salome,* and *Louise ;* as well as a half-dozen more embellished by the talents of particular performers to totals far in excess of their printed significance. In addition to Bonci, Renaud, Tetrazzini, Garden, Bressler-Gianoli, John McCormack, Constantino, Zenatello, Perier, Dufranne, and Didur, Hammerstein brought back Cleofonte Campanini, now an outstanding conductor, to whose presence may, indirectly, be attributed the engagement by the Metropolitan of both Toscanini and Gatti-Casazza. Scarcely a meagre accomplishment for one man possessed of no society backing !

Giordano's *Fedora,* to provide Caruso with a new role and to introduce Lina Cavalieri, was Conried's first novelty, on 5 December. With them (as Loris Ipanow and Fedora) were Alten (Olga), Scotti (De Siriex), and Dufriche (Grech), directed by Vigna. The interest in Caruso and Cavalieri permitted four performances in this season and three in the next, but the work has few of the qualities that have kept *Andrea Chenier* alive. On the same evening, Maurice Renaud was acquainting an audience at the Manhattan with his conception of the Jester in *Rigoletto,* a debut that was ample indication of the qualities of this fine artist. Bonci (The Duke), and Pinkert (Gilda) were

his principal associates, with Campanini directing. With the introduction of Charles Dalmorès as Faust on 7 December, and of Clotilde Bressler-Gianoli in *Carmen* on 14 January, with Dalmorès (Don José), Ancona (Escamillo), and Gilibert (Dancairo), the important members of the Hammerstein company had been presented to the public.

The influence of foreign operatic production that makes itself known at the Metropolitan now and again was demonstrated on 7 December when the version of Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust* prepared by Raoul Gunsbourg for Monte Carlo in 1893 was presented by Conried. In the cast were Farrar (Marguerite) and Rousselière (Faust), both of whom had appeared in the work in Monte Carlo. At the Metropolitan, however, the triumph was Plançon's (Méphistophélès) ; and he was encouraged to repeat the serenade in the Garden Scene. Vigna conducted. Gounod's setting of the Barbier-Carré *Faust* was available in New York on the same evening, being presented by Hammerstein at the Manhattan with Donalda (Marguerite), Dalmorès (Faust), and Ancona. The same work was a feature of the Metropolitan season, being offered in a new scenic production on 31 December, with Farrar, Rousselière, Plançon, and Stracciari (Valentin).

Ternina's absence from the company and the absorption of the German artists of the Metropolitan company with *Salome* confined the Wagner of the early season to a *Tannhäuser* on 30 November, in which Katharina Fleischer-Edel (Elisabeth), and Carl Burrian (Tannhäuser) made their debuts, with Fremstad, Van Rooy, and Blass (Landgraf Hermann) ; a *Lohengrin* of 19 December, with Burrian, Fleischer-Edel, Kirkby-Lunn (Ortrud, debut), Goritz, and Blass ; a *Siegfried*, with Burrian, Fleischer-Edel, Kirkby-Lunn (Erda), Van Rooy, Goritz, and Reiss ; a *Tannhäuser* with Eames, on 14 January, and another with Farrar (Elisabeth *) on 6 February. To replace Ternina, Conried had engaged Gadski, but she did not join the company until 15 February, when she sang Isolde for the first time at the

Metropolitan, with Burrian, Homer, Van Rooy (Kurwenal), and Blass. Gadski sang the same role three times later in the season.

A presentation of *Parsifal* on Washington's Birthday with Fremstad, Burgstaller, Van Rooy (Amfortas), Blass, Goritz, and Mühlmann (Titurel) preceded the season's evening *Ring* cycle which began on 19 March. In *Das Rheingold* on this date were Fremstad (Fricka), Weed (Freia), Schumann-Heink (Erda and Flosshilde), Burgstaller (Loge), Goritz, Van Rooy (Wotan), and Reiss. It was followed by *Die Walküre* on 21 March, in which Gadski, Fremstad (Sieglinde), Schumann-Heink (both Fricka and Waltraute) were heard with Burgstaller, Van Rooy, and Blass. Gadski also sang the two later Brünnhildes — on 25 March in *Siegfried*, with Schumann-Heink, Burgstaller, Van Rooy, Goritz, and Reiss ; and two days later in *Götterdämmerung* with Schumann-Heink (Waltraute and Flosshilde), Burgstaller, Blass (Hagen), Mühlmann (Gunther), and Weed (Gutrune).

Conried's preparations for *Salome* had engrossed him for much of the previous summer. Had he been able, as he wished, to entice Strauss to conduct the American *première* of *Salome* on 22 January, it is likely that the succeeding confusion would have been even greater than it was. Conried's offer to Strauss was five hundred dollars an evening, as royalty and as fee for conducting ; if he did not conduct, only half the sum.[48] Furthermore, he offered the privilege of creating Salome to Farrar, but she wisely refused, nor did she sing the role later in her career.[49] Fremstad accepted the task finally, at the expense of deferring her first Isolde until the next season.

The same curious disregard for the obvious proprieties that Conried had displayed when he gave his first *Parsifal* on Christmas Eve also affected the history of *Salome* in the Metropolitan. The director scheduled the dress rehearsal for a Sunday morning, and altered that event from merely a technical necessity to a semi-public ceremony by inviting, not a few professional observers, but a miscellaneous audience to the number of one thousand. Most of them had just come from divine

[48] Moses, *Conried*, p. 295.
[49] Moses, *Conried*, p. 219.

services, and the contrast could not have failed to shock the susceptible far more than the character of the work alone might have done under other circumstances. Even so, there was no demonstration of disapproval from the directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company until after the first public performance on 22 January. The presentation occurred on a Tuesday evening, indicating that it was outside the regular subscription series ; it was, actually, Conried's choice for his annual benefit, in succession to *Parsifal*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Zigeunerbaron !* Double prices were charged, and the receipts from the sold-out house were close to twenty thousand dollars.

Much has been made of the fact that a number of the audience left before *Salome* was completed ; but of what performance of opera in New York has that not been true ? The beginning of *Salome* was deferred until shortly before ten o'clock by a preliminary concert of ten numbers ; and social engagements seem a much more reasonable interpretation of the exodus than does moral prejudice. This view, indeed, was advanced at the time by Edward Ziegler, since 1916 an executive of the Metropolitan Opera Company, who wrote in the *Theatre Magazine* of February 1907 : 'A few folk straggled out before the end of the Strauss work, but this may be explained very logically by the fact that it was late and that the silly concert and the long intermission had wearied most of the listeners.'

A much larger public, however, was influenced by such writing as appeared in *The Tribune*, by H. E. Krehbiel, on 23 January. He declared : 'The reviewer should be an embodied conscience stung into righteous fury by the moral stench with which *Salome* fills the nostrils of humanity.' Even a 'news' report in the same paper, written by Walter Prichard Eaton, was coloured by a similar concern for the moral well-being of New York's opera-goers ; for it stated : 'Many voices were hushed as the crowd passed out into the night, many faces were white almost as those at the rail of a ship, many women were silent and men spoke as if a bad dream were upon them.' Krehbiel, however,

recognized 'three supremely beautiful musical moments in *Salome*' : Salome's reflections over the cistern, the dance of the seven veils, and the finale. But there is little doubt that the kiss bestowed by Salome upon the severed head was the *casus belli* that led to the banishment of the work, especially since Fremstad performed the action with enormously veracious fervour, at the very front of the stage.

On 27 January it was publicly announced by the directors of the ownership company that they would permit no further performances of *Salome*, even though Conried had announced that all further performances of the work would be outside the regular subscription series. Thus, it would be available only for those who had a personal curiosity about the work, and voluntarily exposed themselves to it. In the press of the time it was stated that 'the objections started in the family of one of the most influential and powerful of the box-holders,' generally interpreted as a reference to the Morgan family. Conried asked for a conference with a representative group of the protesting directors, and the request was granted, though the president of the board, G. G. Haven, said there was no chance of a reconsideration. Otto Kahn, along with Rawlins Cottenet, Robert Goelet, James Speyer, and Henry Rogers Winthrop, of the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company, argued valiantly for the cause of Strauss and *Salome*, but it was plain that the final power reposed with Morgan and his associates. Conried threatened to take the work to another theatre, but he was dissuaded from acting upon this rebellious course by his fellow-directors. There was a threat of cancellation of the lease by the Opera and Real Estate Company if Conried persisted in presenting *Salome* in the Metropolitan, but the legal basis for such an action was scarcely plain. *Salome* had been on the list of works formally submitted to the owners by Conried before the season began ; and it had been approved. The Conried Metropolitan Opera Company could scarcely have been re-

strained by court order from presenting *Salome* had they persisted.

However, the internal solidarity of the two groups was too great to permit any such scandalous outcome ; and the ban was accepted, if with some considerable grumbling. One satisfaction alone was possible for Kahn and his associates of the Conried Metropolitan's directorate. Though Morgan finally offered to pay personally for the expense involved in mounting *Salome* (which included, besides the expense of costumes and scenery, a large royalty guaranteed to Strauss for several years' performing rights) the producers, on 3 March, declined any reimbursement for their losses, preferring to go on record as having withdrawn the opera in deference to the wishes of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company. # [50] At the height of the controversy, on 27 January, Hammerstein declared that he had no interest in the work, even if Conried should relinquish his exclusive right to it. He stated further that it had been offered to him in the previous summer, and that he had declined it. The advent of Mary Garden, however, altered that decision in 1909.

Though Conried had not been able to meet Strauss's terms for the composer's presence at *Salome*, Puccini himself was present to lend *éclat* to the first performances in the Metropolitan of his *Manon Lescaut* and *Madama Butterfly*. Neither of these were New York *premières*, for *Lescaut* had been given in 1898 by the same Italian company that presented *La Bohème ;* and *Butterfly* during the fall of 1906 in the Garden Theatre (see p. 112). Both conformed to Conried's specifications for an enjoyable opera.[51] *Lescaut* was presented on 18 January with Caruso (des Grieux), Cavalieri (Manon), Scotti (Lescaut), and Rossi (Geronte) ; and *Butterfly* on 11 February, with Farrar

[50] From this point, the sign # indicates that a full cast of the work under discussion will be found in the appendix.

[51] In his biography of Conried, Moses states, on p. 195 : 'Those who knew Mr. Conried declared that he never thoroughly enjoyed opera unless Caruso sang.'

(Cio-Cio-San), Caruso (Pinkerton), Scotti (Sharpless), Homer (Suzuki), and Reiss (Goro). Following the first performance of *Lescaut*, Puccini declared his intention of collaborating with David Belasco on an opera concerned with the West, the first public intimation of *La Fanciulla del West*. Also of interest in the repertory of Puccini during this season was the first appearance of Farrar as Mimi in *La Bohème*, on 15 March.[52]

The major events of the season obscured somewhat the day to day repertory of the Metropolitan, but much of the character of subsequent seasons, even to the present day, derives from this 1906–1907 season. There was an introduction of a controversial novelty (*Salome*), and two important lesser works also joined the repertory to endure with considerable persistence. The conflicting activities of the two houses also posed its own problems. On 2 January for example, Hammerstein offered the first appearance of Melba in *La Traviata*, with Bonci (Alfredo), Renaud (Germont), and Gilibert (Dottore Grenville), while at the Metropolitan Eames made her seasonal reëntry in *Tosca*, with Caruso and Scotti. On this night it was estimated that the two auditoriums contained 6702 persons. A later *Tosca*, on 25 January, offered Cavalieri for the first time as Floria Tosca, with the same principals in support. Conried also restored *Lakmé* for Sembrich on 28 January, the cast including Rousselière, Jacoby, and Journet; and *L'Africaine* on 11 January, Caruso singing da Gama for the first time in his career, with Fremstad (Selika), Rappold (Inez), and Stracciari (Nelusko). At the Manhattan, as this performance was in progress, Hammerstein offered Melba, Bonci, and Renaud in *Rigoletto*. The nineteen performances of *Carmen* at the Manhattan in this season may appear, superficially, expressive of a desire to exploit Calvé in the role, but fifteen of these were sung by Bressler-Gianoli, and only four by Calvé. This singer joined the company on 27 March for the last month of the season, reappearing as Carmen in a performance which brought 720 carriages to the house — duly noted in the press as 'a record for the season.'

Despite the increase in New York's operatic activities, Mozart was accorded even less attention than had been the custom in

[52] On the afternoon of the fifteenth, the Metropolitan was the scene of a testimonial concert in honour of Emil Fischer, the celebrated baritone of the German opera period. The first act of *Die Walküre* was sung by Fremstad, Burgstaller, and Blass; the first and second scenes from the second act of *Lohengrin*, by Gadski, Schumann-Heink, and Goritz; and the first scene from the third act of *Die Meistersinger* by Gadski, Schumann-Heink, Dippel, Goritz, Reiss (David), and Fischer. $7500 was raised for the guest of honour.

recent seasons — four performances of *Don Giovanni,* at the Manhattan, being the sum of the representations awarded him. These had the merits of Campanini's distinguished conducting, the beautifully sung Ottavio of Bonci, and Renaud's polished characterization of the Don. So great, indeed, had the popularity of Bonci become that Conried made strenuous efforts to acquire his services, and finally persuaded him to join the Metropolitan company for the season of 1907–1908, though Hammerstein held an option on his appearances for two seasons. The latter announced on 28 January that he would not exercise his legal rights to Bonci's exclusive services in New York, and that he had engaged Giovanni Zenatello of La Scala to replace him. There eventually was litigation, which did not prevent Bonci from going over to the Metropolitan in the next season.

Campanini, too, was desired by the Metropolitan ; and though he never accepted a contract, the eventual engagement of Toscanini may be attributed to Campanini's presence in New York and the effect he had on the conventional repertory presented under his direction. Indeed, the critical comments on the first season of Campanini's conducting at the Metropolitan might well have served as the models for the later enthusiasm for Toscanini, so frequently does one encounter an insistence upon the same virtues of musicianship, authority, artistic rectitude, and interpretative fervour that have become synonymous with Toscanini. Though Mancinelli was a highly able executant, the stock Italian repertory had never, in New York, been so embellished by the talents of an exacting conductor as they were in this season under Campanini, and in the next few years, through his efforts and Toscanini's.

Despite the poor business of his early weeks, Hammerstein announced on 20 April that his receipts were $750,000, representing a sizable profit above the cost of his productions. From Arthur Hammerstein, I learned that the profit for this first season was one hundred thousand dollars. Shortly before, on the

9th, Conried had declared that his season, also, had been profitable, that he might even declare a dividend. There was no dividend, however ; for he had the loss on *Salome* to make good. Also, in the biography of Conried, published in 1916, it is stated that this season showed a *loss* of $84,039 because he 'paid back what had been destroyed during the Western trip' of the previous year.[53] The reference, obviously, is to the San Francisco earthquake. For this season the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company's income was $1,387,783 (from all sources including the post-season tour), and the expenditures $1,471,822. This was the first time in four seasons that a loss had been recorded. The season marked a turning-point, therefore, in the affairs of the Metropolitan, for its production of opera did not yield a dividend in 1907–1908 ; and the organization of the company was altered thereafter to a basis on which no dividends were anticipated.

1907–1908

THOUGH the outstanding event of the final year of Conried's directorship at the Metropolitan did not occur until the season was nearly ended — that being his own replacement and the reorganization of the operatic enterprise — it has managed to obscure, for a later day, the extraordinary richness of operatic activity in New York during the weeks of the 1907–1908 season. That there were twenty of these weeks indicates, alone, that it was the most ambitious season yet undertaken by the Metropolitan. Moreover, Thursday night was included in the subscription series for the first time, thus increasing the number of performances per week. The performances given on Saturday night at reduced prices (known paradoxically as 'popular prices,' implying that the other prices were *not* popular) were offered as a regular subscription series, completing the align-

[53] Moses, *Conried*, p. 219.

ment of performances by subscription that has endured to the present day.

Conried's most aggressive gesture towards meeting the opposition of Hammerstein was to present Caruso fifty-one times during the season. Of the hundred and twenty-four performances given in New York by the company, therefore, Caruso was heard in exactly a third. (Alessandro Bonci was also a member of the Metropolitan company in this season for the first time.) This is by far the largest total of appearances Caruso made in any season of his career in New York, and in proportion to the number of performances given, his most weighty impression on the repertory. With one in every three of the season's performances given over to Caruso, the limitations of the possible repertory are quite apparent. Add to this the presence of a second favourite tenor — Bonci — and it is plain that the Italian population could scarcely be condemned for regarding the Metropolitan as created for their benefit.

For Caruso the season's sole novelty was produced on the opening night, 18 November, Francisco Ciléa's *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Caruso had created the role of Maurizio at the world *première* at Milan on 6 November 1902 ; and there was the further interest, at the Metropolitan, of a cast including Cavalieri, Scotti, Journet, and George Lucas (debut), but the work was only repeated once during the season. Somewhat more successful, if only temporarily, was the first production by the Metropolitan of Mascagni's *Iris*, on 16 December. This was not the New York *première* of the work, for a company under the direction of Mascagni had presented *Iris* in the Metropolitan Opera House in 1902. It was, however, the first presentation in a Metropolitan subscription season. In the cast which presented *Iris* five times in this season were Caruso (Osaka), Eames (Iris), and Scotti (Kyoto).

In the previous season, Conried had introduced Farrar to a public which was to regard her for long as its own ; in this year, he brought forward another outstanding artist, Feodor Chaliapine, on 20 November, the season's second night. Chaliapine hardly earned the immediate approval that Farrar did ; but his career continued to flourish, and returned him trium-

phantly to the Metropolitan nearly fifteen years later. His debut in Boïto's *Mefistofele* was unquestionably impressive, if hardly indicative of a whole-hearted acceptance by the local opera-goers. There was praise for his splendid voice and respect for his capacity as an actor ; but a generation that admired the polish of a Renaud or a Plançon could scarcely be expected to find the vigorous frankness of the early Chaliapine to its taste. Riccardo Martin, a tenor born in Kentucky, also made his debut on this occasion (Faust), and began a career that endured for nearly a decade at the Metropolitan. Paradoxically, Martin's reputation had almost passed from memory when Chaliapine returned, in 1922, to launch in earnest his American career.[54] Farrar (Margherita), Rappold (Helen of Troy), and Jacoby (Pantalis) were also in the cast. Further important debuts of the early season were those of Rudolph Ferrari, who conducted the opening performance of *Lecouvreur* on 18 November ; and of Bonci, who made his first Metropolitan appearance on the twenty-second, in *Rigoletto*, with Sembrich, Stracciari, and Journet (Sparafucile). Mary Garden and Massenet's *Thaïs* began their New York careers together on 25 November in the Manhattan, though more enthusiasm was aroused by Renaud's Athanaël than by Garden's Thaïs. Her vocal failings were, as ever, conspicuous ; and her personal forcefulness was not as strongly marked on this occasion as it was subsequently.

Conried's final important contribution to the history of opera in New York occurred on 1 January 1908, when Gustav Mahler conducted for the first time in America. The work was *Tristan und Isolde*, and Fremstad made her first appearance in the Metropolitan as Isolde on this occasion. This distinguished addition to the list of the conductors who had directed *Tristan* at the Metropolitan (a list which then included Seidl, Paur,

[54] When he reappeared, the singer had dropped the final 'e' from his name. But since he continued to call himself Feodor, rather than Theodore, the original designation has been retained throughout this volume.

Schalk, Hertz, and Mottl ; later Toscanini and Bodanzky) accomplished a reading that proclaimed him a master of his craft, a conductor of superb vitality and imagination. Knote (Tristan), Homer (Brangaene), Van Rooy (Kurwenal), and Blass (Marke), were the other principal singers. The same forces were heard in a repetition of the work on 9 January, with Fremstad more secure in the role that was to become one of her greatest achievements at the Metropolitan.

A restudied production of *Don Giovanni* was Mahler's next contribution on 23 January, with Eames (Donna Anna), Gadski (Elvira), Sembrich (Zerlina), Bonci (Ottavio), Scotti (Don Giovanni), Chaliapine (Leporello), Dufriche (Masetto), and Blass (Il Commendatore) collaborating for one of the most extraordinary musical events in the history of the Metropolitan. In the repetition on 12 February, Conried replaced Sembrich with Farrar, and Dufriche with Barocchi. A performance of *Siegfried* on 19 February and one of *Die Walküre* on 4 March — in which Berta Morena (Sieglinde) and Martha Leffler-Burckard (Brünnhilde) made their debuts — preceded the presentation of Mahler's most enduring contribution to New York's musical experience, on 20 March. This was his version of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which has since become the standard form for this work here. It was given for the first time with Morena (Fidelio), Alten (Marzelline), Burrian (Florestan), Goritz (Pizarro), Blass (Rocco), Reiss (Jacquino), and Van Rooy (Minister of Justice). On 26 March Leffler-Burckard replaced Morena, who returned for the final performance on 1 April. The others in the cast remained constant.

With Conried content to embellish his season with the richness of his personnel rather than with the variety or freshness of his repertory, Hammerstein was able to usurp all the attention of those interested in the developing literature of French works. After two postponements, owing to the illness of Garden — from 20 and 23 December — Hammerstein finally brought forth his first important novelty, Charpentier's *Louise*, on 3 January. As well as acquainting New York with an important contemporary score, the production of *Louise* held revelations merely in the manner in which it had been rehearsed and presented as a stage work. Not only the vocal, but the dramatic excellencies of Garden (Louise), Dalmorès (Julien),

Bressler-Gianoli (The Mother), and Gilibert (The Father) established enduring criteria for these roles.

This standard, however, was surpassed within the same season by the company at the Manhattan with the first performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* on 19 February. With the skilful stage direction of Jacques Coini and the fine conducting of Campanini as a background, the excellent cast offered an ensemble performance that did much to assist the comparatively difficult work to its total of seven performances in this season. The cast of the first performance was :

Pelléas ..... Jean Périer (debut)
Mélisande ..... Garden
Golaud ..... Hector Dufranne (debut)
Genévieve ..... Gerville-Réache
Ärkel ..... Arimondi
Un Médecin ..... Crabbé
Conductor, Cleofonte Campanini

There were murmurs in the press of 'combinations of tones that sting and blister and pain and outrage the ear' [55] — but such comments reflected an insufficient understanding of the technic employed by Debussy, rather than an accurate appraisal of the music itself. There are many things to be said about the score of *Pelléas,* but it is difficult to concede that 'cacaphony' is one of them. At the first performance, the orchestral interludes were almost completely obscured by the babble of conversation between the scenes ; but Campanini was awarded an ovation at the beginning of the fourth act. The reception of the work by the public was markedly enthusiastic, that by the musical press considerably more tempered. More than one of the critics were mindful of Debussy's expressed objections to Wagner, and could not concede that a person of such heretical opinions might nevertheless be capable of writing fine music.

Hammerstein's final novelty of the season was Giordano's *Siberia,* presented for the first time on 5 February. The Vassili of Zenatello

[55] *Tribune,* 20 February.

was the prime event of the occasion, neither the others of the cast, nor the music itself contributing an enduring interest to the production. There was also a good performance by Sammarco as Gleby.

The new singers brought forward in this and the past season by Conried, and the general unfamiliarity of all those associated with Hammerstein, lent an uncommon interest even to the repetitions of the ordinary repertories in both houses. Conried restored *Il Barbiere* on 12 February, with Sembrich (Rosina), Bonci, Campanari (Figaro), and Chaliapine (Don Basilio), under Ferrari. Strangely contrasting with the superb fluency and suavity of Sembrich and Bonci were the exaggerations of Chaliapine's performance, his reputation having not yet grown to the point where these qualities were regarded as merely colourful eccentricities. In the Lesson Scene Sembrich sang 'Bel Raggio' from *Semiramide*, and Strauss's 'Voce di Primavera,' as well as her traditional 'Maiden's Wish.' Chaliapine was heard for the first time as the Méphistophélès of Gounod's *Faust* on 6 January, the cast including Farrar, Caruso, and Scotti (Valentin). Realizing, perhaps, where the attention of the audience would be centred, Farrar attempted to compete with Chaliapine by beginning 'Le Roi de Thule' within the house, offstage, and ending the 'Air des Bijoux' with a number of dance steps. Save for Caruso, Conried was able to offer a different, and even more distinguished, group of principal singers for another *Faust* on the 31st, the cast including Eames, Stracciari (Valentin), Plançon (Méphistophélès), and Caruso.

If the general quality of Hammerstein's singers and the superiority of his novelties had not brought some disturbance to the executives of the Metropolitan, they were introduced to that novel emotion after the debut, on 15 January, of Luisa Tetrazzini. There is a kind of popular excitement associated with the appearance of a new coloratura soprano which is not duplicated by the success of a tenor, or a baritone, or a lyric soprano, no matter of what excellence — and it was Hammerstein's good fortune to discover the first of that class to be in-

troduced to New York since Melba. Tetrazzini made her debut in *La Traviata,* and her subsequent success was an important factor in the profit of a quarter million dollars amassed in this season by Hammerstein, as quoted by his son, Arthur. She was heard in *Rigoletto* on 1 February, in *Lucia* on the 29th with Zenatello and Sammarco, in a revival of *Crispino e la Comare* on 6 March, and in Meyerbeer's *Dinorah* on 26 February. The Metropolitan's discontent no doubt was made keener by the knowledge that Tetrazzini had been originally under contract to Conried, and had been allowed to escape by an oversight. On the evening that Tetrazzini appeared for the first time in *Dinorah,* Conried countered with a presentation of *Il Trovatore* in which Caruso and Eames appeared for the first time in New York as Manrico and Leonora, with Homer (Azucena), and Stracciari (Count di Luna). Two days later, on 28 February, Farrar was heard as Violetta in *La Traviata* for the first time, with Caruso and Stracciari. The production was costumed in modern dress, an innovation introduced by Hammerstein earlier in the season.

Though the emphasis on such singers as Caruso, Bonci, Sembrich, Farrar, and Chaliapine dictated rather conclusively the character of the season's repertory, there were nevertheless a number of distinguished performances of Wagner. A new production of *Der Fliegende Holländer* was introduced on 2 December by Hertz, cast with Gadski, Knote (Erik), Van Rooy (Van der Decken), and Blass (Daland) ; and a *Lohengrin* on 7 December offered Rappold (Elsa), Frida Langendorff (debut, Ortrud), Knote, Goritz, and Journet (Heinrich). In addition to the performances of the *Ring* dramas previously noted for Mahler, he divided a post-season cycle with Hertz. The latter conducted *Das Rheingold* on 13 April, with Burrian (Loge), Fremstad (Fricka), Van Rooy (Wotan), Kirkby-Lunn (Erda), Reiss, Weed, and Goritz ; and *Götterdämmerung* on the 18th, with Burgstaller (Siegfried), Leffler-Burckard (Brünnhilde), Homer (Waltraute), Blass, and Mühlmann. Hertz retained his usual custom of omitting the Norn scene and including the Waltraute scene in this production of *Götterdämmerung.* Mahler's contribution to the cycle was a performance of *Die Walküre* on 14 April, with Morena (Sieglinde), Kirkby-Lunn (Fricka), Leffler-Burckard, Burgstaller (Siegmund), Van Rooy, and Blass (Hunding) ; and *Siegfried* on the 16th, with Fremstad (Brünnhilde), Burrian, Van Rooy, Goritz,

Kirkby-Lunn (Erda), Reiss (Mime), Blass (Fafner), and Alten (Voice of the Forest Bird).

Whether the increasing importance of Hammerstein's opposition, the misadventure with *Salome*, Conried's steadily failing health or internal financial difficulties was the decisive factor in his retirement is not easy to determine now, nor is it important to an historical consideration of the Metropolitan's activities. The importance of an operatic director is contained in the tenure of office, the influence he exerts on the repertory, and the degree to which he broadens or contracts the musical horizon of his surroundings. Conried's retirement was hastened by his poor health, but it was made inevitable by the events of his last two seasons. It is, for example, common knowledge that the same French works *and* artists who comprised the greatest strength of Hammerstein, were offered originally to Conried by Gabriel Astruc of Paris, who controlled their disposition. His rejection of them might have seemed an inexcusable error of judgment by his fellow-directors when Hammerstein became powerful through their availability.

In choosing a successor it is likely that an event preceding Conried's final season was of no little importance. On 18 October 1907 three new directors were added to the board of the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company to replace James Henry Smith, deceased, Alfred G. Vanderbilt, and James Speyer, who had retired. They were Harry V. Higgins, managing director of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, London; W. K. Vanderbilt, and Count di San Martino, president of the Royal Conservatory in Rome. Giulio Gatti-Casazza, successor to Conried, states in his memoirs [56] that on the occasion of his first conversation with Otto Kahn, the latter said that he had been told of Gatti with much favour, not only by the Count di San Martino, but also by other persons. Such recommendation could not fail to impress Kahn.

The first public intimation of an impending change in the

[56] *Saturday Evening Post*, 11 November 1933.

Metropolitan's organization was a cable from Milan on 24 January 1908 which read :

> Julio [*sic*] Gatti-Casazza, director of La Scala, declared today that there was no foundation to the report that he would succeed Heinrich Conried as director of the Metropolitan Opera Company.

This evasion was supplemented by the words of Kahn in New York, who declared on the same day that he knew nothing of Conried's contemplated retirement, or of the director's having tendered his resignation. There was no further activity until 4 February, when another cable from Milan declared : 'It is announced that Arturo Toscanini has been engaged as conductor at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. It is rumoured that either Tito Ricordi or the Duke Viscounti-Modrone [sic !] will succeed Heinrich Conried as director.' On the following day Toscanini was quoted from Rome as saying he had 'not yet signed any agreement' ; while Kahn, in New York, was dismissing the talk of Count Visconti di Modrone as nonsense, though he offered no comment on the candidacy of Ricordi.

There was ample reason for the equivocation and confusion. The lease held by the operating company with the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company had been drawn in 1906 for a period of five years, but it only remained operative as long as Conried was director of the company. Conried's associates wanted to replace him, but they also wanted to retain the lease ; and no definite decision on a successor could be made until a compromise had been arranged. The situation occasioned one of the most momentous meetings in the history of musical activity in New York. In consideration of the banned *Salome*, the scene of it was highly appropriate ; for the meeting occurred on 7 February in the library of J. Pierpont Morgan. These were the surroundings in which was discussed the arrangement that was to govern more than a quarter of a century of opera in New York.

No meeting of the board of directors of the Metropolitan

Opera and Real Estate Company in its recent history was so well attended. Only three members — Mills, Wetmore, and Belmont — were absent. At the meeting were G. G. Haven, president, Charles Lanier, vice-president, George F. Baker, A. D. Juilliard, Luther Kountze, J. Pierpont Morgan, H. A. C. Taylor, H. McK. Twombley, W. K. Vanderbilt, George S. Bowdoin, treasurer, and Frank N. Dodd, secretary. Representing the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company were Otto Kahn, chairman of the executive committee, and Edmund L. Baylies. It was given out that no definite agreement had been reached ; but before an official announcement was made on 12 February, *The Tribune* of the tenth conveyed the facts of the situation thus :

> To students of operatic doings in Europe the name of only one of the four men (Mahler, Toscanini, Dippel, and Gatti-Casazza) who are to be charged with the conduct of the next Metropolitan season is unfamiliar. It is that of Signor Gatti-Casazza. Nothing is known of him beyond the fact that he is the manager of La Scala in Milan. Two reasons are offered to explain his appointment : Signor Toscanini, who was much desired because of his conceded eminence as a conductor, made it a condition precedent to his acceptance of the offer to him ; and the men concerned with the revolution in the affairs of the Metropolitan were impressed with the idea that the coming of the manager of La Scala would bring prestige to the new administration. Signor Toscanini is an admirable conductor and an artist of strong and aggressive methods.

The official announcement on the 12th confirmed the information in this summary by stating that Conried had resigned ; that the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company would continue as a corporate entity, but would change its name to the Metropolitan Opera Company ; and that the custom of having the manager share in the profits of the season would be discontinued. In the future, he would be payed only a fixed salary for his work. Conried's equity in the assets of the expiring company were purchased from him for ninety thousand dollars, W. K. Vanderbilt acquiring his stock in the organization. As Vanderbilt was vice-president of the Opera and Real Estate

Company, the presidency of the Metropolitan Opera Company passed to its other important member, Otto Kahn.

The appearance of Andreas Dippel as 'administrative director' in collaboration with Gatti-Casazza is merely another of the curious chapters in the chronicle of the Metropolitan. His existence was unknown to Gatti-Casazza until the latter arrived in New York in the spring of 1908, and was introduced to Dippel as his 'associate' ; and his appearance as an executive may be traced to the recurring influence of the Morgan family in the affairs of the Metropolitan. Dippel had been for ten years (since 1898) an extraordinarily useful member of the company, able to sing virtually any leading tenor role of a given season's repertory at a half day's notice, but this fact scarcely predestined him for such a post. But it must not be forgotten that Gatti-Casazza was the first foreigner to whom the Metropolitan directors had entrusted their institution — for Abbey, Leopold Damrosch, Stanton, Grau, and Conried were all resident New Yorkers with whose character and qualifications the supervisors of the institution were, one may surmise, completely familiar. From Richard G. Conried I learned that his father was in part, at least, responsible for the choice of Dippel — for A. D. Juilliard of the Opera and Real Estate Company's directorate had given the retiring director the privilege of naming his successor. Conried had designated Dippel, who also had the support of the Morgan faction of the directorate, a combination of circumstances which resulted in the compromise on a dual directorship. That there was little certainty in the minds of the directors regarding their new executives is indicated from the stipulation in the contracts of all three, which provided that the agreements were subject to cancellation, at the option of either party, at any time during the three years specified.[57]

[57] In his memoirs Gatti declared that Toscanini met his objection to this clause by saying that they must accept since he had no desire to remain at La Scala. Also, he continued that neither of them was a person who could be sent away after a year of trial. *Saturday Evening Post*, 25 November 1933.

The official announcement of 12 February contained a phrase that was to appear at regular intervals in later years when the sponsors for opera in New York felt the necessity to reassure both themselves and the public of the quality of the product they were supplying. From the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company at its death came the following :

> To the high standards they [the directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company] have set is due the credit for having made the Metropolitan Opera House what it now is universally conceded to be — the 'Blue Ribbon' of the operatic world.

The establishment of the Metropolitan Opera Company was somewhat more complex an undertaking than it had appeared in prospect. In dropping Conried, the directors had considered it merely logical also to drop his name from the title, but this established a juxtaposition of words which displeased Mr. Whalen, secretary of New York State. He decreed, on 26 February, that this title resembled too closely that of the forgotten Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd. ; and that it would be necessary for Mr. Kahn and his associates to prove the dissolution of that firm before the new company could be recognized as legally privileged to the title. *The Tribune* of 27 February recorded :

> No particular objection was made because of the existence of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company as it is practically the same as the one headed by Mr. Kahn and a waiver notice could easily be secured.

By a special decree of the New York State Supreme Court in May, the Metropolitan Opera Company was ultimately recognized, but it had begun its official career even before, on 3 April, when the contracts with Dippel, Gatti, and Toscanini were formally ratified at a board meeting. From the same meeting came the announcement that set apart the future years of opera in New York from those of the period for seventeen years preceding : no further dividends would be declared to the members of the company, and any profits realized from

the production of opera would be devoted to establishing a pension fund, or to 'other permanent uses for advancement of the Metropolitan Opera Company as an artistic institution.' *In camerâ*, the announcement of this policy to the members of the Conried Metropolitan's directorate was accompanied by an offer, from Kahn and Vanderbilt, to purchase from any stockholders who were dissatisfied with this basis of operation, their interests in the company.

Of the original group that founded the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company, these members remained as directors of the new Metropolitan Opera Company : Robert Goelet, George J. Gould, Eliot Gregory, James H. Hyde, Otto H. Kahn, Clarence H. Mackay, Harry P. Whitney, and Henry Rogers Winthrop, one over half the directorate of fourteen. J. Henry Smith had died ; Conried, Morgenthau, McCurdy, McIntyre, and Alfred G. Vanderbilt had retired, the latter in favour of his brother W. K. Vanderbilt. The new directors, then, of the Metropolitan Opera Company were : Edmund L. Baylies (who had come into the Conried Company before the change), W. Bayard Cutting, Hamilton McK. Twombley, Rawlins L. Cottenet, Frank G. Griswold, and T. De Witt Cuyler. Of the group now directors of the operating company, Cutting, Goelet, Vanderbilt, Whitney, and Twombley were also stockholders in the Opera and Real Estate Company.

The final subscription performance of opera under the direction of Conried was *Il Trovatore* on 4 April, with Caruso, Fornia (Leonora), Homer, and Stracciari. Ferrari conducted.

EPILOGUE

OCCUPYING a position between an operatic period of indubitable magnificence behind it, and another period, at least better publicized following it, the five years of the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company rarely have been treated objectively, in an appraisal of the Metropolitan's history. It was obviously a period of transition from those years when singing was the essence of opera to the later days when the theatrical values of the Metropolitan's performances were to be taken seriously. But it has been the misfortune of Conried to have his accom-

plishments measured by the way in which his innovations were improved upon by his successor, rather than by the degree of originality (in relation to the procedures of the past) reflected in those innovations. There is little doubt that the opera produced in the Metropolitan between 1908 and 1915 was a more finished thing, in production and ensemble, than the opera produced between 1903 and 1908. But a number of the accomplishments recently credited exclusively to Gatti may be found to stem from ideas initiated by Conried.

There is, for example, the emphasis on new works — 'novelties' — in which respect the recent years of the Metropolitan have been held to be unique. Conried offered to his New York public *Parsifal* and *Salome* for the first time, both of which required enterprise and no little courage to present. On a lower level there were the first productions in the Metropolitan of *Madama Butterfly*, *Iris*, *Fedora*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and *Manon Lescaut*. For musical interest, there were Conried's presentations of *Hänsel und Gretel*, Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust*, Boïto's *Mefistofele*, and revivals of *Fidelio*, *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* under Mahler. Nor can the revivals of *Die Fledermaus* and *Der Zigeunerbaron* — though the details of the productions were in poor taste — be regarded as an unworthy chapter in the history of the Metropolitan's performances.

In his singers, Conried was fortunate to inherit the talents of Caruso from Grau, as well as the large number of his other singers, who had been heard at the Metropolitan in the past. But both Farrar and Chaliapine were brought to New York by Conried, who also introduced the policy of bringing important European composers to America in connexion with the presentation of their works. Humperdinck and Puccini did make the journey ; and Strauss was also solicited. On the other hand, his neglect of the French works and singers previously noted was not less than a fatal oversight.

Furthermore, the emphasis on certain questionable business

policies — the double prices for *Parsifal* and the director's benefits, the use of his stars as supers to attract an audience — have undoubtedly left an unpleasant memory of the period among those who have recorded its qualities. But it is also to be noted that these were years in which opera was produced for profit, and profit for individuals, under certain prearranged conditions. Thus it was to be expected that the primary objective of the presentations should have been the attraction of a large public, by no matter what means.

Though Conried had little understanding of the problems involved in operatic presentation, and less knowledge of the subject as an art, he did possess theatrical sense and an elementary shrewdness in employing it. The period under his direction also was influenced by a new element in the production of opera in the Metropolitan — the direct control of those productions by a group of men whose background was social, but who nevertheless felt themselves qualified to interpret the public needs. Not since the period of German presentations had there been an analogous situation in the house ; and there was little pretence among the stockholders who governed matters then that they were connoisseurs of operatic production — they merely wanted to hear the kind of opera that pleased them, without pretending that it was necessarily the *best* opera available. But beginning with the Conried Metropolitan through the history of the Metropolitan Opera Company the desires of the directors of the operating company were represented to be also the touchstones of taste in everything relating to operatic production. It need hardly be emphasized that this was a new element in the operatic history of New York. Since the important figures in this new dispensation had no previous experience in the supervision of opera, the five years presided over by Conried were also experimental ones for them. They knew better what they wanted when they employed their next director.

Thus, the virtues and faults of Conried's period — further complicated by the presence of Hammerstein and the Manhat-

tan Opera House — are seen to be the product of something more than one man's vision or ability. Thus considered, Conried's accomplishments were far from negligible in their influence on the future of operatic production in New York ; but they were, as well, considerably less significant than those of a man trained for that particular task might have been.

JOINT SPONSORSHIP, NON-PROFIT MAKING

1908–1932

The Metropolitan Opera Company
The Years of Toscanini

THE establishment of the Metropolitan Opera Company in 1908 was marked by another instance of the arbitrary use of power which recurrently underscores the absurdity of opera controlled by a group of society and business men. On 12 March Conried signed his name to a statement which declared :

> The Conried Metropolitan Opera Company though it intends to change its name will not be succeeded by a new company, but will retain absolutely unchanged its corporate entity and its legal status. The change in management or in name affects in no way the contractual relations existing between the company and the artists under engagement to it and all such contracts continue in full legal force and effect.

This might be interpreted as an assurance to the artists that their contracts would continue to be valid ; on the other hand, it bound them to the wishes of a new director and a new policy of management which had not been contemplated when the contracts were signed. Thus, the directors had arbitrarily forced Conried to sell out his greatest asset — the stipulation that the lease was valid only so long as he was the director — yet they held firmly to what they would no doubt defend as their 'legal right' to the services of the singers then under contract.

To quiet any fears that the coming of an Italian director and

an Italian conductor would lead to an elimination of the German repertory similar to that which had occurred in 1891, when Abbey and Grau had returned to the house, Kahn insisted publicly and vigorously on the catholicity of the musical tastes of Gatti and Toscanini. Yet, in retrospect this all seems somewhat confusing — for in the last season under Conried, but twenty-five of the one hundred and twenty-four performances given in the house were of works by Wagner. Adding the three performances of *Fidelio* and the four of *Don Giovanni* brings the total of these masterworks to but thirty-two — a bare fourth of the season's activities. Only a complete elimination of the German repertory could have decreased that showing, and there had been no official agitation to justify such a move. Kahn, nevertheless, felt the necessity for reassuring the public, and his efforts took the form of the famous 'Count Centanini' incident.

On 20 February — which, it chanced, was the day following the first American performance of *Pelléas*, and Mahler's first Metropolitan *Siegfried* — the press was called to the Metropolitan Opera House, there to be presented to a man described by Kahn as 'a distinguished Milanese with pronounced artistic proclivities' who 'chanced to be in New York at the moment.' Introduced as 'Count Centanini,' he discoursed eloquently on the virtues of Gatti and Toscanini, and included the two Hammerstein novelties of the previous season — *Pelléas* and *Louise* — among the accomplishments of Gatti in La Scala. Confidence in the new directorate was not increased when several of the musical reporters present recognized the 'Count' as an accompanist for various singers at the Metropolitan several years before. The impartial, objective attitude of Centanini was further exemplified when he became Gatti's secretary on the latter's arrival to assume his new duties at the Metropolitan.

On 2 May 1908, some months previous to his actual commencement of public work, Gatti arrived in New York to survey the scene of his new activities. To the press on that day he

communicated a sentiment which was to make its appearance at regular intervals thereafter from his lips : 'There is a dearth of good dramatic singers all through Europe. So great is it that it is has created a crisis in the musical world. Ten years ago, I was able to get together a good company in a couple of months. It would be impossible for me to do such a thing at the present time.' Nevertheless, Hammerstein had managed to discover almost a whole company of singers who were new to New York on their arrival ; and Gatti himself presented a number of highly impressive singers during the next score of years. His tendency to deprecate the quality of the vocal material available, however, remained constant. Of the auditorium itself he declared : 'We have no such structure in Italy. It is indeed a noble house.' [1]

The initial visit of Gatti resulted in several revisions of essential practices in the operatic organization. These changes, however, did not persist as long as his own directorship did. On 13 May it was announced that two new choruses, each of a hundred voices, would be chosen before the next season's activities began — one, for the Italian-French repertory, would be chosen by Toscanini ; the other, for the German works, would be selected by Dippel. Giulio Setti, from La Scala, was engaged to direct the Italian group, and he remained as chorus-master until the retirement of Gatti in 1935. Hans Steiner, of Munich, was engaged by Dippel for similar duties with the German ensemble. Before long, however, the two groups were amalgamated, and the direction vested in Setti alone.

Even more revolutionary, for the Metropolitan, was the

[1] In Gatti's memoirs (*Saturday Evening Post*, 25 November 1933), however, he states that he found the stage too short and too narrow, lacking in modern equipment of any kind. He also criticized the arrangement, made necessary by the deficiencies of the stage, whereby scenery had to be carted from a storehouse a block away before and after it was used. These objections, communicated to Kahn, resulted in the promise of a new house, says Gatti, in two or three years. Twenty-eight years have now elapsed and the removal is more remote than at any time before.

simultaneous announcement that two separate orchestras would be employed, to comprise a force totalling one hundred and thirty-five musicians, by far the most pretentious resource the Metropolitan had yet possessed in that department. Not alone the increased and increasing number of performances the Metropolitan gave in New York each winter was responsible for this augmentation ; plans had been drawn for fifteen performances in the Brooklyn Academy of Music during the 1908–1909 season, and a more ambitious programme for Philadelphia was also projected. It was hoped, moreover, that the larger orchestra would provide greater opportunity for rehearsal. For this purpose, Gatti suggested the construction of a rehearsal room on the roof, which was eventually installed on the Seventh Avenue and Fortieth Street end of the building. He also advised the installation of a mechanism under the floor of the orchestra pit that would permit the ensemble to be lowered or raised in accordance with the needs of a particular work. Finally, before he sailed for Italy, Gatti announced on 28 May that new sets would be provided for every opera to be produced in the following season, and thus paid his tribute to American art : 'With the possible exception of one set, all the canvases will be painted abroad.'

The prospectus for the first season under the new directorate reviewed these innovations and promised more besides. The Saturday evening popular subscription series would be limited to twelve of the twenty available Saturdays ; and from the end of February until the close of the season in April, Tuesday and Saturday evenings would be given over to 'revivals of classical works by such composers as Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner.' Of the alterations in the organization of the orchestra, the same broadside declared : 'There will be the advantage of always commanding the services of musicians who are not overworked, and therefore capable of giving their best efforts.' Further architectural transformations included the installation of two new elevators on the Fortieth Street side of the house to serve

the family and dress circle patrons, the redecoration of the ceilings and walls of the auditorium, the rearrangement of certain rows of the orchestra floor to provide better views of the stage, and the replacement of the chairs on this floor with new folding seats.

Despite all this, the top charge of five dollars for orchestra chairs established by Grau and maintained by Conried (save for certain extraordinary events) was perpetuated, with the remainder of the house priced as follows : —

Grand Tier Boxes (six seats) $60
(These could also be rented for every *matinée* and evening performance for a season charge of $6000 ; or for one evening a week at $1200)

Stall boxes (5 seats) $30
Stall boxes (4 seats) .....$25 and $20
Orchestra Circle $5
Dress Circle $3
Balcony (first three rows) $2.50
Balcony (other rows) $2
Family Circle .....$1.50 and $1

These prices, per performance, remained through the 1911–1912 season.

1908–1909

THERE is every indication, from the trend of these activities, that the directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company embarked on their enterprise, in 1908, with considerable idealism. Not alone was there an attempt to meet the plan of the Metropolitan's season with a company that was organized to cope with it ; there was, in addition to good intentions, a highly able personnel. Together with Toscanini there were Mahler and Hertz, an alignment of conductors that remains the most impressive of the Metropolitan's entire history. Also, Toscanini and Mahler together enjoyed a degree of power over their rehearsals and performances which had belonged to no conduc-

tors since Seidl. Though Mottl had been termed *Generalmusikdirektor* during his brief career in New York, Toscanini was, in his performances, that in truth if not in designation. The years of his tenure marked, in many essential respects, the high level for the modern era of the Metropolitan.

None of these plans and activities, however, served to discourage the persistent Hammerstein. In the way that his competition had resulted in the improvement of the Metropolitan, the new vitality in that organization forced him to greater ingenuity, more ambitious projects, renewed search for unfamiliar and accomplished artists.[2] When he opened his third season on 9 November with a performance of *Tosca*, bootlegged over the objections of the publishers, Hammerstein's subscription list was twice that of his second season and *eight* times as great as that for his first. Though the event competed with the opening of the Horse Show, his theatre held an enormous audience, including a surprising number of social lights.

Gathered for this *Tosca* (in which Maria Labia made her debut, in a cast with Zenatello, Renaud, and Gilibert, under the direction of Campanini) were the Clarence Mackays, who had as their guests in two proscenium boxes Miss Beatrice Mills, Mr. and Mrs. Bourke Cochran, and Winthrop Ames ; Justice and Mrs. James W. Gerard, Mrs. Edmond Randolph, Commodore and Mrs. Frederick G. Bourne, George F. Baker, Jr., Captain and Mrs. Philip M. Lydig, Lady Northcliffe, August Belmont, and Mrs. Cadwalader Jones. The Mackays made serious efforts to popularize both the Hammerstein boxes and the Grand Tier of the Metropolitan for social purposes, but neither venture was lastingly successful.

For the third time *Faust* served to introduce a new era in the history of Metropolitan opera, when Farrar, Caruso, Adamo Didur (debut, Méphistophélès), and Jean Noté, under Spetrino, presented the work as the first offering of the joint directorate, on 14 November. This event, however, occurred in the new Brooklyn Academy of Music, solemnizing the formal open-

[2] On the previous 23 December, when he was pleading for greater support from the public, Hammerstein delivered one of his characteristic pleasantries : 'I am told that the influence of my efforts in the operatic field has lifted the other institution to a less jocular position than it held for the past several years.'

ing of that structure. The official opening of the Metropolitan on the 16th was gala in every respect — the 'grandest' of grand operas, *Aïda,* in a new scenic production ; a new *prima donna,* Emmy Destinn (debut, Aïda), with Homer, Caruso, Scotti, Didur (Ramfis), Leonora Sparkes (debut, Priestess), Angelo Bada (debut, Messenger), and Giulio Rossi (debut, Il Re), under a new conductor, Arturo Toscanini. Though Destinn was acclaimed a singer of rare skill and much dramatic vividness, the enthusiasm of the press was bestowed in largest volume upon Toscanini, who was greeted as 'in the best sense, an artist, an interpreter, a re-creator.'[3] Both the Hammerstein and the Metropolitan companies removed to Philadelphia on the following evening ; the former to open his new luxurious theatre at Broad, Carlisle, and Poplar Streets — later to be known as the Metropolitan Opera House — with a *Carmen* sung by Labia, Dalmorès, and Dufrannc (Escamillo); the latter presenting *La Bohème,* with Sembrich, Caruso, and Scotti, under Spetrino, in the Academy of Music.

Toscanini's early efforts at the Metropolitan were hardly indicative of the scope and importance that his talents were to assume in the history of the institution. His second opera on 19 November was *Madama Butterfly,* with Farrar, Caruso, Fornia, and Scotti. Angelo Bada, who was heard as Goro in this performance, remains a member of the company to the present day. On 3 December Toscanini directed a performance of *Carmen* in which Maria Gay made her debut, with Caruso, Farrar (Micaëla), and Noté (Escamillo). But it was not until a week later, on the 10th, that he demonstrated himself to be more than merely a conductor superlatively well-equipped for the conventional repertory. On that date he directed his first Wagner at the Metropolitan — a performance of *Götterdämmerung* in which Fremstad sang the Brünnhilde of this work for the first time, with Erik Schmedes (Siegfried*), Hinckley (Hagen *), Fornia (Gutrune *), Goritz (Alberich),

[3] Krehbiel, *Tribune,* 17 November.

and Mühlmann (Gunther). Toscanini restored the prologue and the Norn scene, not heard at the Metropolitan since Paur's last uncut performance in 1900, but the Waltraute episode was omitted.

The rest of Toscanini's very full season included the direction of Puccini's first opera, *Le Villi,* at its American *première* on 17 December, with prices advanced to a seven dollar top charge, followed by *Cavalleria Rusticana,* with Destinn, Gay, Caruso, and Amato ; the first performance of Catalani's *La Wally* # on 6 January ; a revival of *Falstaff* on 20 March, with Alda (Anneta), Destinn (Mistress Ford), Ranzenberg (Mistress Page), Gay (Dame Quickly), Scotti (Falstaff), Grassi (Fenton), Campanari (who had sung Ford in the Metropolitan *première* in 1895 again in that role), Bada (Dr. Caius), Didur (Pistol), and Reiss (Bardolf) ; and finally a Good Friday performance of Verdi's *Manzoni Requiem,* with Destinn, Homer, Martin, and Witherspoon on 9 March, plus the prologue to Boïte's *Mefistofele.* There were, of course, repetitions of all the operas.

The *premières* under Toscanini and the first performance in America of d'Albert's *Tiefland* # on 23 November under Hertz may be regarded as an attempt to lend the Metropolitan season the adventurousness that Hammerstein had demonstrated in the previous year by the production of *Pelléas, Louise, Thaïs,* and *Siberia ;* but the important musical event of the Metropolitan was of much less flamboyant character. This was the first performance in New York of Smetana's *Die Verkaufte Braut* (*Prodana Nevésta*) on 19 February. The work was directed by Mahler, himself a Bohemian ; there were two dances brought from Prague, and further verisimilitude was contributed by the presence of Destinn, also Bohemian by birth, as Marie. Carl Jörn (Hans), Reiss (Wenzel), and Didur (Kezal) were the other outstanding singers. The production was excellently staged by Dippel, marking one of the few opportunities he had to achieve creative results while he was an executive at the Metropolitan. Ottokar Bartik began a long Metropolitan career by staging the dances in this work. Mahler also initiated at this performance the custom of playing the overture before the sec-

ond act. Though the work is one of the most spritely and charming in the repertory, it has never become firmly established at the Metropolitan, despite its occasional revivals.

Mahler's other particularly bright accomplishment in this season was a carefully studied production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, for a revival on 13 January. Though he was not permitted the forty rehearsals which had preceded his exposition of the work in Vienna, the score or so he was allowed at the Metropolitan was generous for that house. The cast, moreover, was equal to the expression of his ideas ; and constituted the last great ensemble that the Metropolitan was to possess for the performance of Mozart. A later revival of *Figaro* was not without its worthy elements (see p. 232), but the particular suitability of these artists for their roles, and the training they had had, was not to be duplicated. In the version conducted by Mahler were Eames (Countess), Sembrich (Susanna), Farrar (Cherubino), Scotti (Almaviva), Mattfeld (Marcellina), Paterna (Bartolo), Reiss (Basilio), Ananian (Antonio), l'Huillier (Barberina), and, according to the German custom of using a bass instead of a baritone for Figaro, Didur. After one repetition with the same cast on 16 January — the date marks the end of an epoch in the singing of Mozart in New York — the ensemble was disrupted on 27 February, when de Pasquale replaced Sembrich and Gadski replaced Eames. By then both of the celebrated artists had carried out their announced intention of retiring permanently from opera. Mahler also conducted several performances of *Tristan* in this season, the first on 23 December with Fremstad, Homer, Schmedes (Tristan), Feinhals (Kurwenal), and Blass ; and the season's only performance of *Fidelio* on 20 February, with Morena (Leonore), Fornia, Burrian (Florestan), Goritz, Blass, Mühlmann, and Reiss.

In addition to Destinn, three other singers who enjoyed distinguished careers at the Metropolitan joined the company during this season. Pasquale Amato made his debut in a per-

formance of *La Traviata* on 20 November with Caruso and Sembrich under Spetrino. The beauty of his voice and the artistry of his singing commended him highly.

In addition to appearances as the Jester in *Rigoletto*, first on 28 November with Sembrich, Bonci, and Didur ; in both *Le Villi* and *La Wally ;* and as Valentin in *Faust* on 1 March, Amato was also heard as Amfortas in *Parsifal* on the 6th. Frances Alda aroused no inordinate enthusiasm in her first Metropolitan appearance, the work being *Rigoletto* on 7 December, with Caruso, Amato, Homer, and Didur. Her Manon was more generally admired, on 26 February, with Caruso and Scotti (Alda replaced Farrar, who had sung the role when the opera was revived on the 3rd of that month) ; [4] but her most favourable impression resulted from Toscanini's revival of *Falstaff* on 20 March, in which she appeared as Anne. Herbert Witherspoon, whose career with the Metropolitan was to lead him to the director's chair for a brief period in 1935 before his sudden death, was heard in the house for the first time on 26 November, as Titurel in a Thanksgiving performance of *Parsifal*, with Schmedes, Fremstad, Goritz (Gurnemanz), and Feinhals (Amfortas), under Hertz.

Hammerstein was meanwhile becoming a more disturbing factor in the operatic situation with each passing week. As the difficulties of the Gatti-Dippel duumvirate moved to their inevitable climax, Hammerstein contributed to the general gaiety with such sympathetic remarks as this, on 8 December : 'I haven't two heads on me, but what is worse, I enjoy a triple capacity. This afternoon I called a meeting of my board of directors, and they decided to reëngage me in the roles of general manager and administrative manager, but at a reduced salary. I shall accept.' His contributions, however, were not merely verbal. Blessed by the presence of Mary Garden, he was able to present Massenet's rewritten version of his *Jongleur de Notre Dame* (at Garden's request Massenet had adapted the role of Jean for soprano) on 27 November, with Renaud, who had created the part, as Boniface, Dufranne (the Prior), and de Segurola (the Painter). Largely for Garden, too, was the re-

[4] The Cours la Reine scene was omitted in this revival. Scenery was provided by Antonio Rovescalli of Milan, who continued to design productions for the Metropolitan for a score of years.

vival of *Salome* on 28 January, with Dalmorès (Herod), and Dufranne (Jochanaan), Campanini conducting. Hammerstein was not unmindful of the business to be done with a revival of Strauss's shocker — as it was still regarded — but the presence of Garden hastened that production, and her own merits were in large part responsible for the ten performances it had in this season. The prevailing Frenchness of Hammerstein's company necessitated its production in that language ; but purists who were distraught at the lack of the German text could take comfort in the thought that Wilde had written his play in French. Garden's importance to Hammerstein's season was so considerable that he eventually encouraged her to make two appearances in the same day — her labours on 6 March including an afternoon performance of *Louise* and an evening one of *Jongleur.* Both were well attended.

If such matters as these attracted the curious among the city's operagoers to the Manhattan, there was even as much strength in Hammerstein's resources for the more hackneyed repertory. Thus, if the Metropolitan offered a *matinée* performance of *Aïda* on 28 November, with Eames, Homer, Caruso, and Scotti directed by Toscanini, Hammerstein was able to present competition of no unplausible sort with a *Barbiere di Siviglia* sung by Tetrazzini, Gilibert, and Sammarco, under Campanini. A performance of *La Traviata* at the Metropolitan on 14 December with Sembrich, Bonci, and Campanari, was matched by Hammerstein with the return of Melba in *La Bohème.* In it were Zenatello, Sammarco, Gilibert, de Segurola, and Gianoli-Galletti, the best balanced group of male singers for *Bohème* that New York had yet heard. Hammerstein's Christmas present to New York in this season was a production of *Otello* on 25 December, with Melba, Zenatello, and Sammarco ; but it was not a gift that pleased the Metropolitan, especially as it made its appearance five times again during the winter.

Even the *première* of Catalani's *La Wally* on 6 January could not focus attention completely on the Metropolitan, for the same date saw the season's first performance of *Pelléas* at the Manhattan, with Garden (Mélisande), Dalmorès (Pelléas), Trentini (Yniold), and Vieulle (Ärkel) for the first time in these roles. Finally, though Hammerstein had replaced Bonci with Zenatello, his capacity for discovering important new artists had not deserted him. On 4 January, he announced the engagement of John McCormack for the following season ; and on 26 February he introduced the fine Spanish tenor, Florencio Constantino to New

York, in a performance of *I Puritani* with Tetrazzini. Temperamental eccentricities which led to entanglements with his various managers prevented Constantino from accomplishing the career in America that his merits foreshadowed, but he sang with distinction at both the Manhattan and the Boston Opera.

With Hammerstein unable to make even tentative gestures in the direction of Wagner during this season, the Metropolitan's performances of these scores was again the sole sphere in which it had no competition. In addition to the productions detailed under Toscanini and Mahler, Hertz directed a number of interesting events, including five performances of *Parsifal*. Several new singers made their debuts in Wagnerian roles during the season, among them Fritz Feinhals (who had been engaged to succeed Van Rooy). He sang first on 18 November as Wotan in *Die Walküre*, the cast offering Gadski, Homer, Fremstad (Sieglinde), Erik Schmedes (Siegmund *), and Allen Hinckley (Hunding *). For similar roles Walter Soomer was introduced later in the season, as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* on 17 February. The acquisition of Destinn was also of significance to the performance of German works, and among her appearances was one as Eva in *Die Meistersinger* on 22 January, in which Carl Jörn made his debut (Walther), the cast also including Homer, Feinhals (Sachs *), Hinckley (Pogner *), Goritz, and Reiss. With Feinhals replaced by Soomer, the work was repeated on 27 February. In all the performances of *Die Meistersinger* in this season, Hertz employed both the German and the Italian choruses in the finale.

Hertz attempted to give an uncut performance of *Tristan* on 30 March ; but, though the performance began at five-thirty, with an intermission of fifty minutes after the first act, there were nevertheless, some omissions in the second act. There was probably more heard of the score on this occasion than ever before or since at the Metropolitan — but an uncut performance of *Tristan* still remains to be chronicled in the history of the institution. Participating in this performance were Gadski, Burrian, Homer, Soomer (Kurwenal), and Blass.

There was no complete *Ring* cycle during the regular subscription season, that event being deferred until a post-season, with all the performances conducted by Hertz. *Das Rheingold* on 5 April offered Kaschowska (Fricka), Homer (Erda), Soomer (Wotan), Burrian (Loge), Goritz, and Reiss as its principals. In the three succeeding works, Gadski was heard as Brünnhilde ; on 6 April in *Die Walküre*, with Morena (Sieglinde), Kaschowska (Fricka), Anthes — a member of the company during the seasons under Grau — as Siegmund, Soomer (Wotan), and Hinckley ; on the 8th in *Siegfried* with Anthes, Soomer, Homer, Goritz, Reiss, and Leonora Sparkes (Voice of the Forest Bird) ; and in *Götterdämmerung* on 10 April, with Homer (Waltraute), Burrian, Hinckley (Hagen), Mühlmann, and Goritz. For this performance Hertz had reversed the Toscanini omissions, including the Waltraute scene but omitting the Norns. This day concluded the first season's activities under Gatti and Dippel, the Wagner score being preceded by a performance of *Madama Butterfly* under Toscanini, with Farrar, Grassi, Fornia, and Scotti, in the afternoon.

Considering that the season saw the presentation of thirty-one operas in one hundred and forty-three performances in New York — plus fifteen in Brooklyn, twenty-four in Philadelphia, and four in Baltimore — during twenty weeks,[5] it is difficult to believe that these results were achieved despite constant contention between Gatti and Dippel. When the season had been in progress but three weeks, on 5 December, both Gatti and Dippel applied for an extension of their contracts beyond the single year guaranteed, motivated by internal manipulation which was not known to the public. On 25 November a letter signed by Sembrich, Eames, Farrar, Caruso, and Scotti was sent to the directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company, petitioning them to grant full equality in the management of the enterprise to Dippel. Without making this letter public, the executive committee of the Opera Company — Kahn, Vanderbilt, and Griswold — issued a statement to the press on 6 December asking for the patience and forbearance of the singers during a time of change, but declaring that Gatti was the 'supreme executive head' of the institution, and Dippel's functions 'are and must be subordinated to those of the general manager, Mr.

[5] An extra week was added to the New York season, bringing the total to twenty-one.

Gatti-Casazza.' The artists had more than merely personal sympathy with Dippel as the basis for their attitude — for they had been asked, before his appointment, whether they would have any objection to an executive who had formerly been their colleague. Since they had consented to his appointment, it seemed to them no more than just that they should defend him. Subsequently it was stated that the petition had been prepared by Wilhelm Stengel, husband of Mme. Sembrich. It had, however, no important effect. On 10 December Dippel accepted the subordinate relationship with Gatti, the only course, other than retirement, open to him. In the press of the time it was implied that Dippel had been given certain verbal guarantees which had not been included in his written contract ; when he was called upon to produce evidence to support the demands he made, it was, of course, lacking. On 27 February, after it had become known that Gatti and Toscanini had been engaged through the season of 1910–1911 — thus restoring to them the three years' engagement originally agreed upon — the re-engagement of Dippel as administrative manager with the consent of Gatti, was announced. A post as business manager was offered to Charles Dillingham, the theatrical producer, but he refused the offer, accepting instead a commission to make a survey of the Metropolitan's business affairs. He began his task, under the sponsorship of the directors, on 5 January.

Though her support of Dippel gives the impression that Mme. Sembrich's retirement was influenced by the local situation, she was merely carrying out a declaration she had made, on 15 November, before the season began. Her activities in 1908 rounded out for the singer a career of tweny-five years since her debut in New York in 1883, and thus constituted a logical point of cessation. One of her last new undertakings at the Metropolitan was a revival of *L'Elisir d'Amore* on 25 December, sung with Bonci (Nemorino), Paterna (Dulcamara), and Campanari (Belcore), under the direction of Spetrino. Her final appearance in a complete opera was on 23 January,

a performance of *La Traviata* with Caruso and Amato, directed by Spetrino. Her official farewell took place on 6 February, in a mixed bill which offered :

ACT I of *Don Pasquale*

Norina ..... Sembrich
Dottore Malatesta ..... Scotti

ACT II of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*

Rosina ..... Sembrich
Figaro ..... Campanari
Don Basilio ..... Didur
Don Bartolo ..... Paterna
Un Ufficiale ..... Tecchi
Fiorello ..... Bégué

ACT I of *La Traviata*

Violetta ..... Sembrich
Flora Bervoise ..... Farrar
Alfredo ..... Caruso
Barone Douphol ..... Scotti
Dottore Grenvil ..... Didur
Marchese d'Obigny ..... Amato
Gastone ..... Bada
Conductor, Francesco Spetrino

In the lesson scene of *Il Barbiere* Sembrich sang Strauss's 'Voce di Primavera,' 'Ah ! non giunge' from *Sonnambula,* and Chopin's 'Maiden's Wish.' At the conclusion of the performance Dippel read an address signed by George F. Baker, president of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, and presented to Sembrich a large silver punch-bowl. Her gifts also included a cup from the orchestral musicians — in remembrance of her benefit performance for them after the San Francisco earthquake, by means of which they were able to replace the instruments destroyed in the catastrophe — and a string of pearls, and a watch and chain set with diamonds from the opera-goers of New York, for whom ex-Mayor Seth Low acted as spokesman.

In contrast to the ceremonious departure of Sembrich was the comparatively uneventful farewell of Emma Eames, who sang for the last time at the Metropolitan in a performance of *Tosca* on 15 February, with Martin (Cavaradossi), instead of

Caruso, who was ill, and Scotti. It was not an official leave-taking although announced as her 'farewell appearance for the season' ; but Eames let it be understood that she would not be heard again in opera. Following an ovation after the second act, the retiring *prima donna* made a brief speech.

Hammerstein's opposition and the difficulties arising from the disagreements of Gatti and Dippel cost the Metropolitan a deficit of close to three hundred thousand dollars for this season. Hammerstein, however, made a sum almost equal to this. His profits are quoted by his son, Arthur Hammerstein, at $229,000 for this year. It was by much the most profitable season that Oscar Hammerstein had as an opera impresario in New York.

The season was barely concluded when the death of Heinrich Conried on 27 April occurred in Meran, in the Austrian Tyrol. Such deficit as remained from the seasons of 1906–1907 and 1907–1908 were in part compensated for the directors by the insurance for $150,000 which was carried by the company on Conried's life. The premiums had been paid up to date, and the beneficiaries (the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company, now the Metropolitan Opera Company) collected. On 3 May plans for the rehearsal space requested by Gatti were filed, the construction to be made on the Seventh Avenue and Fortieth Street corner of the building, to comprise a sixth floor to the structure. The projected cost from the plans drawn by Arthur C. Fletcher was ten thousand dollars. When the work was completed on 3 September, the expense was announced to have totalled twenty-five thousand dollars.

1909–1910

THE last year in which New York was to be flattered by the presence of two resident operatic organizations of the first rank illustrates once again the advantages to the public of competition in the realm of artistic activity. Though Gatti had complained — but a year before — of the shortage of worthy

singers in Europe, the new artists of his company in this season included Leo Slezak, one of the finest dramatic tenors the Metropolitan has ever possessed, Clarence Whitehill, Dinh Gilly, Edmond Clément, Alma Gluck, and Marie Delna. Hammerstein's important acquisitions were fewer, but scarcely less impressive — John McCormick was one, and Mariette Mazarin the other. Further, in a pre-season series of opera performances at popular prices, beginning on 30 August, Hammerstein introduced, to New York Margarita d'Alvarez on that date as Fides in *Le Prophète ;* on 1 September, Marguerite Sylva as Carmen and Alice Gentle. Nicola Zerola was the principal tenor of the company. When the season concluded on 30 October, after furnishing entertainment to one hundred and fifty thousand New Yorkers, Hammerstein announced : 'My season was successful inasmuch as I lost only $50,000, whereas I had expected to lose $75,000.' While this season was in progress, on 20 October, the Metropolitan announced plans that would take it to Paris for a season in May, after giving opera in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, and Chicago during the winter.

Having found that his New York public was tolerant and occasionally even enamoured of works by Massenet, Hammerstein chose another unfamiliar one from that composer's fairly inexhaustible list for his opening on 8 November. This was *Hérodiade,* then familiar to New York only for 'Vision fugitive,' and 'Il est doux.' Cavalieri had joined the Manhattan company and she was seen and heard as Salome, with Dalmorès (John), Renaud (Herod), Gerville-Réache (Hérodias), and Vallier (Phanuel). Campanini having left, Henriquez de la Fuente, one of Hammerstein's five new conductors, directed. On the same evening the Metropolitan opened its Brooklyn season with *Manon,* in which appeared Farrar and Jörn (des Grieux). Also on the same evening the Boston Opera House was inaugurated, with a performance of *La Gioconda,* with Nordica, Constantino, Homer (Laura), Meitschik (La Cieca),

and Guiso Nivette (Alvise), Arnaldo Conti directing. John McCormack sang for the first time in New York on 10 November, the opera being *La Traviata* with Tetrazzini, and Sammarco, under Anselmi (debut). McCormack was praised for the 'good volume and rare sweetness' of a voice that 'moreover, he knows how to use' ; and noted as 'a true lyric tenor.' [6] No more accurate description of McCormack's qualities could be written even now, twenty years later. In adapting himself to operatic clothes and stage deportment, McCormack had difficulties equal to those of Caruso — but he never developed even the amount of skill achieved by the Italian. On the occasion of his debut, though the remainder of the cast wore modern clothes, McCormack appeared in a wine-coloured outfit in the style of the 40's. On 12 November Mariette Mazarin made her debut as Aïda, with d'Alvarez (Amneris *), Zenatello, and Sammarco (Amonasro). Also on the twelfth the Metropolitan opened its Baltimore season with a *Tannhäuser* under Hertz in which were Gadski, Noria (Venus), Jörn, and Goritz (Wolfram).

These activities, however, were merely preparatory for the Metropolitan, which began its New York season on 15 November. Gatti's custom of a Caruso-Toscanini opening, initiated in the previous season, continued with Toscanini's first performance of *La Gioconda* at the Metropolitan, in which were Destinn, Homer, Meitschik, Amato (Barnaba), and de Segurola (formerly with Hammerstein). The public interest in this event may be gauged from the prices that were paid to the sidewalk speculators — as much as fifteen dollars a piece for tickets. Nevertheless, a performance of *Lucia* on the same evening at the Manhattan with Tetrazzini and McCormack, drew an enormous audience.

On the evening of the 16th the Metropolitan gave the first of its semi-weekly performances in the New Theatre, which had been opened shortly before.[7] The opera was a revival of Massenet's *Werther*, with

[6] Krehbiel, *Tribune*, 11 November.

[7] It later became the Century Theatre, and retained that title until it was demolished in 1929. An apartment building now occupies the site.

Farrar (Charlotte), Clément (debut, Werther), Gilly (Albert), and Alma Gluck (debut, Sophie), under the direction of Egisto Tango (debut). Further Massenet of the week was the first New York performance of *Sapho*, at the Manhattan, on 17 November, with Garden (Fanny Legrand), Dalmorès (Jean Gaussin), d'Alvarez (Divonne), and Dufranne (Caoudal). At the Metropolitan on the same evening Toscanini conducted his version of *Otello* for the first time, with Slezak (debut, Otello), Alda (Desdemona), Scotti (Iago), Florence Wickham (Emilia, debut), and Witherspoon (Lodovico). The last previous performance of *Otello* in this house had been in 1902. Also during the first week was presented the debut of Lydia Lipkowska in *La Traviata* on the 18th, with Caruso, Amato, and a new conductor, Vittorio Podesti ; and on the 19th, the debut of Alice Nielsen (Mimi) in *La Bohème* with Bonci, Alten (Musetta), Scotti, de Segurola, and Didur, Podesti conducting. The afternoon of that day was given over to a *Lohengrin*, newly studied and rehearsed, in which much choral music previously omitted was included by Hertz. Also, the trumpets were increased to the number specified by Wagner. In the cast were Gadski, Homer, Jörn, John Forsell (debut, Telramund), and Hinckley (Heinrich).

During the earlier weeks of the season, Toscanini was engaged in preparing the production of two works with which his career at the Metropolitan is memorably associated. Not only the musical values of *Tristan* had been reappraised when it was given under his direction for the first time on 27 November (*matinée*) ; there was also new scenery, admirable in many details, but hardly suggestive, in the ornamentation of Tristan's ship, of the traditional craft. The cast for this performance was : Gadski (Isolde), Burrian (Tristan), Amato (Kurwenal *), Homer, and Blass. At the repetition on 8 December Nordica was the Isolde, and on the 27th it was Fremstad. Rarely, in one season, has the Metropolitan presented three singers of such excellence in this formidable role. All of them, together with Burrian, were regarded as having surpassed their best previous performances on these occasions. The now conceded fact that Toscanini's treatment of an orchestral score redounds to the advantage of his singers was slowly making itself known.

His production of *Orfeo* on 23 December was perhaps even more revealing ; there had been splendid conductors for

Tristan in the past history of the Metropolitan — but the previous productions of Gluck's masterpiece had been largely for specific singers, prepared with little regard for the distinctions of the music. The cast for Toscanini's first performance of *Orfeo* was Homer (Orfeo), Gluck (A Happy Spirit), Gadski (Eurydice), and Alten (Amore). At the third repetition on 29 January Marie Delna made her debut, replacing Homer. Also new to the Toscanini repertory at the Metropolitan in this season were Franchetti's *Germania*,# which had its American *première* on 22 January, with Caruso (Federico Loewe), Destinn (Ricke), Amato (Carlo Worms), and Didur (Stapps); and *Die Meistersinger*, given under his direction for the first time on 26 March, with Slezak (Walther *) — probably the best performance of this role since those of Jean de Reszke — Gadski (Eva), Wickham (Magdalena *), Soomer (Sachs), Goritz, Reiss, and Blass (Pogner). In addition, as in the previous season, Toscanini directed *Aïda*, *Butterfly*, and *Falstaff*, certainly as curiously diverse a list of works as any conductor has undertaken at the Metropolitan.

The absence of Sembrich and Eames had deprived the Metropolitan of a decided strength over Hammerstein in the matter of *prime donne*, and the latter's acquisition of Tetrazzini had even widened that gap. To replace Eames in certain of her roles Gatti had Fremstad and Farrar, both of whom sang in *Tosca* for the first time in this season: Farrar on 22 November with Martin and Scotti, and Fremstad on 11 December with Caruso and Amato(Scarpia *). Fremstad also took over another role favoured by Eames, when she sang Elsa in *Lohengrin* for the first time on 18 December, with Wickham, Jörn, Goritz (Telramund), and Hinckley.

The replacements for Sembrich, however, were much less satisfactory. Lipkowska was heard in the florid roles early in the season; and on 7 March Elvira de Hidalgo, a soprano as Spanish as her name, was introduced as Rosina in *Il Barbiere*, with Bonci, Forsell (Figaro *), Didur (Don Basilio), and Pini-Corsi (Dr. Bartolo), Podesti conducting.

Hammerstein's offerings during this season, aside from novelties and specialities, included a revival of *La Fille du Regiment* (in Italian) on 22 November, with Tetrazzini, Zenatello, and Sammarco, preceded by *Pagliacci* with McCormack and Sylva (Nedda) ; a performance of *Rigoletto* on 11 February, with Tetrazzini, McCormack, Renaud (The Jester), and Gilibert (Monterone) ; and Tetrazzini, McCormack, Duchène (Mallika), and Huberdeau (Nilakantha), in *Lakmé* on 21 March. Hammerstein's production of *La Bohème* on 26 January was again worthy of comparison with that of the Metropolitan, offering a performance with Cavalieri, McCormack, Gilibert, Sammarco, Huberdeau, and Trentini (Musetta), to match Gatti's of the same evening with Farrar, Caruso, Scotti, Didur, de Segurola, and Bella Alten (Musetta).

Though Hammerstein could not resist the presentation of another score by Massenet on 19 January, his *Grisélidis* — in which were Garden (Grisélidis), Dalmorès (Alain), Huberdeau (The Devil), and Dufranne (The Marquis) — he earned the lasting gratitude of New Yorkers with the first production of *Elektra* on 1 February.[8] As with *Salome*, Hammerstein presented the work in French, and he had again discovered, in Mariette Mazarin, a performer who seemed predestined for the title role. Since de la Fuente's conducting suggested a greater rapport with Massenet than with Strauss, the production derived its qualities from the superb portrayal by Mazarin, and the Orestes of Huberdeau. Among the other principal singers were Alice Baron (Chrysothemis), Gerville-Réache (Klytemnestra), and Duffault (Aegisthus). From the strain of preparation, and the exertion of the performance, Mme. Mazarin collapsed after the *première ;* and for the repetition of 7 February, Gerville-Réache renounced her role on the grounds that it required too much vocal effort. She was replaced by Mme. Doria, and Devriès relieved Duffault as Aegisthus.

[8] This performance, according to Arthur Hammerstein, drew $19,700 at increased prices ; *Salome*, at lower prices, had drawn $11,000 at its *première* in the Manhattan.

Despite the success of *Salome*, the critical attitude was not strikingly sympathetic. In *The Tribune*, Krehbiel declared : '*Elektra* is as un-Hellenic as Bernard Shaw's notion of Cleopatra is un-antique — or, rather, let us say, was, for all of these artistic abortions fortunately pass away quickly' — a prediction somewhat less successful than others by this commentator. After a considerable disquisition on the subject of degeneracy in art, Krehbiel concluded by saying : 'We shall enjoy *Hänsel und Gretel* next Saturday, and be comforted.' The public, however, refused to be dissuaded by this and similar writing ; and following the reappearance of Garden in *Salome* on 5 March — with Dufranne (Jochanaan), Doria (Herodias), Dalmorès (Herod), Devriès (Narraboth), and de la Fuente conducting — the two Strauss works were given a total of eleven performances. Mazarin's resourcefulness was strikingly demonstrated on 12 February, for she appeared both in a *matinée* performance of *Elektra* and in the evening's *Hérodiade*, (Salome), Cavalieri being ill. Hammerstein paid tribute to Strauss on 24 March when he presented an afternoon performance of *Elektra*, and an evening one of *Salome*, the former coinciding with a production of the same composer's *Sinfonia Domestica* by the Boston Symphony in Carnegie Hall. At this concert Sembrich appeared as soloist, one of her songs being Strauss's *Ständchen*.

Mahler's participation in the season's activities at the Metropolitan was considerably limited by his position of chief conductor of the Philharmonic Society. His important contribution to the Metropolitan's artistic record was a presentation of Tchaikowsky's *Pique Dame* on 5 March, the first Russian opera to be given a stage production in New York. (There had been concert performances of *Eugen Onegin* under Walter Damrosch.) Mahler's version of *Pique Dame* was given in German, thus establishing the background of the Metropolitan's rather unenviable record in the production of Russian scores. Only Chaliapine's own Boris has been sung in the language of the

composer. For the other Russian works given in this house the languages have been Italian and French. At the *première* of *Pique Dame* it was cast with Slezak, a magnificent Hermann, Meitschik (The Countess), Destinn (Lisa), Gluck (Chloe), Wickham (Pauline), and Didur (Count Tomsky). Of a similar musical interest was a revival of *Der Freischütz on* 11 March with a splendid cast directed by Hertz. His singers were Gadski (Agathe), Alten (Ännchen), Jadlowker (Max), Blass (Caspar), Mühlmann (Kuno), and Witherspoon (The Hermit). One of the *Brautjungfern* was Anna Case.

Also in the Metropolitan during this season were performances of Auber's *Fra Diavolo* and Flotow's *Stradella,* which were revived for their suitability to the New Theatre.[9] The latter was given for the first time on 4 February when Max Bendix made his debut as an operatic conductor, the cast including Slezak (Stradella), Gluck (Ortemia), Goritz and Reiss (Two Bandits). To Hertz fell the honour of directing the first American opera to be given at the Metropolitan, Frederick Converse's *Pipe of Desire,*# produced for the first time on 18 March with a wholly American cast in which were Martin (Iolan), Homer (Naia), Whitehill (The Old One), and Witherspoon (The First Gnome). Though English was the native tongue of all these singers, it was scarcely possible to distinguish the language of the work, and the libretto was quite unintelligible. Nor has the ability of American composers to write understandable declamation increased impressively since then. As on many later occasions, Whitehill was the one singer to make the text of his role understood.

In addition to his restudied *Lohengrin,* Hertz lavished the same care on *Parsifal* before it was given for the first time in this season on 25 November (Thanksgiving Day). In this performance Clarence Whitehill made his debut as a member of the company in the role of Amfortas, beginning a career that attained considerable distinction despite various interruptions. Fremstad, Goritz (Klingsor), Burrian (Parsifal), Blass (Gurnemanz), and Witherspoon (Titurel), were the other principal singers. Toscanini having taken over both *Tristan* and *Die*

[9] See Krehbiel, *More Chapters of Opera,* Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1919.

Meistersinger, Hertz resumed the direction of *Götterdämmerung,* as well as retaining control of the other dramas of the *Ring.*

In a *Siegfried* of 16 December Whitehill sang his excellent performance of Der Wanderer for the first time, with Gadski, Burrian, Blass (Fafner), Reiss (Mime), and Homer ; and a *matinée* of *Die Walküre* on 8 January was sung by Whitehill (Wotan *), Gadski, Homer (Fricka), Fremstad (Sieglinde), Burrian, and Blass (Hunding). Slezak was heard for the first time in one of his finest roles on 17 January, when he sang Tannhäuser in a performance of that score in which were Gadski, Fremstad (Venus), Whitehill (Wolfram *), and Blass (Landgraf). A *matinée Ring* cycle began on 24 January with a performance of *Das Rheingold* that came near to disaster when the interior curtains rising on the Nibelheim became entangled. The proscenium curtain was dropped and the orchestra stopped playing until the difficulty was adjusted. The principal singers of this performance were Soomer (Wotan), Fremstad (Fricka), Meitschik (Erda *), Gluck (Freia *), Goritz, and Reiss. In *Die Walküre* on 27 January, Soomer (Wotan), and Hinckley (Hunding) were the only variations from the previous cast, and the *Siegfried* on 29 January was presented without alteration. Hertz again omitted the opening scene when he presented *Götterdämmerung* on 1 February — the day of the *première* of *Elektra* at the Manhattan — with Gadski, Burrian, Homer (Waltraute), Hinckley (Hagen), Fornia (Gutrune), Whitehill (Gunther *), and Goritz (Alberich). There was also the innovation of a *Ring* cycle in the regular evening subscription series, with the four works presented sequentially on 24 and 25 February, 2 and 4 March. The only change from the casts of the afternoon performances occurred in the performance of *Götterdämmerung,* in which Jane Osborn-Hannah replaced Fornia as Gutrune.

Encouraged by his success with *Salome,* Hammerstein attempted to give Wagner, also, in French this season, with a production of *Tannhäuser* on 10 December, in which were Mazarin (Elisabeth), Renaud (Wolfram), Zenatello (Tannhäuser), Doria (Venus), and Vallier (Landgraf). The Dresden version was used. Despite the unsuitability of the language, Mazarin and Renaud were wholly admirable in their roles ; the others, especially Zenatello, were badly miscast. There were two further presentations of the work in this season, but Hammerstein's venture with Wagner can scarcely be said to have prospered. In the last *Parsifal* of the Metropolitan season on 25

March, Jörn was heard for the first time as Parsifal, with Fremstad, Goritz, Hinckley (Gurnemanz), and Whitehill ; and on 28 March Walter Hyde, an English tenor, chose Siegmund for his debut in a performance of *Die Walküre* sung by Fremstad, Gadski, Wickham (Fricka), Whitehill (Wotan), and Hinckley. Hertz conducted all of these performances.

Though the Metropolitan season was still built round Caruso, he was used with considerably more discretion by Gatti-Casazza than he had been in the later years of Conried's regime. He was heard but twenty-eight times in this season, still an impressive proportion of the subscription performances, but a far more reasonable total than the fifty-one of the 1907–1908 season.[10] His roles were scarcely varied from the list of the past, Frederico Loewe in *Germania* being the only new part he undertook in this season. On 17 February Caruso reappeared as the Duke in *Rigoletto,* singing it for the first time since the coming of Bonci, with Lipkowska, Amato (The Jester), and Didur (Sparafucile). Though the influence of Campanini had banished encores from the Manhattan Opera House, the practice still persisted at the Metropolitan — despite its claim to the 'blue ribbon' of the operatic world — and Caruso repeated 'La donna è mobile.' During this season Bonci added appearances in *Tosca* and *Faust* to his Metropolitan record, singing Cavaradossi * on 30 December with Farrar and Scotti ; and Faust * on 9 February with Farrar, Didur (Méphistophélès), and Gilly (Valentin). Though Bonci's fine artistry was equally apparent in both works, he was much more suited to *Faust* than to *Tosca* — 'Salut ! demeure,' indeed, had not been so well sung in the house since the early days of Jean de Reszke.

As evidence of the directors' intention to establish the Metropolitan on a well-rounded plan was the engagement of Anna

[10] The press had not been hesitant to protest against the excessive use of Caruso, Krehbiel stating on 1 March 1908 : 'There are indications that it is beginning to be difficult to keep the Caruso cult on its old hysterical plane, which is no wonder, with his two and three performances a week and the fifth year of his presence at the opera house.'

Pavlowa and Mikhail Mordkin. These dancers, whose like had never been seen at the Metropolitan, made their debut on 28 February, following a performance of Massenet's *Werther*. The opera was not concluded until after eleven o'clock ; but an audience that had remained in curiosity left in reluctance, for they had seen an exhibition of dancing in Delibes' *Coppélia* which was the most brilliant in the history of the house. The honours belonged almost exclusively to the soloists, for Podesti's conducting was poor, and the *corps de ballet* inferior. Pavlowa's and Mordkin's three further appearances in this work, and two in Glazounow's *Hungary* — the first on 26 March, following a performance of *Il Trovatore* — were unexpected boons to the subscribers. The plan for a balanced schedule, however, did not include, in this season, any work by Mozart.

Though Hammerstein had completed his subscription series as projected, with a brilliance in many ways superior to that of his former seasons — through the establishment in the repertory of such works as *Pelléas*, *Louise*, and *Salome*, the addition of *Elektra* — and had announced plans for a season in the following winter, there were indications that his enterprise was becoming financially unwieldy. The Philadelphia venture had embarrassed him in several ways, and after applying in vain to numerous banks in that city, he finally succeeded in raising a loan of four hundred thousand dollars through the intervention of E. T. Stotesbury. On 1 January 1910 Hammerstein confided to the press : 'The operatic war is suicide,' and offered to take over the direction of the French works at the Metropolitan if some arrangement could be made. The directors of that institution, however, declared they were not interested in any suggestions coming from Hammerstein. On the following day Hammerstein declared that there was no truth in the rumour that he had been offered a million dollars to give up producing opera in New York, but this was an eminently accurate indication of what the solution to the difficulty finally was.

Not every aspect of the Hammerstein-Metropolitan deal has been fully understood, nor is it likely to be in the future. It is not probable that Hammerstein would have been able to continue the production of opera for long in New York, for he was practically at the end of his financial resources. His son, Arthur Hammerstein, says that Kahn and his associates paid $1,200,000 for an enterprise that was practically bankrupt, and that no one was more surprised when the deal was consummated than Oscar Hammerstein. This does not mean that the conception of Hammerstein as an impresario who could make opera pay is a false one, for, in a letter to Paul D. Cravath, dated 14 May 1935, Arthur Hammerstein declared : 'If it were possible to obtain the account books of the Manhattan Opera House during the regime of Oscar Hammerstein, they would disclose that opera under his direction was financially successful, but when he essayed to quarrel with interests that were vital to his needs he suffered a loss. He was not a failure in grand opera, if production is to be the sine qua non of success.' In addition to the difficulties indicated here — applying to his relationship with singers, conductors, technicians, etc. — Hammerstein had become involved with various real estate projects, the building of several opera houses, which administered the final blow to his career as an operatic producer.

However, the purchase of Hammerstein's assets coincided very favourably with certain other plans in which the directors of the Metropolitan were interested, and influenced them to proceed with the purchase regardless of what they may have known of the true state of Hammerstein's ability to continue in New York. On 14 November it had been rumoured that Dippel would have charge of an operatic company in Chicago during the season of 1910–1911, with Campanini as his musical director ; and when the organization of the Chicago Grand Opera Company was announced on 9 December, the interest of the Metropolitan Opera Company in this venture was made apparent.

The Chicago company was capitalized at a half million dollars subscribed by fourteen men, including : J. Ogden Armour, Martin A. Ryerson, John G. Shedd, J. C. Shaffer, Samuel Insull, Charles G. Dawes, Julius Rosenwald, C. L. Hutchinson, A. G. Becker, of Chicago ; and W. K. Vanderbilt, Otto Kahn, and Clarence Mackay. The latter three, all directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company, were represented in the affairs of the Chicago group by Andreas Dippel.

After Oscar Hammerstein, on 2 January, had denied that an offer of a million dollars had been made to him by the Metropolitan, a director of that institution told the press : 'The whole proposition is very much broader than is generally supposed. By this I mean that under the leadership of the Metropolitan Opera Company, it will not be at all improbable that in time an operatic basis may be established in every principal city in the United States.' The formation of the Chicago Grand Opera Company was cited as 'an opening wedge in the great West.' On 4 January Arthur Hammerstein issued a statement declaring that at the suggestion of Kahn, Judge Gary, a subscriber to both the Metropolitan and the Manhattan, had been appointed as intermediary to discuss with the Metropolitan directors the most equitable solution of the difficulties. No immediate settlement was reached ; but on 9 February Oscar Hammerstein announced his readiness to sell the Philadelphia Opera House to the Metropolitan, and that eventually became the central factor in the deal. On 26 April 1910 the matter was consummated in the home of Otto Kahn on East Sixty-eighth Street, New York, in the presence of Stotesbury, who was the nominal purchaser and represented the newly-formed Philadelphia Opera Company, Otto Kahn and Paul Cravath acting for the Chicago Grand Opera Company. Arthur Hammerstein and E. Butterick Root represented the senior Hammerstein, who was abroad.[11]

[11] Arthur Hammerstein declares that when he appeared in the old Hammerstein Theatre, at Forty-second Street and Broadway with a certified check for one hundred thousand dollars, as a deposit on the whole amount, neither his brother nor any one else in the theatre would believe it genuine, so often had the deal been discussed without definite action. When they had been persuaded that the check was *bona fide*, the Hammersteins proceeded to the bar of the Knickerbocker Hotel, where champagne was set up for every one within sight. Arthur then sent his

In addition to acquiring the rights for works held by Hammerstein and contracts for many of his performers, the purchasers compelled the acceptance of a clause which prohibited either Oscar *or* Arthur Hammerstein from engaging in the production of opera in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, or Chicago for a period of ten years. All Hammerstein's properties *except* the Manhattan Opera House were included in the transaction. The sum mentioned at the time was 'a little over $2,000,000.' But this probably included the four hundred thousand dollars owing to Stotesbury, plus other sums raised from the same source. The actual price paid, it was revealed during a later controversy, was $1,200,000.[12] Of this, Hammerstein used nine hundred thousand dollars to pay off several debts ; he then invested the remainder towards the expense of a new theatre he was building in London, where he produced, of all things, opera ! This enterprise ended in disaster two years later.

In America, however, the results of Hammerstein's activities were tangible. His artists and, in many ways, his ideas became the basis for the Philadelphia-Chicago Grand Opera Company ; and when the Philadelphia activity was abandoned not long afterwards, his policies remained the basis of operatic production in Chicago for a considerable time. Stotesbury became a director of both the Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera Companies ; and Kahn, Vanderbilt, and Mackay also joined the Philadelphia directorate. Dippel retired permanently from the affairs of the Metropolitan, in assuming his Chicago duties ; and Gatti entered upon the first of his twenty-five years as sole

father, who was in England, a seven hundred and fifty word cablegram informing him that the deal was closed. 'Imagine,' he said, 'my sending a seven hundred and fifty word cable. Why the day before we didn't have seven dollars and a half among us !'

[12] A good portion of this sum, according to Arthur Hammerstein, was contributed by a director of the Metropolitan whose name has never appeared in connexion with the deal. His son had formed an attachment for Lina Cavalieri, when she was at the Metropolitan, which had led to her non-engagement by that house. When Hammerstein had the temerity to bring her to America again, this director vowed to oust Hammerstein from New York. This was the method he used.

director of the Metropolitan. Thus, with Gatti an 'advisory director' of the Boston Opera Company, the interlocking directorates of the Philadelphia, Chicago, Metropolitan, and Boston companies became an established fact ; and the final stamp of contemporary business methods had been placed on the production of opera in New York.

The activities of this momentous season were not completed until the end of May ; for when the American tour was finished, the company departed for Paris to begin a brief season at the Châtelet, on 21 May. The first performance was, in the true spirit of Gatti, *Aïda,* with Destinn and Caruso, under the direction of Toscanini. The local critics preferred the ballet and settings of the Paris Opéra, though the merits of the Metropolitan's individual artists were recognized. The *Colonne* Orchestra was used. Toscanini received a rather unusual greeting at the beginning of the second act, a sweeping hiss from the gallery expressing the disapproval of the Parisians for the alleged discriminations of Gatti and Toscanini against French artists.[13]

1910–1911

WITH the commencement of this season the Metropolitan entered upon a period of financial well-being which has no parallel in the annals of operatic production anywhere in the world. The retirement of Hammerstein had stimulated the already flourishing subscription list of the Metropolitan ; and in place of the fifty or sixty thousand dollar advance sale of the German opera period, or the three or four times that amount of the Grau period, or even the half-million dollar pre-season income of the years of Conried, the subscription sale mounted steadily towards the million dollar mark, eventually to pass it and continue well beyond. In fact, so great was the public demand for tickets to the Metropolitan on this basis, that the organization, desiring to

[13] On 3 March the first mention of a 'New' Metropolitan Opera House in this era is encountered. A plan for removal to the Grand Central area was reported in the press. It remained merely a rumour.

increase its income by forty thousand dollars, was able to revoke its twenty per cent discount privilege to the ticket agencies, beginning with this season.[14] There was apparently no concern that these tickets might not be sold without the intervention of the brokers.

With the elimination of Hammerstein, the end of the unprofitable New Theatre venture, and the limiting of outside performances in Brooklyn and Philadelphia to the unengaged Tuesdays, this increase in revenue was regarded by those in control of the Metropolitan as the last step towards a balanced budget. The results to the artistic health of the institution, however, were not so uniformly satisfying. Too much, indeed, has ever been made in America of the subject of deficit as related to the production of opera, and too little of *what* was returned for the profit or the deficit. In no other centre of opera — save in London — has there ever been a pretence that opera should pay for itself. A deficit has been recognized as fundamental to the giving of first-rate opera, to be estimated in a budget along with singers' salaries, royalties to composers, the expenses for costumes, scenery, etc. But the fact that opera in America has for most of the present century been underwritten by men whose training was primarily in business enterprise, has resulted inevitably in the application of those standards in a field to which they are patently unrelated. There was the further paradox, in New York, that the sponsorship of opera *did* return a dividend, in social prestige, that was to be obtained from no other activity, artistic or philanthropic.

For a time, however, the ambition, or idealism, of the Metropolitan Opera Company helped to achieve the qualities which mark this era — till the retirement of Toscanini in 1915 — as the most brilliant, in repertory and ensemble, in the history of the institution. From the outset, the season of 1910–1911[15]

[14] For details of this and the later relationship of the Metropolitan to the ticket agencies, see Krehbiel's *More Chapters of Opera*, p. 274 *et seq.*

[15] Twenty-two weeks were scheduled, the longest season projected by the company to that time.

was marked by the new importance of Toscanini in the affairs of the house, the opening night, 14 November, being given over to Gluck's *Armide*, performed for the first time in the history of the Metropolitan. It was presented with Caruso (Renaud), Fremstad (Armide), Gluck (Lucinde and Un Plaisir), Rappold (Une Naiade), Homer (La Haine), Sparkes (Sidonie), and Gilly (Ubalde). Caruso displayed a surprising adaptability to his role, and Fremstad, as Armide, was superb.

Since this season included the world *première* of a Puccini opera at the Metropolitan, Toscanini paid further tribute to that composer by directing his *Bohème*, on 21 November, for the first time in this house. His cast included Farrar, Jadlowker (Rodolfo *), Scotti, Didur, de Segurola, and Alten (Musetta). Previously Toscanini had conducted *Madama Butterfly*, on 19 November, with Farrar, Martin, Scotti, and Mattfeld ; and he capped his services to Puccini with the presentation of *La Fanciulla del West* # on 10 December. Conried's policy of double prices for his important events was followed by Gatti, though this affected not at all the size of the audience which gathered to hear Destinn (Minnie), Caruso (Dick Johnson), Amato (Sheriff Jack Rance), and the others of the cast. The reception was enthusiastic, and Gatti found it appropriate to remark : 'The performance is a great event in the history of the Metropolitan Opera House. It is a great success.' Puccini, who had assisted in the preparation of the work, said : 'The performance has been perfect. I have no doubt now of its success.' The comment of Belasco, on whose play the opera had been founded, was wholly personal : 'I am divinely happy.' So long as Toscanini was present to direct it, *The Girl of the Golden West* retained more than a cursory interest, but subsequent revivals have not revealed any impressive vitality in this score.

As if to ward off any suspicion of an Italian bias, Gatti also offered significant *premières* in both German and French. The first performance anywhere of Humperdinck's *Königskinder* # on 28 December, provided Geraldine Farrar with one of her

most individual characterizations, and the first performance in America of Paul Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* # on 29 March also had Farrar in the principal female role. In contrast to the Puccini *première*, *Königskinder* was presented in the regular subscription series with no advance in prices, even though Humperdinck himself was on hand. The cast under the direction of Hertz included Farrar (The Goose-girl), Jadlowker (The King's Son), Goritz (The Fiddler), Didur (The Wood-cutter), and Homer (The Witch). Toscanini's cast for *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, in addition to Farrar (Ariane), included Léon Rothier (Barbe-bleue), who had made an admired debut on 10 December as Méphistophélès in a performance of *Faust* with Farrar and Jadlowker. Dukas' stress, in his adaptation of the libretto by Maeterlinck, on the character of Ariane was not mitigated by the patently 'Gardenish' impersonation that Farrar permitted herself ; and though the skill of the writing was recognized, the more conservative press found the same 'excruciating dissonances' [16] that had been discovered in *Pelléas*. The work was given but four times in this season, and three in the next, disappearing thereafter from the repertory. It is wholly likely that a revival now would find a much more responsive audience.

Leo Slezak, who had made so favourable an impression in the previous season, was with the company this year for both the beginning and ending of the twenty-week period. He made his reappearance on the second night, 16 November, in *Tannhäuser*, with Morena (returned to the company after a year's absence, as Elisabeth), Fremstad, and Soomer. On 9 December Slezak was heard for the first time in *Lohengrin*, with Fremstad, Homer, Goritz, and Hinckley (Heinrich) ; and later in five performances of *Otello*, the first on 27 February with Rappold, Scotti, and de Segurola (Lodovico). Melba returned to sing in the Metropolitan during this season, and both John McCormack and Maurice Renaud appeared there for the first time, though not as official members of the company. Melba's return was veritably a Hammerstein production, for the performance of *Rigoletto* in which she appeared on 25 November offered also the Metropolitan debuts of Constantino (The Duke) and Renaud (The Jester). Didur, who had also been introduced

[16] *Tribune*, 30 March.

to America by Hammerstein, appeared as Sparafucile. Melba's only other appearance of this season occurred on 29 November, in a performance of *La Traviata* which introduced to the Metropolitan both McCormack (Alfredo) and the fine Italian baritone, Carlo Galeffi (Germont). Illness prevented any further appearances by Melba, and McCormack was occupied thereafter by his engagements with the Chicago and Boston Opera Companies. Another tenor new to the Metropolitan was Dmitri Smirnoff, introduced to America on 31 December in *Rigoletto* with Lipkowska (Gilda), and Amato. He did not attain any lasting celebrity, his most important assignment being in a revival of *Roméo et Juliette* on 13 February, with Farrar (Juliet), Rothier (Laurent), and Gilly (Mercutio). The work had not been given for three seasons. Though less than a decade had elapsed since the last performance of the score by Eames, the de Reszkes, and Plançon, it was evident that those days were not to come soon again ; and they have but slipped further away in the twenty-five years since.

Other glories, however, there were for the Metropolitan. Toscanini again directed the season's *Tristans* and *Meistersingers*, four performances of each work. Fremstad was the Isolde in three of the former, Gadski in one, with Burrian the invariable Tristan. Gadski and Destinn were the alternating Evas in *Die Meistersinger*, with Jörn as the tenor, save on 6 March, when Slezak was heard as Walther. Soomer was the Kurwenal and Hans Sachs for all of these. Hertz's performance of *Die Walküre* on 18 November was offered in a wholly new scenic production. It emanated from Italy, however, rather than Germany, being modelled on the set used at La Scala. In this performance Lucy Weidt (Brünnhilde), and Basil Ruysdael (Hunding) made debuts, with Morena (Sieglinde), Wickham (Fricka), Soomer (Wotan), and Burrian. In the Thanksgiving Day performance of *Parsifal* on 25 November, Witherspoon appeared as Gurnemanz,* with Fremstad, Burrian, Goritz, Amato (Amfortas), and William Hinshaw (Titurel). During the only *Ring* cycle of the season, given at *matinées* beginning on 2 February, Fremstad made her first attempt at the Brünnhilde of *Die Walküre* on the 9th, with Morena, Wickham, Burrian, Soomer, and Hinckley. *Das Rheingold*, a week previously, was given with Mariska-Aldrich (Fricka), Homer, Gluck (Freia), Burrian (Loge), Soomer, Goritz, Reiss, Witherspoon (Fasolt), and Ruysdael (Fafner). In *Siegfried* on 13 February, Morena was the Brünnhilde, with Burrian, Soomer, Homer (Erda), Goritz, and Reiss. Again omitting the Norn scene, Hertz presented *Götterdämmerung* on 22 February, with Gadski (Brünnhilde), Osborn-Hannah (Waltraute), Soomer (Gunther), Hinckley (Hagen), and Burrian (Siegfried).

Gatti's policy of reviving certain of his 'novelties' which had not been commercially successful at their initial appearance

was tried for the first time in this season, the work being Franchetti's *Germania*. It had one performance after its revival on 1 February ; thereafter it was heard no more, even though it was cast with Destinn, Caruso, Amato, and Gluck (Jane). Toscanini directed this work, and also added *Tosca* to his list of Puccini for the season, on 8 February, the principal singers being Farrar, Martin, and Scotti. An innovation in the presentation of Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* was inaugurated on 26 December for the Christmas performance. Albert Reiss, the tenor, undertook the part in place of the contralto generally heard. Humperdinck was present, and approved the alteration, which was retained at Metropolitan performances for the next half-dozen years. Since the vocal line indicated for the Witch is largely arbitrary in any case, Reiss's mimetic gifts were ample excuse for the innovation. The cast included Alten (Gretel), Mattfeld (Hänsel), Goritz (Peter), and Case (The Dewman). Pavlowa and Mordkin were again associated with the company.

In the Metropolitan this season were also visible the first results of the syndicate arrangement which gave the directors of this company an interest in the operatic activities of Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston. Under the direction of Dippel, the Chicago-Philadelphia company gave a series of eleven performances on Tuesday nights, beginning with *Thaïs* on 24 January, with Garden, Dalmorès, and Renaud under the direction of Campanini. Save for Renaud, this marked the first appearance of these artists in the Metropolitan. In line with the policies of Hammerstein, as they persisted in the affairs of this company, the next performance, on 31 January, was *Louise*, sung by Garden, Dalmorès, Bressler-Gianoli, and Dufranne (as the Father, replacing Gilibert, who had died on 12 October as he was about to rejoin the Metropolitan company). Still another first performance in the auditorium — though it was not given by the resident company — was that of *Pelléas* on 7 January, interpreted by Garden, Dufranne (Golaud), Bressler-Gianoli

(Genevieve), Huberdeau (Ärkel), and a new Pelléas, Edmond Warnery.

Also included in this season of the Chicago company were *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* on 14 February, with Renaud, Dalmorès, Sylva, Alice Zeppilli, and Tina di Angelo ; *Carmen* on the 21st, with Sylva, Dalmorès, and Dufranne ; Victor Herbert's *Natoma* on the 28th, and a repetition of the same work a week later ; Wolf-Ferrari's *Il Segreto di Susanna* on 14 March, following a performance of *Jongleur* with Garden ; a repetition of *Louise* on the 21st ; *Il Segreto* and *Natoma* on the 28th ; and the first performance of Jean Nougues' *Quo Vadis*, with Renaud, Huberdeau, and Dufranne on 4 April. There was also a special repetition of *Thaïs*, with Garden, on Saturday evening 18 March. The quality of the productions and their comparative unfamiliarity in New York — *Carmen* alone had been given in the Metropolitan before — brought excellent attendances to all the performances, and a kind of anticipatory excitement not common in this auditorium.

As early as 28 February a rumour was circulated that the year's activities at the Metropolitan would show a profit for the first time in four seasons. As much as a hundred thousand dollars was mentioned. But this report was discredited by the management, for whom a spokesman said : 'We may come out a little ahead, but success depends upon the road tour which is usually a financial failure.' A continued indisposition of Caruso, which finally resulted in his retirement for the season on 5 April, greatly reduced the attractiveness of the company on its tour ; and when the company concluded its activities in the middle of May, the small balance to the credit of the season's operations was almost wiped out.[17]

Relevant to the history of the Metropolitan is the death of Gustav Mahler, which occurred in Vienna on 18 May. His post as conductor of the Philharmonic Society was taken by Josef Stransky.

1911–1912

For the first time in a score of years — since the return of Grau in 1891 — there was a revision in the regular price for seats

[17] There was no opera by Mozart produced at the Metropolitan in this season, nor was *Fidelio* offered either.

at the Metropolitan, preparatory to this season. The change, however, affected only the orchestra chairs, the price of which was raised from five to six dollars for single purchase, with a proportionate increase for subscribers. During the summer in an interview with the press, John Brown, business controller of the organization since the 1909–1910 season, said: 'In ten years, conductors' salaries have increased nearly three hundred per cent; the orchestra one hundred per cent; the chorus and ballet from sixty to eighty per cent.' To Gatti-Casazza Mr. Brown attributed a reorganization of the box-office staff, which, he said, 'probably saved thousands of dollars a year.' Now, with the elimination of discounts to agencies, the elevation of prices was believed to be the really *final* step towards elimination of the deficit — though the same opinion had prevailed when the agencies were deprived of their discounts. In view, however, of the increased number of performances, and the longer season — there were, for example, 149 performances in 1911–1912, against only 68 in 1901–1902 — and of the infinitely greater tension under which the personnel operated, the mounting expenditures were scarcely so disproportionate as they superficially appear.

The reappearance of *Aïda* to open this season on 13 November presaged the cyclic recurrence of that opera for similar purposes during the remaining years of Gatti's directorship. This performance, however, was enriched by the presence of Margarete Matzenauer. She made her debut as Amneris, in company with a cast that included Destinn, Caruso, Amato, and Didur, under Toscanini. There was an enormous audience; and more than a thousand prospective listeners were refused admission. The receipts were nearly thirteen thousand dollars, a record, at that time, for a regular performance. During the first week Gatti also exhibited his world *premières* of the previous season — *Königskinder* on the second night, 15 November, and *Fanciulla del West*, in a somewhat abridged version, on the 16th. The casts for both were essentially as they had been.

The week continued with *Tristan* under Toscanini on 17 November, sung by Fremstad, Matzenauer (Brangaene), Burrian, Hermann Weil (debut, Kurwenal), Witherspoon (Marke *), and Lambert Murphy (debut, A Sailor's Voice) ; and concluded with the American *première* of Ludwig Thuille's *Lobetanz* on the 18th, with Jadlowker (Lobetanz), Gadski (Princess), Sparkes (First Dark Girl), and Case (Second Dark Girl), under Hertz. Though new to America, *Lobetanz* was already fifteen years old, and the composer had been dead for five years when his work was produced at the Metropolitan. The five performances during this season were the extent of its life there.

The success of the previous season's production of Wolf-Ferrari's *Il Segreto di Susanna* by the Chicago Grand Opera Company no doubt inspired the revival of the same composer's *Le Donne Curiose,* which was a novelty to New York when it was presented on 3 January. It had been given at the Hofoper, Munich, on 27 November 1903, in German. The New York production with Farrar (Rosaura), Jadlowker (Florindo), Scotti (Lelio), and Didur (Ottavio), was one of Toscanini's finest achievements at the Metropolitan, for spirit, for *bravura,* for lightness of effects. Wolf-Ferrari was present at the repetition on 6 January, and after an enthusiastic reception by the audience, told the press : 'I have never realized what was in my opera until I heard it today for the first time in Italian, and under the direction of Signor Toscanini. I am too happy for words.' On 4 January it had been announced that the contracts of both Gatti and Toscanini had been renewed for a period of three years.

One of the earliest promises of the Metropolitan Opera Company — an intention to encourage the creation of opera in English — was reflected in the production of Horatio T. Parker's *Mona,* # for the first time on any stage, on 14 March. To Mr. Parker was awarded not only the honour of a Metropolitan production, but a prize of ten thousand dollars which had been offered by the company in 1908 for the best American score

submitted. At the *première,* moreover, there was a laurel wreath for Mr. Parker from the Bohemians, a New York musical club, a second from his colleagues in the music department of Yale University, and a third from his summer neighbours at Blue Hill, Maine. Also from Blue Hill was a set of pearl buttons for 'waistcoat, bosom, and cuffs.' The opera was given four times during this season, and has never been revived. The last of the season's novelties was Leo Blech's one-act *Versiegelt,* given on 20 January under Hertz, with Goritz (Lampe), Jadlowker (Bertel), Gadski (Frau Gertrud), and Alten (Elsie). Its three subsequent appearances were as part of double bills. There has been no revival.

The retirement of Sembrich, which had considerably incommoded Gatti in the previous season, was partially compensated for by the engagement of Luisa Tetrazzini. She made her somewhat belated debut at the Metropolitan on 27 December, in *Lucia,* with Constantino, Amato, and Witherspoon (Raimondo), with Sturani conducting. Tetrazzini was scarcely the artist that Sembrich had been, nor did she possess a comparable versatility, but her qualities were extraordinary and of a kind particularly impressive to the public.

Tetrazzini was heard again in *Lucia* on 1 January with Constantino, Campanari, and Witherspoon, who had been the Gurnemanz of that afternoon's *Parsifal ;* on the 11th with Smirnoff and Amato in *Rigoletto ;* in another performance of the same work on the 27th with Renaud, Smirnoff, and Rothier (Sparafucile) ; and finally in a special Tuesday night performance of *Rigoletto* on 6 February, in which her associates were Caruso, Homer, Renaud, and Rothier. The audience was again the overflowing one of the opening night ; and the number of those unable to buy tickets was estimated to be two thousand. Emmy Destinn appeared during this season for the first time as Floria Tosca, substituting for Fremstad, who was ill on 21 February. In the cast were Caruso (singing Cavaradossi for the first time in two seasons), and Amato, with Toscanini conducting. Another addition to Destinn's repertory was Elsa, which she sang for the first time in New York on 29 January in a performance of *Lohengrin* with Jadlowker, Homer, Weil (Telramund), and Griswold. Hertz was the conductor.

During this season Toscanini lavished his talents on the refurbishing of another opera in the conventional repertory, when Massenet's *Manon* was revived on 30 March after a lapse of two years. There had been splendidly sung performances of the work during Grau's time, but none in which the ensemble of singers and orchestra had been so well integrated. The cast offered Farrar, Gilly (Lescaut), and Rothier (Comte des Grieux), but the highest critical praise was reserved for Caruso's des Grieux. His performance undoubtedly reflected the influence of Toscanini, for Caruso had displayed no such aptitude for the Gallic style before. In addition to *Manon*, *Tristan*, *Le Donne Curiose*, and *Tosca*, the works conducted by Toscanini in this season included *Die Meistersinger*, *Aïda*, *La Gioconda*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Otello*, *Armide*, *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, and *Orfeo*. Sturani, who had made his debut conducting *Faust* on 26 November, was entrusted with *La Bohème*.

A number of these works, as well as much of the Wagnerian repertory, profited from the presence of Matzenauer. She had been engaged to sing contralto roles, but explored the soprano repertory as well before the season was concluded. In all, Matzenauer was heard in a total of fourteen different roles in her first season with the company. Her resourcefulness had a precedent only in the careers of Lilli Lehmann or of Schumann-Heink, but neither of these artists was capable of the double duties assumed by Matzenauer.

Following her debut as Amneris (see p. 174), Matzenauer appeared as both Waltraute and Flosshilde in *Götterdämmerung* on 23 November, with Gadski, Burrian, Putnam Griswold (debut, Hagen), Weil (Gunther), and Fornia (Gutrune), under the direction of Hertz ; as Ortrud in *Lohengrin* on the 25th ; as Hate in *Armide* on 16 December with the cast of the previous season ; and as Erda in *Siegfried* on the 30th, with Burrian, Gadski, Reiss, Griswold (Der Wanderer), and Goritz. Matzenauer effected her transition to the rank of soprano by no easy stages, for her first role in this category was Kundry, in *Parsifal* on 1 January, as a replacement for Fremstad. Though it was the first time Matzenauer had sung the role on any stage, her performance was highly praised.

Her other higher roles in this season were Fricka in *Das Rheingold* on 8 February, and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* on the 26th, the latter with Burrian, Morena (Sieglinde), Homer, Weil (Wotan), and Ruysdael (Hunding). As a contralto, Matzenauer was heard as the Nurse in *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* on 30 January, as Fricka in *Die Walküre* on 8 February, Laura in *La Gioconda* on the 16th, with Destinn, Caruso, Wickham (La Cieca), and Amato (Barnaba) ; and in *Orfeo* (Orfeo) on 26 December. She was also heard as Brangaene in *Tristan* four times.

A performance of *Parsifal* on 30 November — previous to that distinguished by Matzenauer's appearance — was disrupted somewhat when Klingsor's castle refused to yield to his magic, in the second act, causing the stage to be darkened for five minutes. The singers on this occasion were Fremstad, Burrian, Amato (Amfortas), Witherspoon (Gurnemanz), and Goritz (Klingsor). Other events in the season's performance of Wagner were the debut of Herman Hensel (Lohengrin) on 22 December, in a performance of *Lohengrin* with Fremstad, Matzenauer, Weil, and Griswold (Heinrich) ; a partially restaged *Siegfried* on 18 January — with new scenery for the second act — sung by Fremstad (Brünnhilde), Burrian, Matzenauer, Griswold, Reiss, and Goritz ; and a *Ring* cycle given on *matinées* beginning with 1 February. In *Das Rheingold* were Matzenauer (Fricka), Homer (Erda), Goritz (Alberich), Weil (Wotan), Burrian (Loge), Reiss (Mime), and Gluck (Freia). The performance of *Die Walküre* on the 8th offered Morena (Sieglinde), Matzenauer (Fricka), Gadski (Brünnhilde), Hensel, Weil, and Ruysdael ; the *Siegfried* Hensel, Morena, Matzenauer (Erda), Griswold (Der Wanderer), Reiss, and Goritz, on the 12th ; and the *Götterdämmerung* on the 22nd Burrian, Fremstad, Homer (Waltraute), Griswold (Hagen), Fornia (Gutrune), and Goritz. All the performances were conducted by Hertz, who was also entrusted with Smetana's *Die Verkaufte Braut,* which had two performances in this season. The first occurred on 23 February with Destinn, Jörn (Hans), Didur (Kezal), and Case (Esmeralda).

In the French and Italian repertory the primary interest was contributed by the activities of various singers. On 21 February Frances Alda — who in 1910 had married the General Director, Giulio Gatti-Casazza — returned to operatic activity at the Metropolitan after a lapse of two years. Her first appearance was in *Otello* (Desdemona), with Slezak and Scotti, under the direction of Toscanini. Mme. Charles Cahier, well-known on the concert stage as Mrs. Morris Black, made her debut at the Metropolitan on 3 April, appearing as Azucena in *Il Trovatore.* Her associates in the cast were Gadski, Martin,

and Gilly (di Luna). This was Cahier's only appearance of the regular season, though she was heard as Amneris in a post-season *Aïda,* with Rappold, Martin, Gilly, and Didur, Sturani conducting. At a *matinée* performance of *Faust* on 4 February, Renaud was heard as Valentin for the first time in America, the principal singers of the cast being Farrar, Martin, and Rothier. Theodora Orridge, an American contralto, was added to the company on 29 November, as La Cieca in a performance of *La Gioconda* with Caruso, Destinn, Wickham, and Amato. She was also heard as Azucena in *Il Trovatore,* with Gadski, Martin, and Gilly on 30 November, but she had no permanent celebrity at the Metropolitan. Pavlowa and Mordkin were again members of the company, assisted by a ballet corps organized in Russia and brought to America in the previous season. Their appearances were usually supplementary features to some of the shorter operas, but they gave occasional afternoons of ballet. The first of these was on 19 December, when Tchaikowsky's *Le Lac des Cygnes* was presented. In this performance, however, Pavlowa was replaced by Katerina Geltzer.

Of more musical interest than the usual events in an opera house were two performances of concert music given in the Metropolitan on 28 January and 14 April. On the first date Wolf-Ferrari's cantata *La Vita Nuova* was given under the composer's direction, with Amato and Gluck as soloists.[18] At the season's final Sunday night concert Monteverdi's *Orfeo* was presented, in English, under the direction of Josef Pasternack. The soloists were Fornia (Eurydice), Duchêne (Music, Sylvia, and Proserpina), Weil (Orpheus), Witherspoon (Pluto), Ruysdael (Charon), Case (A Nymph, and a Shepherd), and Wakefield (Another Shepherd). There had been a revival of interest in *Orfeo* as the result of a performance in Rome during the international exhibition of 1911. As given by the Metropolitan, some of the vocal difficulties in the score

[18] The Oratorio Society, under Frank Damrosch, had given the work in 1908.

had been modified. For this season had also been promised *Boris Godounoff* and Franchetti's *Cristoforo Colombo,* neither of which was presented. Arthur Nevin's *Twilight* had also been announced, and a biographical sketch of the author printed in the Metropolitan's programme. The work was never given, however. There was, further, no Mozart, Beethoven, or Weber.[19]

The arrangement with the Chicago-Philadelphia Grand Opera Company was perpetuated as it had been in the season previous, with that organization taking over the auditorium on Tuesday evenings beginning with 13 February, when Garden, Dalmorès, Renaud, and Zeppilli were heard in *Carmen,* directed by Campanini. Rosina Galli, later of the Metropolitan, danced in this performance. Though Hammerstein was far, far away, Massenet continued to be a prime interest of the group which he had fathered, and on 20 February they presented the French composer's *Cendrillon* for the first time in New York. The work was sung by Garden, Maggie Teyte, Dufranne, and Huberdeau. The *première* in New York of *I Giojelli della Madonna* was scheduled for 27 February, but Sammarco was ill and *Il Segreto de Susanna* and Massenet's *Jongleur* were given instead. *I Giojelli* was finally presented on 5 March, with Carolina White (Maliella), Bassi (Gennaro), Sammarco (Rafaele), and Jenny Dufau (Stella) under the direction of Campanini. The *intermezzi* preceding both the second and the third acts were repeated, the reception in every particular being enthusiastic.[20] Following a performance of *Thaïs* on the 12th, *I Giojelli* was repeated on the 19th. On this occasion, Grenville Vernon of *The Tribune* wrote : 'The final scene of the

[19] On 28 April Artur Nikisch directed the London Symphony Orchestra in a concert at the Metropolitan, in which was presented the following program : the fifth symphony of Beethoven, and Wagner's *Meistersinger* overture, the *Trauermarsch* from *Götterdämmerung,* the prelude to *Parsifal,* and the Bacchanale from *Tannhäuser.* Elena Gerhardt appeared as soloist, singing Richard Strauss's *Ständchen, Morgen,* and *Wiegenlied,* with Nikisch at the piano ; and excerpts from Goetz's *Der Widerspänstigen Zähmung,* with the orchestra. On the following day the orchestra gave a concert in Carnegie Hall, the program including the fifth symphony of Tchaikowsky, Strauss's *Don Juan,* and the first Hungarian Rhapsody of Liszt.

[20] James Gibbons Huneker headed a review of *The Jewels of the Madonna* with the single word : 'Paste !'

second act was made last night much less offensive to the Roman Catholics in the audience, and probably to many others, by Miss Carolina White omitting to place the Virgin's crown upon her head in the love duet.'

The cessation of the company's activities, during the regular season, in Baltimore, Washington, and other cities, had encouraged the Metropolitan's executives to reduce the orchestra of one hundred and fifty to one hundred ; and the ambitious plans for two separate choruses, of a hundred voices each, had also been modified to a polylingual group of one hundred and twenty. The demands of the New York season, however, had already reached a point beyond the capacity of these groups to cope with effectively, and the schedule showed no diminution during the next score of years. The talk that had arisen in the 90's of an 'overworked orchestra,' on the basis of nine performances in an *extraordinary* week was far more justified now, when each week held seven regular performances, plus extra *matinées*, and visits to Brooklyn and Philadelphia. The time was not far removed when the orchestra was overworked in every week of every season. This economy in an essential phase of the opera's activities remained a permanent handicap to the artistic achievements of the Metropolitan for years to come.

1912–1913

THE three years entered upon with this season tower, in the history of the Metropolitan, as years of high accomplishment in performances and repertory, of a sort that the institution never again attained. Not only was *Boris Godounoff* given for the first time in America ; there were also introduced *Der Rosenkavalier* and *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, which, of all operas by living composers, have displayed the greatest vitality in their different fashions. The revival of *Euryanthe* reflected further credit on the somewhat nebulous artistic policy of the institution. Toscanini was concerned in three of these four

events — a proportion which well indicates the loss to the Metropolitan through his retirement in 1915.

However, for the first time since he was a member of the company, this conductor was not in the director's chair when the season opened on 11 November. The post was occupied by Giorgio Polacco, who thus made his debut, directing a revival of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut.* The occasion had really been set aside for the introduction of Frieda Hempel, the Metropolitan's newest soprano, who came in the wake of enthusiastic reports from Berlin, where she had been a distinguished member of the Royal Opera. Hempel had been expected to open the season with either a revival of *Die Zauberflöte,* or a contemporary version of a Grau-gala *Les Huguenots,* but an illness compelled the singer's absence, and *Manon Lescaut* was substituted. It nevertheless provided a noteworthy debut for the opening night audience ; for in it Lucrezia Bori made her first appearance in the house. She displayed even then much of the art that has since established her career on the firmest of foundations — an intimate knowledge of the uses of her voice. In the performance with her were Caruso and Scotti. On 18 November Lila Robeson, an able character actress, made her debut in the season's first performance of *Königskinder* (The Witch), with the usual cast of Farrar, Jörn, Goritz, Reiss, and Didur, under the baton of Hertz.

For the first time in the regime of Gatti as sole director, the Metropolitan presented a Mozart opera, on 23 November, when *Die Zauberflöte* was finally given. There had been performances of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 1909, of course, but this was an enterprise largely associated with Mahler, who had conducted. In place of Hempel, who was still indisposed, Gatti announced the appearance of Ethel Parks, as Queen of the Night. 'Mrs. Parks,' the press of the day stated, 'was engaged for the Metropolitan last season, but was unable to sing because of the arrival of the stork.' She did, however, sing on the 23rd, and proved to be the least capable exponent of her difficult role in

the Metropolitan's history. In other respects, however, the casting for the work was choice, including Destinn (Pamina), Slezak (Tamino), Alten (Papagena), Goritz (Papageno), and Reiss (Monostatos), the last two of whom had also participated in the revival by Conried with Sembrich and Eames. The Drei Damen of the Gatti revival were Vera Curtis, Florence Mulford, and Louise Homer ; and Zwei Knaben, Leonora Sparkes and Anna Case ; the Sprecher, Griswold ; Edward Lankow (Sarastro, debut), and Lambert Murphy (the Erster Priester). Hertz conducted. On 28 December Gadski appeared as Pamina and Jörn as Tamino.* The scenery for this was the work of Kautsky.

Toscanini's return to the company was deferred until 19 December, when he conducted a performance of *Orfeo* with Homer, Rappold, Sparkes, and Gluck. A recurrent illness, however, prevented his further appearances for a number of weeks. During the early season, his customary work in the Italian repertory was divided between Polacco and Sturani, and Hertz resumed the direction of *Die Meistersinger*. *Tristan* was not given.

Thus to Polacco and Sturani fell the honour of introducing Bori in her various roles during that portion of the season : as Nedda, in *Pagliacci* on 20 November, with Caruso and Amato under Sturani ; in *Bohème* on the 28th, with Caruso, Gilly (Marcello), de Segurola, and Alten under Polacco ; and as Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* when it was given for the first time in the history of the Metropolitan on 11 January, with Umberto Macnez (Hoffmann), Hempel (Olympia), Fremstad (Giulietta), Didur (Coppelius), Rothier (Dr. Miracle), Reiss (Cochenille and Frantz), Gilly (Dappertutto), de Segurola (Spalanzani and Schlemil), and Ruysdael (Lindorf), Polacco conducting. On 16 February Duchène replaced Fremstad. Bori was heard in her only other role in this first season on 5 April, as Norina in a revival of *Don Pasquale* directed by Toscanini, with Scotti (Dr. Malatesta), Pini-Corsi (Don Pasquale), and Macnez (Ernesto). Though her Mimi had been highly praised, Norina was the role in which Bori most strongly appealed to her New York audiences. During the early portion of the season, Slezak was heard for the first time in *Faust*, on 7 December with Farrar, Rothier, and Gilly (Valentin) ; and on 13 December Polacco

introduced *Il Segreto di Susanna* to the Metropolitan repertory, with Farrar, Scotti, and Bada.

The anticipated introduction of Hempel did not occur until nearly a third of the season was completed ; but it then rounded out one of the most imposing casts that Gatti ever assembled, for a performance of *Les Huguenots*. The opera was given on 27 December, cast thus :

Marguerite de Valois ..... Hempel
Valentine ..... Destinn
Urbain ..... Alten
Raoul ..... Caruso
de Nevers ..... Scotti
Marcel ..... Didur
St. Bris ..... Rothier
Conductor, Giorgio Polacco

Caruso and Scotti had also been heard at the last previous performance of *Les Huguenots* in the Metropolitan, on 18 February 1905, with Sembrich, de Macchi, Edyth Walker, Plançon and Journet. Hempel's qualities were recognized as those of a superior artist, although there was some feeling that the preliminary furore about her had encouraged unreasonable expectations. *Il Barbiere* was revived for her on 1 January, the cast including Amato (Figaro *), Umberto Macnez (debut, Almaviva), de Segurola (Don Basilio), and Pini-Corsi (Dr. Bartolo). Sturani was the conductor. In the lesson scene Hempel sang Adam's variations on Mozart's 'Ah! vous dirais-je maman ?' At the repetition of *Les Huguenots* on the following day Gilly was heard as de Nevers in place of Scotti.

Hempel appeared for the first time as the Queen of the Night on 10 January, the cast including Gadski (Pamina), Jörn (Tamino), and Witherspoon (Sarastro). The revival of *Contes d'Hoffmann* on the 11th offered her as Olympia, and on the 29th she added Violetta to her roles, in a performance of *La Traviata* with Macnez and Amato. The last of her new parts for the season was Gilda, first sung at a *matinée* on 27 March, the other principal singers of that *Rigoletto* being Macnez, Gilly (The Jester), and Rothier (Sparafucile). Though *Parsifal* had

been given with the same scenery since its original production in 1903, there were new settings for this *Rigoletto.*

The introduction of two so valuable artists as Bori and Hempel would alone have set the season apart, but they are overshadowed historically by an event that occurred on 19 March. On that date Moussorgsky's *Boris Godounoff* # was presented for the first time in America. The impetus for this production was supplied by the Paris presentation of 1908, which had been enormously successful. Indeed, the Metropolitan's production [21] had been purchased in Paris, being the work of the fine Russian designers Golovine and Benois. Toscanini's presentation had been prepared with a degree of care that was extreme even for him, the rehearsals having occupied the artists during most of January and February. His superb work with the chorus and the authenticity of Didur's Boris were accorded the chief critical recognition in the general homage to the magnificent score, which opened a wholly new vista in New York's musical as well as operatic experience. The virtuoso qualities of Chaliapine's Boris have obscured the merits of all other performances of that role, but Didur's conception of the character was most highly respected at the time of its creation. His principal associates were Homer (Marina), Case (Theodore), de Segurola (Varlaam), Rothier (Pimenn), and Paul Althouse (debut, Dmitri). As in all subsequent performances of the work at the Metropolitan, the language used by the singers was Italian. Chaliapine, of course, sang his role in Russian. To the press after the *première* Gatti declared : 'I consider *Boris* the most important performance artistically that I have given at the Metropolitan,' a sentiment with which it is possible to agree heartily. The traditions established for the performance of the work by the strength and authority of Toscanini's conduct-

[21] It was still in use when the work was last given at the Metropolitan, during the season of 1928–1929. On the programme the costumes and designs of *Boris* are credited to 'A. Golovine, St. Petersburg and Moscow,' though Arnold L. Haskell credits the fourth act designs to Benois, and the costumes to Bilibine. See *Diaghileff, His Artistic and Private Life* [in collaboration with Walter Nouvel], Simon and Schuster, New York, 1935.

ing perpetuated the score in the repertory even after his departure ; and the reappearance of Chaliapine after the war again stimulated public interest. The focus of that interest and the emphases of the production, however, were altered considerably.

Despite Toscanini's illness and the strain of his preparation of *Boris*, he made a substantial contribution to the repertory performances during the season, though it was numerically smaller than in the past. On 24 December he conducted *Butterfly*, with Farrar, Martin, Scotti, and Fornia ; another *Orfeo* on the 28th ; a performance of *Tosca* on Saturday afternoon, 4 January, with Farrar, Caruso, and Scotti, for which the prospective standees began to gather at ten in the morning, with fifteen hundred of them unable to purchase tickets ; his first *Tristan* of the season on the 15th, with Fremstad, Burrian, Matzenauer, Weil (Kurwenal), and Griswold ; a performance of *Otello* on the following day, with Alda, Slezak, and Amato ; *Manon* with the cast of the previous year on the 22nd ; and, on the 31st, another performance of *Otello*, with Alda and Scotti, in which Leo Slezak (Otello) made his final appearance at the Metropolitan. It was also the last performance of *Otello* to be given in the house. *Le Donne Curiose* was given on 5 February with the cast of the preceding season's *première* almost intact, Macnez replacing Jadlowker. One of the few performances of *Die Meistersinger* conducted in this season by Toscanini occurred on the 13th, with Gadski, Mattfeld, Jörn, Willy Buers (debut, Sachs), Goritz, Reiss, and Braun (Pogner). A *Tristan* on 28 February offered Urlus as Tristan, with Fremstad, Matzenauer, Goritz (Kurwenal), and Braun. On 6 March Toscanini conducted his only performance of *Aïda* during this season, with Destinn, Homer, Caruso, and Gilly.

The *première* of *Boris* during this season has obscured an event of great significance to Toscanini's later career — his first appearance as a conductor of symphonic music in New York, on 13 April.[22] The programme is interesting especially for the degree to which it reflects Toscanini's taste in music today, for it contained : *Eine Faust — Ouvertüre*, by Wagner ; Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel ;* and the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven. The soloists in the last were Hempel, Jörn, Homer, and Griswold. New York had never heard such a performance of the choral finale, with its superb variety of nuance, and the ejaculated 'Freude !' of the chorus. Though Toscanini's

[22] Unless the performance of Verdi's *Manzoni Requiem* on 9 March 1909 be entitled to that distinction.

mastery as an operatic conductor had become a familiar thing in the Metropolitan during the preceding years, few persons had expected the results he obtained with the opera orchestra, chorus, and soloists. The length of the programme eloquently testifies to Toscanini's eagerness for this type of activity. At the repetition of the programme on 18 April, Toscanini followed his original intention — which he had not observed at the first concert — of playing the third and fourth movements of the symphony without a pause between them. He used no score for any of the works.

Following a custom which was eventually to become a tradition at the Metropolitan, Gatti devoted a portion of the season to the production of a new American opera, this year's choice being an adaptation of Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* #, the music by Walter Damrosch, the libretto by W. J. Henderson. The principal singers of the cast were Alda (Roxane), Amato (Cyrano), Martin (Christian), Reiss (Ragueneau), Griswold (De Guiche), and Hinshaw (Le Bret). There was the customary enthusiasm for the new work after the *première* on 27 February, and Otto Kahn interpreted this to foreshadow an extended life for it, saying : 'I firmly believe that Mr. Damrosch's opera will remain in the regular repertory.' Illnesses — first of Amato and then of Martin — delayed the first repetition until 24 March. The total performances in this season eventually reached five, the highest to that time for an American opera, but also all that *Cyrano* ever had at the Metropolitan.

The search for new and capable male singers to enhance the Wagnerian repertory brought to the Metropolitan, during this season, Jacques Urlus, tenor, and Carl Braun, bass. Both made their debuts in a performance of *Tristan* on 8 February — as Tristan and King Marke — and Urlus had the misfortune of having his voice fail him at the words 'War Morold dir so wert,' finishing the first act almost in a whisper. There was no substitute available, and Urlus completed the performance, the third act being greatly curtailed. Braun's debut was some-

what ignored in the excitement, but he was an able singer who remained a useful member of the company until the works of Wagner were eliminated shortly after America entered the war. A similar misfortune had afflicted Hermann Weil (Sachs), in a performance of *Die Meistersinger* under Hertz on 20 January ; for he lost his voice at the conclusion of the second act. The scene in Sach's workshop was completely omitted, and the 'Apostrophe to German Art' was considerably shortened. Gadski, Slezak, Mattfeld, Griswold (Pogner), Goritz, and Reiss were in the cast of this performance.

Among the events in the season's Wagner were a *Tannhäuser* on 13 November, with Destinn, Fremstad, Slezak, Weil, and Bayer (Landgraf) ; a *Parsifal* on the 28th, with Fremstad, Burrian, Witherspoon (Gurnemanz), and Weil (Amfortas) ; and a performance of *Die Meistersinger* on 6 December, with Destinn, Homer, Jörn, Weil (Sachs), Griswold (Pogner), Goritz, and Reiss. On the 14th Matzenauer was heard as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, with Fremstad (Sieglinde), Cahier (Fricka *), Burrian, Griswold, and Ruysdael (Hunding) ; and two days later for the first time as Venus in *Tannhäuser*, her associates being Destinn, Slezak, and Weil (Wolfram). Hertz conducted all these performances and also all those of the afternoon *Ring* cycle which began on 29 January. *Das Rheingold* was given with Burrian (Loge), Matzenauer (Fricka), Weil, Homer, Goritz, and Reiss ; *Die Walküre* on 6 February, with Gadski (Brünnhilde), Fremstad (Sieglinde), Matzenauer (Fricka), Burrian, Griswold, and Ruysdael (Hunding) ; *Siegfried* on the 12th, with Gadski, Homer, Urlus, Griswold (Der Wanderer), Goritz, and Reiss ; and *Götterdämmerung* on the 20th, with Urlus, Fremstad (Brünnhilde), Matzenauer (Waltraute), Fornia (Gutrune), Hinshaw (Gunther *), and Braun (Hagen *) In this Sparkes, Alten, and Matzenauer were the excellent trio of Rhine Maidens. Matzenauer's versatility permitted Gatti to offer that unusual thing of *Ring* cycles — both Frickas sung by the same artist. In a performance of *Die Walküre* on 3 March, Braun was heard as Wotan for the first time, with Urlus, Gadski (Sieglinde), Matzenauer (Brünnhilde), and Homer ; and again on the 14th, the cast being altered by the substitution of Fremstad for Matzenauer. Among his activities in the Wagnerian repertory Braun turned aside briefly to sing Marcel in *Les Huguenots* on 26 February. The most favourable impression of Urlus was credited to his Walther in *Die Meistersinger* on 22 March, in which Alten (Eva), Mattfeld, Buers (Sachs), Braun (Pogner), Goritz, and Reiss were his collaborators, under the direction of Hertz.

The Metropolitan continued its sponsorship of capable dancers even though Pavlowa and Mordkin were no longer associated with the company. Their places were taken by Adeline Genée and Alexander Volinin, with the inevitable *Coppélia* serving for their first appearance at a subscription performance on Christmas Day. They had given dance programmes in the Metropolitan previously, but this was the first time they were offered in conjunction with a regular performance. The ballet followed a performance of *Hänsel und Gretel* with Alten (Hänsel), Mattfeld (Gretel), Goritz (Peter), Reiss (The Witch), Case (The Dream Maiden), Robeson (Gertrude), and Stella de Mette (The Sandman). The subsequent appearances of Genée and Volinin were supplementary to the shorter operas in the repertory, an admirable custom which has been abandoned in recent years. The Metropolitan repertory included no Beethoven or Weber during the 1912–1913 season.

As in the two seasons past, the Chicago-Philadelphia Grand Opera Company occupied the Metropolitan auditorium under an amicable arrangement with the lessee. A disagreement involving Campanini and Dippel led to the sale of the New York stockholders' interests in that enterprise on 26 April, and the retirement of Dippel from the directorship, which was then taken over by Campanini. Before that time, however, the visiting company contributed much to the interest of the winter in New York. On 19 November Titta Ruffo made his first appearance in the Metropolitan, the opera being Thomas' *Hamlet*, with Zeppilli (Ophelia), Huberdeau (Claudius), and Eleanore de Cisneros (Gertrude). The last of these was the Eleanore Broadfoot who had appeared at the Metropolitan fifteen years before. (See p. 75.) Ruffo's success was tremendous ; and contrary to Campanini's practices, he repeated the Drinking Song at the close of the second act. Further visits of the company were deferred until February, when Zandonai's *Conchita* was presented on the 11th, for the first time in New York. Tarquinia Tarquini (Conchita), Dalmorès (Don Maceo), Louise Bérat

(The Mother of Conchita), and Helen Stanley (Dolores) were the leading singers of the performance. Rosina Galli, later solo danseuse at the Metropolitan, and thereafter ballet mistress, appeared as La Gallega in this performance.

On the 18th *Thaïs* was given with Garden, Dalmorès, Dufranne (Athanaël), Huberdeau, and Bérat ; and the week following, on the 25th, the first performance in New York of Wilhelm Kienzl's *Le Ranz des Vaches*, with Stanley (Blanchefleur), Huberdeau (Marquis Massimelle), Dalmorès (Primus Thaller), de Cisneros (Doris), and Dufranne (Favart). This completed the activities of the Chicago-Philadelphia company in New York during 1912–1913, save for a post-season performance of *Lucia* on 3 May, with Luisa Tetrazzini, and a new tenor, Aristodemo Giorgini. Enrico was sung by Polesi, with Perosio conducting.

The warfare which Oscar Hammerstein had carried on with the Metropolitan since 1906 was resumed in the winter of 1912 with the announcement from that impresario on 2nd November — newly returned from London and eager to resume operatic production — that he was planning to give opera in English at a top price of three dollars, beginning in the fall of 1913. This was in direct violation of his agreement with the Metropolitan, prohibiting him from producing opera in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, or Chicago until 26 April 1920. Hammerstein's proposal to give his opera in English presented the matter in a somewhat new light ; and there was no immediate reply from the Metropolitan. On 1 December, Rawlins Cottenet of the Metropolitan's board of directors was quoted as saying that he thought Hammerstein's project might be a desirable thing, though he had not seen the plan in detail. On the 5th, a meeting of the Metropolitan's board was held but consideration of Hammerstein's intentions was deferred until the 18th, when it was decided that the consent of the Metropolitan could not be granted. For the company it was said : 'Even with its enormous success of last year, the Metropolitan company made practically no profit ; and better results are not

expected for the current season.' On the 21st Arthur Hammerstein announced that he was planning to sue for a release from his agreement, saying that he had received nothing personally in the deal, and did not feel himself obligated in any way. From Oscar came this statement : 'The Metropolitan and Chicago opera companies paid me $800,000 for my Philadelphia opera house. I received nothing for my scenery, my costumes or my opera rights. I do not intend to be bulldozed and kept out of the opera field.' This implies that the quoted figure of $1,200,000 might have included the $400,000 owing to Stotesbury, which was deducted from the amount that passed to Hammerstein.

However that might have been, his one-time benefactor was not yet fully appeased ; for on 8 January Stotesbury brought an action to claim payment of $39,960 which he contended Hammerstein had borrowed during his years of production in Philadelphia. It was Hammerstein's assertion that the money had not been borrowed, but paid in 'pursuance of an agreement.' The case dragged on, but the original matter that had revived public interest in Hammerstein came to light again on 26 March when the City Club made known its project for presenting opera in English, at popular prices, in the Century Theatre. Simultaneously Hammerstein announced that he had acquired land for a new opera house on Lexington Avenue at Fifty-first Street. The City Club's plan was precisely that of Hammerstein — popular priced opera in English. But it had the strength of substantial backing by certain directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company, among them Kahn, Vanderbilt, and Whitney. On the following day — 27 March — the clause of the Metropolitan's agreement with Hammerstein bearing on his production of opera was released to the public. Hammerstein vowed that he would proceed to build his theatre in defiance of it ; and shortly afterwards said that he had decided to enter into open competition with the Metropolitan

again by giving opera in French and Italian, as well as English.

Though the Metropolitan, apparently, did not relish a controversy in court with the invincibly popular Hammerstein — and had, indeed, sought to circumvent his plans by competing in the production of opera in English, rather than by exercising a legal restraint — this newest boldness called for more severe measures. The Metropolitan applied for an injunction against Hammerstein ; and one was finally granted, after considerable delay, by Justice Pendleton of the Supreme Court, on 6 December 1913.

The theatre which Hammerstein was building reached completion, as the Lexington Opera House, but it was not put to its intended use until the Chicago Opera Company returned to New York as a competitor to the Metropolitan in 1917. It cost well over a million dollars to build, and passed from the control of Hammerstein not long after it was completed. He was unable to keep abreast of the interest charges on the mortgage, held by the Manhattan Life Insurance Company, which recaptured the property. This was Hammerstein's last venture as an operatic impresario, active or potential. He died on 1 August 1919, a bare half-year before his agreement with the Metropolitan would have expired, and while he was engaged in formulating plans for a return, legally, to operatic production.

1913–1914

THE retention of *Boris* in the repertory, the addition of *Der Rosenkavalier* and *L'Amore dei Tre Re* to the active list, the provision of new sets for the *Ring* dramas — sets which were still in use twenty-two seasons later — give to this season a position at the top of Gatti's achievement. The influence of Toscanini continued to widen and deepen, as it did, indeed, until the day of his last performance, during the 1914–1915 season. Not again, however, in the remaining years of Gatti's directorship was the Metropolitan to present so valid an impression of

vitality and animation as it did during the twenty-three weeks of the season now under consideration.[23]

That the qualities which distinguished this season from its predecessors and successors were of a sort not to be duplicated is not overpoweringly apparent from a study of its elements. To be sure, no other season in the Metropolitan's recent history has presented two new scores of the quality of these by Strauss and Montemezzi ; but the gap between the quality of these and the quality of the usual novelties at the Metropolitan certainly is wider than would seem to be inevitable. Further, the refurbishing of the *Ring* dramas — although both *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* had had new settings during the earlier years of Gatti — was an act of restoration which could have been done, again, at any time in the next decade ; and, needless to say, should have been done years ago.

Though the scheduled opening bill of the season was changed — owing to an indisposition of Farrar — from *Manon* to *La Gioconda*, with Destinn, Caruso, Matzenauer, Duchène (La Cieca), Amato (Barnaba), and de Segurola under the direction of Toscanini, it did not prevent the 'largest audience ever in the house for an opening' gathering on 17 November for that ceremony. Further, it was noted, 'the parterre was ablaze with jewels.' A fine performance of *Die Zauberflöte* with both Hempel and Destinn, Urlus, Goritz, Alten, Reiss, and Griswold (Sarastro) ; Curtis, Eubank, and Robeson as the Damen, Sparkes, Cox, and Mattfeld as the Knaben, succeeded on 19 November. On the following evening the season's first important debut occurred, when Giovanni Martinelli made his first appearance at the Metropolitan, as Rodolfo in a performance of *La Bohème* with Bori, Scotti, de Segurola, Didur, and Alten (Musetta), Polacco conducting. Martinelli's vocal powers were admired, but a lack of subtlety was also marked. Unqualified endorsement, however, was bestowed on Margarete

[23] This was the longest regular season to date ; and remained the normal length for the next decade.

Ober, who made her debut on the following evening in *Lohengrin* (Ortrud), with Fremstad, Urlus, Weil (Telramund), and Braun (Heinrich). Krehbiel noted her Ortrud to be 'the creation of a true tragic actress,' and her voice 'a mezzo-soprano of great power, used with skill.' [24] To cap this impressive week Gatti offered for his Saturday *matinée*, the 22nd, a revival of *Un Ballo in Maschera* conducted by Toscanini, in honour of the Verdi centenary. The first performance of the work since 1905 was given with :

Amelia	Destinn
Oscar	Hempel
Ulrica	Matzenauer
Riccardo	Caruso
Renato	Amato
Tom	Rothier
Samuel	de Segurola

Though the opera was repeated four times, the illness of Destinn and Hempel, then of Matzenauer prevented even one recurrence in the season of this extraordinary cast, probably Gatti's most successful grouping of prominent singers in the manner of Grau.

Martinelli's second appearance, in *Butterfly* on the 24th, with Farrar, Scotti, and Fornia, conducted by Toscanini, and Hempel's first *Lucia* at the Metropolitan on 26 November, with Italo Cristalli (debut, Edgardo), and Amato, were followed by another memorable debut, on the 28th. This was the first appearance of Sophie Braslau, as Theodore in *Boris* with Didur, Ober (Marina *), Rothier, Althouse, de Segurola, and the others of the original cast, Toscanini conducting. On the previous day Braslau had made an off-stage debut as A Voice, in *Parsifal*. The other roles sung by Martinelli during his first year with the company were : Cavaradossi in *Tosca* on 6 December, with Fremstad, and Scotti (a benefit for the Italian Hospital) ; Rhadames in *Aïda* on the 27th with Destinn, Ober (Amneris *), Amato, Rothier, and Ruysdael (The King), under Toscanini ; and finally, again, in *La Bohème* on 17 January, this time with Farrar, Rothier, Gilly (Marcello), Didur, and Alten. He also appeared as Pinkerton in a performance of *Butterfly* on 12 December, in which Destinn made her first appearance as Cio-Cio-San in four years, with Scotti and Fornia. Martinelli's success was more than suf-

[24] *Tribune*, 22 November 1913.

ficient to assure his re-engagement ; and he has been a member of the company in each of the twenty-one seasons since his debut.

The *première* of *Der Rosenkavalier* # — a non-subscription event, at advanced prices — was not the unequivocal success that its later popularity might have indicated. A portion of the press hailed the delightful work joyously ; others dissented. Richard Aldrich [25] declared : 'There are passages of great felicity and beauty in the work . . . teeming with life, bubbling with humor.' He thought the 'Princess's soliloquy . . . one of the most beautiful passages in the work.' Krehbiel,[26] however, held the use of waltz-motives for an opera concerned with the time of Maria Theresa to be an 'an anachronism.' He advised the following extraordinary course to the hard-worked Hertz : 'To Mr. Hertz a greater debt of gratitude would be due (supposing the production of the work calls for gratitude) had he done more to save it from condemnation by cutting out 30 or more pages of the score.' Also he reverted to the juxtaposition of *Elektra* and *Hänsel und Gretel* (see page 159) by saying : 'Many a listener must have felt a longing for the melodic ingenuousness of Humperdinck last night,' adding, 'a continuity of musical flow is impossible to Strauss.'

In contrast to the directions of the libretto — which have the Feldmarschallin in her bed, with Octavian kneeling beside her, as the curtains part — Hempel was seated on the divan, a compromise which has since been traditional at the Metropolitan as well as in certain European theatres. In Munich, however, the original directions are respected. Hempel's characterization of the Feldmarschallin remains to the present day the finest seen for the role in New York, as the recent performances of Lotte Lehmann at the Metropolitan have not been indicative of the true qualities of that impersonation. Opera-goers who have had the opportunity to study Lehmann's impersonation elsewhere concede her at least an equality of accomplishment

[25] *Times*, 10 December 1913.
[26] *Tribune*, 10 December 1913.

with Hempel. It is of interest that in a performance of *Rosenkavalier* under Beecham at Drury Lane, London, during 1914, Hempel sang the Marschallin and Lehmann appeared as Sophie. The Baron Ochs of this performance was Bohnen, who was later heard at the Metropolitan in the same role. Also excellent in the first performance was Ober, who had been the Octavian to Hempel's Marschallin in a production in Berlin during 1912. The other important roles were created at the Metropolitan by Goritz (Ochs), Weil (Faninal), Case (Sophie), Jörn (Ein Sänger), Fornia (Marianne), Reiss (Valzacchi), Mattfeld (Annina), and Schlegel (Ein Polizeikommissär).

For the other important novelty of this season, Italo Montemezzi's setting of Sem Benelli's *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, Gatti had made no such unusual plans when it was announced for production on 2 January. He did, however, have Toscanini to conduct it, and Bori (Fiora), Edoardo Ferrari-Fontana (debut, Avito), Amato (Manfredo), and Didur (Archibaldo), to sing it — which was considerably more than had been available for either the *première* at Milan on 10 April 1913 (though Ferrari-Fontana was the original Avito) or in its other productions in Italy subsequently. The work had created no furore in Europe ; and its production in New York was not awaited with especial anticipation. W. J. Henderson, indeed, relates an interesting account of his first experience with *L'Amore* at a rehearsal, during which he sat at the back of the Metropolitan, score in hand, listening to the revelations from the pit and stage. As the work progressed, his amazement increased ; and finally, as George Maxwell, American representative for Ricordi (who published the score) paused beside him, Henderson asked : 'Why on earth wasn't this opera a success in Italy ?' Maxwell merely inclined his head significantly in the direction of Toscanini, and said : 'They never heard it in Italy.' [27] Along with

[27] Alexander Smallens, who has conducted opera in many parts of Europe, America, and South America, was in Chicago when Montemezzi came to attend a local production of *La Nave* not long after the success of *L'Amore* in New York. He had not, however, heard Toscanini's version of his score, and inquired interestedly of

Rosenkavalier and *Pelléas, L'Amore* is one of the handful of this century's opera scores to attain even relative permanence in the repertory of New York, over forty performances of it having been given at the Metropolitan since its *première.*

Also new to both the Metropolitan and America were three other operas produced during this season : Charpentier's *Julien,* Wolf-Ferrari's *L'Amore Medico,* and Victor Herbert's one-act successor to his *Natoma, Madeleine.* The last was a world *première.* There were high hopes for *Julien,* # as a sequel to *Louise ;* but it was too similar, in many respects, to the earlier work to win independent recognition. It was presented, on 26 February, with a strong cast that included Caruso (Julien), Farrar (Louise, and the figures of Julien's dream), Gilly (L'Hiérophante, Le Paysan, and Le Mage) and Duchène (La Paysanne). The conductor was Giorgio Polacco. The five performances of this season were all it has ever received in New York. A short life was also ahead for *L'Amore Medico,* given for the first time on 25 March, with Cristalli (Clitandro), Bori (Lucinda), Alten (Lisetta), Pini-Corsi (Arnolfo), Rothier, Leonhardt, de Segurola, and Bada as the four doctors, Toscanini conducting. There were three repetitions, and no production in a subsequent season. Victor Herbert's *Madeleine* also totalled only four performances. The *première* under the direction of Polacco occurred on 24 January, with Alda (Madeleine), Sparkes (Nichette), Althouse (Francois, Duc d'Estrée), and de Segurola (Didier). Otto Kahn pronounced the usual words of prophecy when he said, following the first performance, 'We have at last a real English opera.'

The first appearances of Ober and Martinelli were of significance to the future strength of the company ; but much was lost through the retirement of Fremstad, after a full season's

Smallens, who had, the details of that interpretation. Smallens thereupon led the composer to a piano and began to pound out a portion of the work in the manner of Toscanini's interpretation. 'Stop !' cried Montemezzi. 'Wrong ! all wrong !' It required considerable effort for Smallens to convince Montemezzi that this was the type of conducting that had made the work a success in New York.

activity. Though her voice was not in prime condition during this season, her appearances had been customarily successful, and her capacity as an artist was scarcely impaired. Her final appearance, on 23 April, was as Elsa in *Lohengrin* — with Homer, Berger (Lohengrin), Goritz, and Witherspoon (Heinrich) — certainly one of her least representative roles. This manœuvre gave rise to a feeling that her retirement was something less than wholly voluntary, an impression that was strengthened by the speech she made in farewell, after one of the most extraordinary demonstrations of affection that a singer had ever received at the Metropolitan. Fremstad said : 'I have always tried to give you my best, my very best. Goodbye, dear friends, and may we all someday meet in that land where peace and harmony reign.' Her last performance of Kundry was sung in *Parsifal*, on Good Friday, 10 April, with Berger (Parsifal *), Witherspoon (Gurnemanz), Weil (Amfortas), and Goritz, Hertz conducting.

In all, during this final season, Fremstad was heard as Kundry (three times), Isolde (three times), Sieglinde (four times), Fricka (in *Das Rheingold*), both Elisabeth and Venus, the Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung* (twice), Elsa, and Floria Tosca — a total of nine roles.

The new sets for the *Ring* made their appearance in rather confused order, the first to be seen being those for *Die Walküre* at a production on 9 January which offered Gadski (Brünnhilde), Robeson (Fricka), Fremstad, Urlus, Braun (Wotan), and Ruysdael. The work had been done by Kautsky of Vienna. A drapery which fell to the floor was seen in place of the door that Wagner had indicated for Hunding's hut, and the marvellous tree also made its first appearance. The opening of the *Ring* cycle on the 29th permitted the display of the settings for *Das Rheingold*, which remain generally admirable save for the rainbow and the simulation of Walhalla. In this cast were Jörn (Loge), Fremstad (Fricka), Ober (both Erda * and Flosshilde *), Weil (Wotan), Curtis (Freia), Murphy (Froh), with Witherspoon and Braun as the giants. *Die Walküre* on 5 Feb-

ruary saw the debut of Rudolf Berger,[28] one of the handsomest and most impressively athletic Wagnerian tenors that the Metropolitan has ever possessed ; his career was foreshortened by his death in New York during the next season. In this cast were Ober (Fricka *), Gadski, Fremstad (Sieglinde), Braun, and Ruysdael. *Siegfried* on the 12th was given with Gadski (Brünnhilde), Ober (Erda), Sparkes (Voice of the Forest Bird), Jörn, Reiss, and Griswold (Der Wanderer) ; and *Götterdämmerung* with Fremstad, Ober (Waltraute *), Berger, Braun, Weil, Fornia (Gutrune), and Goritz. Even when these sets were new, it was observed that they were considerably less illusive in full-light than in half-light.

Toscanini continued to conduct all the performances of *Die Meistersinger* and *Tristan*, though an injured finger compelled him to relinquish the baton for a performance of *Tristan* to Hertz on 9 March (with Gadski, Berger, Homer, Amato, and Witherspoon), the first performance of that work without Toscanini in five years. His previous indispositions had invariably resulted in the cancellation of *Tristan*. On 27 March Hempel acquainted her New York audience with another of her superior impersonations, appearing as Eva in *Die Meistersinger* for the first time, with Berger, Homer, Weil (Sachs), Witherspoon (Pogner), Goritz, and Reiss, with Toscanini conducting. The previous season's revival of *Die Zauberflöte* was continued in the repertory (see p. 193) under Hertz ; one Saturday night performance, on 18 April, with Hempel, Destinn, Alten, Reiss, Berger (Tamino *), Leonhardt (Papageno *), and Witherspoon (Sarastro), being conducted by Morgenstern.[29]

The new direction of the repertory, during the first dozen years of the century, was plainly indicated by the occurrence

[28] Following Berger's debut, the reviewer for *The Tribune*, 6 February, remarked : 'Mr. Berger might be asked in what books of antiquities he discovered the portrait of a Volsung, or if not, what authority he can produce for the particular style of headdress that he affected yesterday.' To this Berger replied, on 14 February, with a rare display of erudition : 'I can quote none better than Tacitus, that most noble of Roman historians, who himself lived among the ancient Germans about 100 A. D. In his monumental volume *Germania*, Chapter 38, he speaks of the ancient German heroes as combing their long blond hair back and doing it up in a knot. Any one desiring to satisfy his curiosity as to pictorial proof need only go to New York's own Metropolitan Museum of Art and look at the painting *Thusnelda Before Emperor Tiberius*, by the famous painter Piloty. There you will find in the captured prisoners brought to Rome in triumph, abundant proof in support of my views, for which I cannot claim any novelty.'

[29] His first appearance in this capacity.

of *Faust* at but one performance during this season, on 14 February, with Farrar, Martin, Rothier, and Gilly (Valentin). Richard Hageman conducted an opera at the Metropolitan for the first time on this occasion. On the following day Mabel Garrison sang for the first time in the Metropolitan, performing 'Caro nome' from *Rigoletto* and the well-known soprano aria from Mozart's *Il Re Pastore* at a Sunday night concert. It was remarked that she possessed a 'light soprano voice of unusual purity and sweetness, a fluent and sure style.'[30] Her actual debut in opera, however, was not made until the following season. To the current season's list of revivals was to have been added *Carmen*, with Farrar for the first time as the cigarette girl, but her doctor forbade that exertion, and the revival was deferred until the following season. There was no Beethoven or Weber included in this season's repertory.

For the last time during this year, the Chicago Opera Company was a welcomed guest in the Metropolitan Opera House, on Tuesday evenings which were not required for the resident company. When the company came to New York next, on 27 January 1919, to occupy the Lexington Opera House, which Hammerstein had built and never used for that purpose, they came as outright competition, not as amiable collaborators at the convenience of the Metropolitan. During this season they presented the usual Chicago quota of novelties. On 3 February, the opening performance was given over to Massenet's *Don Quichotte*, with Garden (Dulcinée), Vanni Marcoux (his New York debut, Don Quichotte), Dufranne (Sancho Panza), and Warnery (Juan), under Campanini. It was the first time that the work had been heard in New York. *Louise* followed on 10 February with Garden, Dalmorès, Dufranne, and Bérat in their customary roles, before Février's *Monna Vanna*, also new to New York, was given on the 17th with Garden (Monna Vanna), Lucien Muratore (New York debut, Prinzivalle),

[30] *Tribune*, 16 February.

Vanni Marcoux (Guido), and Huberdeau (Marco), Campanini again being the conductor.

Gatti abandoned his usual taciturnity — except in the expression of dissatisfaction with the singers available — when he departed for Europe on 30 April 1914, saying : 'Contrary to custom, the Metropolitan actually showed a financial profit during the season just completed.' From this point onward [31] to 1930, the Metropolitan was operated on a basis which required no subsidy from the nominal sponsors, the Metropolitan Opera Company. This is a truly amazing record ; though a method of adducing thereby a statistical chart of excellence in performance and repertory was, as remarked in the case of Conried, still to be produced.

1914–1915

DESPITE the outbreak of the European war, Gatti had managed to reassemble virtually his entire company when the season opened on 16 November. Only Dinh Gilly, interned as a prisoner of war in Austria, was not on hand. To the resourcefulness of Gatti and the power of the Metropolitan in manipulating the release of certain desirable artists, this was an impressive tribute. To point further the magnitude of the feat that had been accomplished, there was an opening with the gala *Un Ballo in Maschera* of the previous season, with a cast that could not have been equalled anywhere in the world. It was a restoration of the group that had presented the first performance of the revival, brought together again — Destinn, Hempel, Matzenauer, Caruso, Rothier, Amato, and de Segurola. The conductor was Toscanini, who thus directed his last opening at the Metropolitan. With the beginning of the new season also came a new rule. Flowers for the singers could no longer be

[31] In his memoirs, *Saturday Evening Post*, 23 December 1933, Gatti says that for the first time since he assumed sole control, the production of opera at the Metropolitan was attended by a loss (during 1930–1931).

presented on the stage, but must be sent directly to the artists' dressing-rooms.

With the customary second-night Wagner disposed of — *Lohengrin*, on 18 November, with Gadski, Urlus, Weil, Ober, Braun (Heinrich), and Arthur Middleton (debut, The Herald) — Gatti offered immediately his revival of *Carmen*, which had been scheduled for the previous season and deferred because of Farrar's incapacity. With her as Carmen were Caruso (Don José), Amato (Escamillo), Alda (Micaëla), Sparkes (Frasquita), Braslau (Mercédès), Rothier (Zuniga), Désire Defrère (formerly of the Hammerstein and Chicago Companies, and since 1934 stage manager of the Metropolitan, debut, Moralès), Reiss (Dancairo), and Bada (Remendado). The opera was conducted by Toscanini. Settings for this, as well as for *Euryanthe*, were designed by Kautsky. Rosina Galli made her debut as premier ballerina. On the following evening, the 20th, *Der Rosenkavalier* was presented with the cast as it had been before, save that Elisabeth Schumann, the fine Austrian soprano, was heard in her debut as Sophie. Though she was highly admired for this and the other roles that she sang during the year, her Metropolitan career was limited to this single season. The first week was concluded with the debut of Luca Botta (Rodolfo) in a performance of *La Bohème* on the 21st, with Bori, Scotti, de Segurola, Riccardo Tegani (debut, Schaunard), and Schumann (Musetta *), Polacco conducting.

At the Thanksgiving performance of *Parsifal* on 26 November, Clarence Whitehill ended an absence — inexplicable on artistic grounds, considering his qualities and the prevailing inferiority of the low voices in the German portion of the company — that had endured since 1910, to sing Amfortas. This performance presented the debut of Johannes Sembach (Parsifal), with Matzenauer (Kundry), Braun (Gurnemanz), Goritz, and Schlegel (Titurel), under Hertz. At the first repetition of *Carmen* on the 27th, Whitehill was heard as Escamillo, with Bori (Micaëla), and Garrison (Frasquita, debut), to vary

the cast, which included Farrar, Caruso, Braslau, Reiss, Bada, Rothier, and Defrère as before. The last of the early season debuts was that of Raymonde Delaunois (Theodore) in *Boris* on the 28th, with Didur, Althouse, Rothier, Duchène (Marina), de Segurola, Reiss, and Schlegel. Toscanini also conducted this performance, which brought his labours during this particular period to : 27th, *Carmen ;* 28th, *Boris ;* 30th, *Butterfly ;* 3 December, *Tristan ;* 4th, *Tosca ;* and, 7th, *Carmen* — a total of five operas and six performances in eleven days, all of them, of course, without score.

To illuminate further the capacity of this conductor for work, and to indicate somewhat the pace to which he held himself, and which he expected his confreres to meet, a later week in December included performances of *Tristan* and *Tosca,* on the 16th and 17th, while he was meanwhile preparing for the revival of *Euryanthe,* which occurred on the 19th. Though Toscanini prepared freshly three other operas in this season — Giordano's *Madame Sans-Gêne,* a revival of Mascagni's *Iris,* and a restudied *Trovatore,* as well as *Prince Igor,* which was not given until the following season — *Euryanthe* remains the outstanding memory of his final months. In addition to the material in the fine score, Toscanini had a highly able cast including Hempel (Euryanthe), Ober (Eglantine), Sembach (Adolar), Middleton (The King), Weil (Lysiart), Bloch (Rudolph), and Garrison (Bertha). The tableau during the overture, which had been presented in the Seidl version, was omitted, and Toscanini also omitted the *Invitation to the Waltz* from his performances, substituting the *pas de cinque* composed for the Berlin production by Weber. The normal life of *Euryanthe* in the repertory was curtailed by the retirement of Toscanini ; there were thus only the five performances of this season, for there has been no revival since.

Madame Sans-Gêne # was first scheduled for 22 January, and postponed to the 25th by the illness of Farrar. It was given on that date with Farrar (Caterina), Amato (Napoleone), de Segurola (Fouché),

and Martinelli (Lefebvre). Pleased by the reception of the first audience, Gatti said : 'I feel sure that the opera is going to be a popular success,' a prediction that was sustained, at least temporarily, for the work remained in the repertory for three seasons. The production by Toscanini of *Il Trovatore* on 20 February, with new scenery, made use of the talents of Destinn (Leonora), Ober (Azucena), Martinelli (Manrico), and Amato (di Luna). Certain commentators took the opportunity to remind Toscanini that there was a distinction between concert and operatic conducting, but the revival was generally admired. For the revival of *Iris*, however, on 1 April, there was a more tangible reason, for it provided a setting for Bori (Iris), who was associated with Botta (Osaka), Scotti (Kyoto), and Didur (Il Cieco). The public did not respond, however, and the four performances of this season were all it had until the revival of 1930–1931 for Elisabeth Rethberg.

The single non-Toscanini novelty of this season was Franco Leoni's *L'Oracolo,* presented on 4 February under the direction of Polacco. This was scarcely a conductor's opera, however ; for it was dominated by the extraordinary portrait of the villainous Chim-Fen, by Antonio Scotti — a portrait that he had introduced to opera lovers as early as 1905, in a presentation in Covent Garden with Donalda (Ah-Yoe), and Dalmorès (Win-San-Luy). At the Metropolitan, his performance was, as it has ever been, the life of the production, in which were Didur (Win-Shee), Bori (Ah-Yoe), Botta (Win-San-Luy), Rossi (Hoo-Tsin), and Braslau (Hua-Qui). It was hoped that *L'Oracolo* would provide the means with which to vary the inevitable combination of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci,* an expectation that was fulfilled to a considerable extent by the total of nearly forty performances in the next score of years. Certainly its success was more conspicuous than that of any of the brief American works which were produced for the same purpose. Under the direction of Hertz, *Fidelio* was restored to the repertory during this year, with new scenery, on 30 January. The production adhered closely to the details of the Roller-Mahler version, both in the division of the first act into two *tableaux* and the use of the *Fidelio* overture as a curtain-raiser, with the *Leonore No. 3* after the dungeon scene. The work was cast with Matzenauer (Leonore), Urlus (Florestan), Braun

(Rocco), Goritz (Pizarro), Reiss (Jacquino), Schumann (Marzelline), and Middleton (Minister of Justice). With both *Euryanthe* and *Die Zauberflöte* in the active repertory, this was the first of the seasons under Gatti to present works by Mozart, Beethoven, and Weber.

There was but one repetition of the gala *Ballo in Maschera* after the opening night, but Gatti provided similar excitement in another direction with a revival of *Les Huguenots,* which had been out of the repertory for a year. It was given on 30 December with :

Marguerite de Valois ..... Hempel
Valentine ..... Destinn
Urbain * ..... Garrison
Raoul ..... Caruso
St. Bris ..... Rothier
de Nevers ..... Scotti
Conductor, Giorgio Polacco

Owing to the absence of Gilly, Scotti returned also to the role of Lescaut in Massenet's *Manon,* singing the part for the first time in five years when the opera was given on 24 December, with Farrar, Caruso, and Rothier (Comte des Grieux), Toscanini conducting. Caruso's departure — to fill an obligation of long-standing to Raoul Gunsbourg, impresario of the opera at Monte Carlo, after a final performance of *Pagliacci* on 17 February, with Destinn and Didur — provided an opportunity for Martinelli to add Don José to his roles at the Metropolitan. With him, *Carmen* was presented on 18 March, with Farrar, Alda, and Amato, Toscanini conducting. The same cast, with the exception of Tegani (Escamillo *), also were in the performance of *Carmen* on 13 April — the last appearance but one of Toscanini as a conductor of Metropolitan opera.[32] An 'illness' which interfered with Toscanini's subsequent duties also gave rise to the unique occurrence of a Metropolitan season — the presentation of an opera twice within the same week. *Trova-*

[32] For details of this performance, see the section on Toscanini, p. 213.

tore, scheduled to be directed on the 15th by Toscanini, with Destinn, Ober, Martinelli, and Amato was given instead by Polacco ; and when both Destinn and Toscanini reported themselves unable to appear for a performance of *La Gioconda* on the 17th, *Trovatore* was repeated, with Rappold as Leonora, the others as before.

To replace Fremstad, Gatti imported Melanie Kurt from Germany. She made her debut on 1 February as Isolde in a performance of *Tristan* directed by Toscanini, with Matzenauer (Brangaene), Urlus (Tristan), Weil, and Witherspoon. Kurt was described by Krehbiel [33] as 'a finished artist,' with unusual dramatic instincts as well as a good voice and fine presence.

Kurt had an important part in this season's *matinée* cycle of the *Ring* dramas, which had begun on 28 January, with Sembach (Loge,* admired as the best since Vogl and Van Dyck), Ober (Erda), Matzenauer (Fricka), Braun (Wotan), Goritz (Alberich), Reiss, Schumann (Freia *), Witherspoon (Fasolt), and Middleton (Fafner). Kurt was heard as Brünnhilde in both *Die Walküre* on 4 February and *Götterdämmerung* on the 15th. In the first her associates were Gadski, Ober (Fricka), Berger, Braun (Wotan), and Ruysdael ; in the second, Berger, Ober (Waltraute), Braun (Hagen), Weil (Gunther), Goritz, and Curtis (Gutrune). This was Berger's final appearance at the Metropolitan, for he became ill shortly afterward, and died on the 28th from paralysis of the heart. In *Siegfried* on the 11th, Gadski was heard as Brünnhilde, with Urlus, Reiss, Whitehill (Der Wanderer), Leonhardt (Alberich, in place of Goritz who was ill), and Schumann (Voice of the Forest Bird). On the 22nd, Kurt added Kundry to her roles ; and during the balance of the season, she was heard as Leonore in *Fidelio* on 3 March, with Sembach (Florestan), the others as before ; as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* on the 8th, with Matzenauer (Brünnhilde), Ober (Fricka), Sembach (Siegmund), Braun, and Ruysdael (Hunding) ; and in *Tannhäuser* (Elisabeth) on 3 April, with Matzenauer (Venus), Urlus, and Weil. Also among the events of the season, in the German repertory, was the appearance of Hempel as Eva, in *Die Meistersinger,* on 12 March, with Sembach (Walther *), Mattfeld, Weil, Goritz, Reiss, Braun (Pogner), and Schlegel (Kothner), one of the final performances of this score to be conducted by Toscanini. The last was on 7 April.

[33] *Tribune,* 2 February.

Though there continued to be rumours and semi-official pronouncements up to the beginning of the next season that Toscanini would return to the Metropolitan, his departure was based on no such impulsive decision as the management offered in explanation. The official reason had Toscanini remaining in Italy to devote himself to patriotic duties connected with the war, but as early as February there had been a rumour circulated that this season would be his last. At that time it was understood that the expiration of his contract at the end of the season would mark his last engagement at the Metropolitan. A few days later — on 3 February — the discussion in the press of plans for a tour by the opera orchestra and a quartet of soloists (Hempel, Braslau, Martinelli, and Amato) for a series of concerts under the direction of Toscanini, intimated that he might have reconsidered his earlier decision. But it is apparent that he had not yet settled in his own mind what he really wanted to do.

His ultimate decision was influenced by the determination of the Metropolitan to retrench, a policy to which it had committed itself on 25 January, when it was announced that the custom of giving increases in salary to singers, on demand, would cease. There were both necessity and shrewdness in this decision ; necessity, in that the competition with Hammerstein had led the Metropolitan to outbid him for the services of singers who were plainly not worth the salaries they were receiving; [34] and shrewdness, because the war in Europe had reduced the number of opera houses in which employment was to be found, thus giving the Metropolitan a rare advantage in bargaining. Also, the suspension of the Boston and Chicago Opera Companies left the Metropolitan with more singers than it could use for its own productions, since it terminated the 'exchange' arrangements with those companies which had formerly

[34] An official of the company said (*Tribune*, 26 January) : 'The war has presented us with the psychological moment for putting an end to these exactions.'

cared for the over-staffing of the Metropolitan. It is thus plain that the Metropolitan had to adjust its commitments to those singers who were not indispensable.

The relationship of these plans to Toscanini is plainer when it is understood that the retrenchment extended also to details that would affect the artistic qualities of his performances. He rejected these plans when they were proposed to him, and counselled Gatti to join him in retirement, insisting that the Metropolitan would certainly meet their demands if they persisted. But Gatti refused to jeopardize his position, and Toscanini retired alone, to be estranged from Gatti for seventeen years thereafter.[35] Officials of the company suggested to Toscanini that he reconsider his attitude during the summer ; but his decision had been irrevocably made. Even an offer granting *all* his wishes, plus the designation of Artistic Director, could not lure him again to the Metropolitan.

This season also marked the end of the Metropolitan career of Alfred Hertz, who had announced his retirement on 21 January, saying that after fourteen years of opera in New York, he felt the need of a less strenuous occupation. However, the engagement of Artur Bodanzky, of Mannheim, was announced simultaneously with the news of Hertz's retirement. The latter's farewell appearance occurred at the season's final *matinée*, on 24 April (Saturday). The work was *Der Rosenkavalier*, which Hertz had introduced to America, and it was sung by Hempel, Ober, Schumann, and Goritz. From the German artists of the company Hertz received a laurel wreath of gold and silver ; and from the directors, a silver loving cup.

Arturo Toscanini

Though the career of Toscanini as a symphonic conductor has already exceeded in length the years during which he conducted

[35] The reconciliation occurred in April 1932, after Toscanini's journey from Italy especially to conduct a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the

opera in New York, the earlier experience remains for many music-lovers the essential memory of his activity in America. There is less of paradox in this than appears at first thought. Although the eminence of Toscanini as an orchestral technician is uncontested, there have been other symphonic conductors who have given to music-lovers in New York experiences that are at least comparable in this field. Since he left the Metropolitan, however, the standards of conducting and performance established by Seidl, Mancinelli, Schalk, Mottl, and Mahler, have sunk steadily lower. In recent years there has been little of that substantial tradition visible or audible in the house. There have been among the conductors of the company since his time a number of admirable musicians ; but, whatever their qualities, they have suffered in effectiveness by the conditions under which opera has recently been prepared and presented in the Metropolitan — conditions which even in prospect, Toscanini would not abide.

Whether the generality of 'star' conductors contribute as much to repertory opera as they detract by their self-importance may be questioned ; but it is certain that there is no opera house in the world that can willingly forego a Toscanini — which, in effect, is what the Metropolitan did. How different the recent history of the Metropolitan might have been had the directors capitulated to his demands immediately, instead of waiting until his patience had been tried beyond endurance ! Furthermore, the break was doubly deplorable since it was not an unpreventable result of death or illness.

Perhaps the truest indication of his qualities is the nature of the persons who disliked him — singers, primarily, because he held them to ideals of performance which they would have preferred to ignore ; and orchestral musicians, for the amount and quality of the concentration he demanded of them. In each instance, he exacted of his collaborators a devotion to music and an integrity equal to his own. Nor was the distinction

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall, for the benefit of unemployed musicians.

between their characters an especially subtle one — they were, for the most part, labourers ; he was unrelentingly an artist. The conflict of the two attitudes could never long be concealed. How little he cared for an immediate impression in order to effect an understanding of his essential character is well demonstrated by his action during a performance of *Orfeo*. His contralto had a *penchant* for clinging stubbornly to a certain climactic tone in 'Che faró senza Euridice.' She had been informed, in rehearsals, that her opinion did not agree with Gluck's intention as interpreted by Toscanini ; and she accepted the correction finally, if somewhat grudgingly. The performance progressed to the point of her big aria. Whether through nervousness, habit, or mere wilfulness, the contralto hung tenaciously to her high F, against which she had been specifically warned. Did Toscanini wait patiently for her to finish, thus saving the performance, and make known his displeasure afterwards ? He brought the orchestra in immediately with the chord of resolution, leaving the singer stranded on her high tone, to remain there as long as she would.[36]

This insistence upon an ideal of procedure — almost unknown in the conventional opera house — was the basic quality setting apart the performances under Toscanini from those subsequently. Not only did he have an elevated conception of how his music should sound ; he was also willing to risk his reputation and those of the singers under his direction in the quest of that ideal. What their response to such a revolution-

[36] The classic story of Toscanini's domination of the performances he directed is contained, in an authoritative version, in the reminiscences of Leo Slezak published in Berlin in 1922 by Ernst Rowohlt. As translated and quoted by H. E. Krehbiel in *The Tribune* for 19 February 1922, it reads: 'A greatly spoiled prima donna sang at a rehearsal for the first time under Toscanini and permitted herself to take a few irregularities with the rhythms and freedom with the tempi. Toscanini pushed ahead, commanding "Avanti, avanti, signorina." The singer lost her temper, and said very energetically "Maestro, lei deve dirigere come io canto, io sono una stella." ("Maestro, you must conduct as I sing, for I am a star.") Toscanini rapped for silence and waiting until everything was quiet, retorted "Signorina, le stelle sono sul firmamento. Qui siamo tutti artisti, buoni o cattivi. Lei è una cattiva artista." ("Miss, the stars are in the sky. Here we are artists, good or bad. You are a bad artist.") The rehearsal proceeded.'

ary attitude was, may be accurately deduced from the comment of Emma Eames : [37]

'As an operatic conductor he left much to be desired by comparison with such great ones as Seidl and Mancinelli. He was charming and amiable, and rehearsed at the piano with me, taking all my shades and intentions. Once before the public, however, and the opera was his and his alone. He had such a marvellous and exact memory that he could reproduce what he had heard one do at one particular rehearsal and only that. . . His conducting was not an accompaniment but a stone wall of resistance to any personality but his own.'

It was, thus, the virtue of Toscanini to be 'charming and amiable' out of the theatre — but it was apparently also expected that he should be 'charming and amiable' during the performance, for the benefit of his singers. If an artist of Eames's character held this opinion of Toscanini, what could the lesser figures of the day have thought ?

Towards singers who did not regard the orchestral portions of their operas as 'accompaniments,' his attitude was likely to be otherwise. There was the occasion, for example, of Jacques Urlus' debut in *Tristan* on 8 February 1913 (see p. 187), when the tenor lost his voice during the middle of the first act, but, lacking a substitute, had to complete the performance. Toscanini modified his orchestral background superbly, now avoiding any necessity for Urlus to force his voice, elsewhere bringing the tone of his band forward to conceal the failings of the vocalist. In the same season, when two singers did not appear for a scheduled rehearsal of *Tristan*, Toscanini refused to conduct the performance until they had co-operated with him in preparing it. Since there was insufficient time before the date announced for the performance, Toscanini's 'indisposition' was communicated to the public, and a performance of *Götterdämmerung* under Hertz was offered instead.

These actions, of course, imply a greater degree of freedom

[37] Emma Eames, *Some Memories and Reflections*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1917, p. 298–299. She granted his qualities as a symphonic conductor, however.

in action, and control over the performances than conductors at the Metropolitan have ordinarily been entrusted with — which undoubtedly are among the reasons for the fluctuations in the quality of opera there recently. It is not that a conductor should have the authority to cancel a performance at his discretion ; but the possession of such domination, as a threat, would undoubtedly be a boon to discipline. It is not likely, for example, that the singers involved in that *Tristan* failed to appear for a subsequent rehearsal called by Toscanini. As a disciplinary gesture it could not have missed its effect — though it doubtless would have been even more forceful if the real reason for the cancellation had been announced, for the information of the public and the castigation of 'artists.' A rehearsal, for Toscanini, was, after all, not the planless 'run-through' that it is for some conductors. James G. Huneker early described the conductor at such a session thus : 'A bull-dog with a bone could not have been more tenacious.' [38]

This brings once again to the foreground the Metropolitan's lack of a central artistic direction in recent years. Whether granted that privilege by his contract or not, Toscanini could not avoid usurping such powers in striving for the performances he was capable of giving. There is little doubt that other contemporary conductors at the Metropolitan, both before and after him, have felt the same impatience with the requirements of their posts. But the primary difference between them and Toscanini is not to be found in his greater ability, his greater irascibility, his greater temperament, or his greater anything else, but this : they were job-holders ; he was, above all else, an idealist, and an artist. The demonstration of his integrity at a crucial moment has permitted him to remain an artist to this day.

This quality in Toscanini was well summed-up in the course of an article by Olin Downes in *The New York Times* of 21 June 1931. He wrote : 'It is known that the handsome fee Toscanini receives for his services will not operate for a second to detain

[38] *Times*, 14 April 1910.

him if he is artistically displeased. The Metropolitan . . . found that out to its cost some seasons ago, when he expressed dissatisfaction with some of the conditions there and demanded many difficult things for the good of his performances. For a time he protested, without the desired results. His protests were not heeded because legend had it that anywhere Gatti-Casazza . . . would go or stay, there too would stay Toscanini. Very suddenly, however, the end came and Toscanini was on the wharf. The Metropolitan, as one member of the organization put it, awakening too late to the true situation, followed him there and threw its purse and its pride out of the window. Toscanini was definitely finished and the wealth of the Indies would not have restored him to the fold.'

How little part the war played in his decision to retire from the Metropolitan may be understood from his expressed intention, in the spring of 1914, not to accept a renewal of his contract when it expired a year later. It was a threat he made at intervals during the last three years of his Metropolitan engagement, and his eventual decision was therefore scarcely surprising to persons in musical circles. But the details of the incidents that led to the final break will, doubtless, never be known in their entirety. Discontent with the increasing tendency of the Metropolitan's management towards the maintenance of a balanced budget (see p. 207) and its devitalizing effects on the standards he had set for himself obviously was a primary factor. But a note in *Musical America* [39] sheds new illumination on one of the final performances Toscanini conducted at the Metropolitan, and its part in his subsequent action.

The opera was *Carmen*, on 13 April, cast with Farrar, Martinelli, Alda (Micaëla), and Amato. According to *Musical America*, Tullio Serafin, then at La Scala, was passing through New York *en route* to an engagement in Havana, and attended the performance in company with Titta Ruffo, Maria Gay, and Giovanni Zenatello. News of their presence was transmitted

[39] Issue of 1 May 1915.

to Toscanini, who informed his collaborators that he expected the utmost in co-operation and concentration from them, with the intention of showing Serafin what the Metropolitan, at its best, was capable of offering. It chanced that Amato was indisposed, and Tegani replaced him, to sing Escamillo for the first time at the Metropolitan ; Farrar was in poor voice ; there were a number of audible slips in the orchestra at important moments ; and the stage band commenced to play ten measures before its cue. Together with the labours of the season, and the personal difficulties by which he was beset, this assortment of mishaps irritated Toscanini unbearably — and he conducted but once more that season, a performance of *Iris,* on the following night, with Didur, Bori, Botta, and Scotti. For the remainder of the season his duties were assumed by Polacco ; and though it was announced that the maestro was 'ill,' he was seen in public places on nights when Polacco was conducting in his stead.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of his annoyance was Toscanini's failure — whether through illness or otherwise — to conduct the symphony concert that had been announced for 18 April, with the Metropolitan orchestra. For this was a labour wholly congenial to him, and the reasons that prevented his participation must have been indeed serious. In view of Toscanini's eventual activities in New York, the programme of that concert is more than moderately interesting. It offered :

Symphony No. 2 ..... Brahms
Symphony No. 6 ..... Beethoven
L'Apprenti Sorcier ..... Dukas
En Saga ..... Sibelius
La Mer ..... Debussy
Sarabande ..... Roger-Ducasse
Tannhäuser Overture ..... Wagner

There was no little prophecy in the ending of this year ; for the final season under Toscanini concluded with the death of *Boris,* on 4 April, a performance with Didur, Ober, Delaunois, Rothier, Althouse, and de Segurola. With the passing of Toscanini went, also, the life spark of the institution. Though it continued

to flourish financially for another fifteen years, its artistic career had plainly reached its highest point, and thereafter declined to the end of this period.

An excellent literary approximation of the Toscanini individuality at work in the theatre was written by the late H. T. Parker in a memoriam to the departed conductor.[40] Declaring his gifts to be rivalled, among operatic conductors of the day, only by Dr. Karl Muck and Felix Weingartner, Mr. Parker spoke thus :

Whatever piece he undertook in his seven years at the Metropolitan — German music-drama, Italian opera buffa, the romantic Verdi, the theatrical Puccini, the adroit Massenet, in the whole range of music of the theatre from Gluck to Dukas — he penetrated substance, style and spirit and transmitted them eloquently to his audience. He was thrilling to hear in his mastery of rhythm ; magnificent in the advance and the breaking of musico-dramatic climax ; wondrous in the adjustment of detail to the whole tonal mass in the orchestra and the instant that it enforced or illuminated on the stage. Doing these things, his ear and the ear that listened to him rejoiced in the beauty, the vitality, the euphony and the expressive quality of tone that he drew from his band. He converted his men into images of himself — sensitive and expert voices of pure music yet alive to it as the speech of character and emotion, picture and drama. The nervous force within him he infused into music and play, singers, band and audience until, when he was at his highest and fullest, and in the music that stirred him, it made the atmosphere of the opera house electric.[41]

The mention, by Parker, of the audience emphasizes again the fact that Toscanini expected the co-operation of his listeners,

[40] Boston *Evening Transcript*, 30 September 1915.

[41] This quality of concentration is demonstrated in another anecdote recorded by Slezak, this time at his own expense. (Quoted by Krehbiel in *The Tribune* for 26 February 1922.) 'True, he looked upon every mistake even the most trivial as a catastrophe. One evening, in a performance of *Die Meistersinger*, I was absent-minded and made a few blunders. Between the acts Toscanini came on the stage. Despairingly he pounded his head against the wall and muttered, "Questo tenore é una bestia." ("This tenor is a jackass.") I didn't go near him and not a glance did I get from him at the desk that night. I sang as ravishingly as I could — in vain. After the opera, while I was awaiting the elevator in my hotel — which was also his — he came in, his hat pulled down over his face, mad, not deigning to look at me. I went to him, stammered out my excuses, told him I would guarantee anything that it would not happen again. Then he grew calm, muttered a gloomy "Caro, eri terribile !" and all was well again. There was not one of us who would not do his very best and follow his advice blindly, without question, because everything he asked of us had a reason and led to success.'

equally with that of the singers and players — or at least, no interference from them in his appointed task. During his early performances of *Tristan*, for example, the doors of the auditorium were closed before the prelude began, and no one was seated until it was completed. While he was conducting *Euryanthe*, in his last season, he was disturbed by whispering, during the interlude between the first and second scenes. Toscanini signalled his orchestra to stop, rapped on the stand for silence, and having obtained it, resumed the performance. Such actions, perhaps, are not for a repertory opera house — but then, neither were the performances of opera that he was capable of giving.

Of his extraordinary memory, there has been much written, but not sufficiently of its prowess during his years at the Metropolitan. In a single week during 1911 he conducted *La Fanciulla del West*, *Tristan*, *Orfeo*, and *Otello*, while he was preparing his presentation of *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, all without score. And, in 1913, he directed the dress rehearsal of Montemezzi's *L'Amore dei Tre Re* on a certain December afternoon, and an evening performance of *Tristan* on the same day, both from memory !

In all, during his Metropolitan career, he conducted the following twenty-nine operas, as well as the half-dozen symphonic and choral works indicated :

1908–1909 : *Aïda, Madama Butterfly, Carmen, Götterdämmerung, Le Villi, La Wally, Cavalleria Rusticana, Falstaff*, Verdi's *Manzoni Requiem*, and the prologue to Boïto's *Mefistofele.*
1909–1910 : *La Gioconda, Otello, Madama Butterfly, Tristan, Orfeo, Aïda, Germania, Falstaff, Die Meistersinger.*
1910–1911 : *Armide, Aïda, Madama Butterfly, La Bohème, La Gioconda, La Fanciulla del West, Orfeo, Tristan, Die Meistersinger, Germania, Tosca, Otello, Ariane et Barbe-bleue.*
1911–1912 : *Aïda, La Fanciulla del West, Tristan, Madama Butterfly, La Gioconda, Tosca, Armide, Orfeo, Le Donne Curiose, Ariane et Barbe-bleue, Otello, Die Meistersinger, Manon.*
1912–1913 : *Orfeo, Madama Butterfly, Tosca, Otello, Tristan, Manon, Le Donne Curiose, Die Meistersinger, Aïda, Boris Godounoff, Don Pas-*

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quale, Wagner's *Eine Faust — Ouvertüre*, Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*, and the *Ninth Symphony* of Beethoven.[42]

1913–1914 : *La Gioconda, Un Ballo in Maschera, Madama Butterfly, Boris Godounoff, Tosca, Aïda, Tristan, Manon, L'Amore dei Tre Re, Die Meistersinger, Orfeo, L'Amore Medico.*

1914–1915 : *Un Ballo in Maschera, Carmen, Aïda, Boris Godounoff, Madama Butterfly, Tosca, Tristan, Euryanthe, Manon, Madame Sans-Gêne, L'Amore dei Tre Re, Il Trovatore, Die Meistersinger,* and *Iris.*

EPILOGUE

THE qualities that distinguished the presentations of the Metropolitan Opera during the pre-war years have been sufficiently emphasized in the recounting of their occurrence to require little further insistence here. But it is worth pointing out that these years marked a transition from the definitely nebulous organization of the seasons directed by Conried, to the more thoughtfully planned and stabilized regime of Gatti. Whether the planning was, in itself, as much superior to that which had gone before as the partisans for the recent administration have insisted, may be questioned — but it is plain that a conscious effort to mould the Metropolitan to a definite scheme of repertory and organization had taken the place of tentativeness and uncertainty.

It was not a progress that had been achieved without difficulty. The novelties of 1908–1909 — *Le Villi, La Wally, Tiefland,* and *Die Verkaufte Braut* — were, save the last, scarcely of unparalleled distinction. Conried had given thought to a revival of *Die Verkaufte Braut,* and its actual presentation was due primarily to Dippel and Mahler, rather than to Gatti. Nor was the succeeding year — with *Germania, Stradella, Fra Diavolo, Pique Dame,* and *The Pipe of Desire* first introduced to the repertory — of appreciably higher quality. The two seasons had also seen the restoration first of *Falstaff,* and then of *Otello, Orfeo,* and *Der Freischütz ;* and the continuance, temporarily, of the

[42] The fact that Toscanini did not begin this engagement until the latter part of December, explains the comparative brevity of the list of operas he directed.

two Verdi operas supplied an element that had been absent overlong.

With the exit of Hammerstein, and the assumption by Gatti of sole control of the institution, the additions to the Metropolitan's repertory began to improve in quality and interest — and during the next five years, the subscribers to the Metropolitan were offered, for the first time in their experience, at least five works of high worth — *Armide, Königskinder, Der Rosenkavalier, L'Amore dei Tre Re,* and *Ariane et Barbe-bleue ;* also a revival of *Euryanthe.* On a lower artistic level, but still of interest, were *La Fanciulla del West, Il Segreto di Susanna, Julien, Le Donne Curiose,* and the first performance in the Metropolitan of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann.* There were, on the other hand, the production of such works as *Lobetanz, Versiegelt, L'Amore Medico,* and the operas in English, *Mona, Cyrano,* and *Madeleine* to be accounted for — but the proportion of worthwhile works to inferior ones was higher from 1910 to 1914 than at any later time.

The quality of the singers that the Metropolitan offered during this period undoubtedly represented a decline from the highest standards of those during the preceding eras, from which remained, at the beginning of the war, only Caruso, Scotti, Homer, Gadski, Goritz, and Reiss. Sembrich, Eames, and Fremstad — all of whom had been members of the company when Gatti arrived — had by now departed. Among the great number of singers who had been brought to the Metropolitan during these seven years, these were a fair number of outstanding artists — Bori, Slezak, Whitehill, Matzenauer, Hempel, Amato, Ober, Didur, Gluck, Rothier, Martinelli, and Destinn — who enjoyed extended careers in New York, as well as many inferior performers who went as quietly as they came. Tetrazzini, Renaud, and McCormack paused only briefly at the Metropolitan ; and the worth of certain American artists — Braslau, Garrison, Case, among them — was not yet wholly established. Aside from Carl Braun and the short-lived Berger, the additions

to the male singers for Wagner were not of memorable quality.

It is curious, and perhaps significant, that the first season which Gatti acknowledged to have been financially successful — that of 1913–1914 — was followed, in 1914–1915, by the decision of the Metropolitan executives to reduce expenses, and establish the institution on a self-sustaining basis. The outbreak of the war presented a logical reason for this manœuvre — but it may also be suggested that another line of thought was not far from the minds of the management. Since it had been demonstrated that operatic enterprise on the present plan of the Metropolitan could be made financially sound, why not continue it so ? The flaws in that reasoning were not to remain long obscure.

THE WAR SEASONS 1915–1921

1915–1916

'THE Maestro is a burning bush of patriotism,' said William J. Guard, press agent for the Metropolitan when he returned from Europe on 25 September. He added that he was not certain whether the Maestro — which meant Toscanini — would come to New York for the season or not. When Gatti returned from Europe on 20 October, he, too, felt the need of reassuring the press about the matter of Toscanini, for he said : 'No one regrets more than I do the failure of Mr. Toscanini to come to America this year. Mr. Toscanini made his decision solely because of his interest in the war.' This, however, does not explain the failure of Toscanini to return to the Metropolitan when the war was won. There is further curiosity in the remarks of Gatti on this occasion, for he continued, 'As to reports about my not giving opera in German, they are ridiculous. Should we boycott the printers because Gutenberg, a German, invented printing ?' Newspapers continued to be printed when America entered the war, but no operas in German were given at the Metropolitan, whose director was still Gatti-Casazza.

Between these two *pronunciamentos*, another was made to the New York musical public. It came from Artur Bodanzky, and was delivered on the day of his arrival, 8 October : 'I hope to please the American public and if I do I shall become a citizen of your country. I do not wish to be known as a Wagnerian conductor, as I love the operas of all nations. One thing I firmly believe in, and that is in cuts. If the length of a Wagner music drama bores the public, it should be cut, and I intend to see to it that such cuts will be made in the works under my direction.' One cannot accuse Bodanzky of having failed in his sworn intention, for the Bodanzky cuts have been, for eighteen years, one of the most individual features of the Metropolitan, if hardly one of the most praiseworthy. According to the management, Bodanzky has instituted no new cuts, but has merely perpetuated those used by Seidl, Mahler, Toscanini, etc.

Though Toscanini had not returned, the tradition of an opening night with Caruso continued — there had been but a single interruption, in 1906, for the debut of Farrar in *Roméo* — with the production of *Samson et Dalila*, given for the first time in the Metropolitan since 1894–1895. In staging and costuming, if not in musical quality, the presentation was superior to those offered by Hammerstein in 1908 and 1909. The revival of interest resulted in forty-two performances during the next dozen years. In addition to Caruso, the cast offered Matzenauer (Dalila), Rothier (An Old Hebrew), Schlegel (Abimelech), and Max Bloch (A Philistine Messenger). The work was conducted by Polacco, who had been newly designated 'chief Italian conductor' of the Metropolitan. It was declared in the press that the production of *Samson et Dalila* had cost between forty and fifty thousand dollars. As the first opening since the war had become an enduring reality rather than merely a temporary inconvenience, the response of the public was interesting. The line of standees began to form at three o'clock in the afternoon, and the space reserved for them was sold out twenty minutes after the tickets were put on sale, leaving many

persons unaccommodated. In other parts of the house an equally keen public interest was reflected, causing one ecstatic journal to report : 'The opera season opened in more glory than even its old-time splendor. The golden horseshoe was ablaze with jewels, which answered each other from box to box until their flashing brilliancy dimmed even the auditorium's flashing lights. Paquin, Worth, and Poiret were in their glory.' Officially it was stated that the subscription list was larger than ever before. This alone, it must be recognized, should have appeased the Messrs. Gatti and Kahn for the loss of Toscanini. In respect to the Metropolitan's economies, it is to be noted that the name of Hans Steiner, German chorus master, was now missing from the programme. Both groups were now under the direction of Giulio Setti.

Bodanzky had adhered to the letter of his promise to the public when he made his debut on 18 November, conducting a performance of *Götterdämmerung ;* for, in addition to the usual lack of Norns, the scene between Alberich and Hagen had been excised. The vitality and precision of Bodanzky were admired, however, and the performance as a whole was the best for the work since those under Toscanini, in his first season. In the cast were Kurt (Brünnhilde), Matzenauer (Waltraute), Urlus, Braun, Weil, and Julia Heinrich (debut, Gutrune). Gaetano Bavagnoli, who had been engaged to share the direction of the Italian repertory with Polacco, made his debut on the following evening, in charge of a performance of *La Bohème* in which appeared Caruso, Alda, Scotti, de Segurola, Tegani, and Ida Cajatti (debut, Musetta). Bodanzky's second appearance was on 20 November, to direct a *matinée* performance of *Der Rosenkavalier,* which was even more highly regarded than his *Götterdämmerung.* Though Bodanzky's *Rosenkavalier* is scarcely the most buoyant or elastic interpretation that can be named, it possessed a larger degree of lightness and charm than Hertz had been able to summon, and the gain was doubly perceptible because New York had heard no other interpretations, nor has it

since — save for the two tentative performances under Josef Rosenstock, in 1929, which can scarcely be called interpretations. This occasion marked the debut of Edith Mason (Sophie), with the familiar cast of Hempel, Ober, Goritz, Weil, etc. Bodanzky did not hesitate to abbreviate the score, a course which Hertz had resisted.

The debuts of the early season continued on the evening of the 20th, when Henri Scott (who had sung with Hammerstein as Henry Scott) was the Ramfis of *Aïda* with Rappold, Matzenauer, Martinelli, and Amato, under the direction of Bavagnoli. On 25 November, Giuseppe de Luca (Figaro), Giacomo Damacco (Almaviva), and Pompilio Malatesta (Dr. Bartolo), made debuts in the first performance of *Il Barbiere* in two years, given with Hempel, and Didur (Don Basilio), Bavagnoli conducting. De Luca's training at La Scala, his fine voice and artistry all commended him to the public, which continued to admire his ability for seventeen seasons. In the first *Lohengrin* under Bodanzky's direction, on 26 November, Erma Zarska (Elsa) made an uneventful debut in a cast that included Matzenauer, Urlus, Weil, and Braun. The engagement of Louisa Edvina was supposed to compensate for the loss of Bori — who was suffering from a throat condition that prevented her appearance for several seasons — but Edvina had her debut with Caruso and Scotti on the 27th, in *Tosca*, an opera not, of course, in Bori's repertory. Polacco was the conductor. To provide Caruso and Hempel with fresh roles, *Marta* was returned to the repertory on 11 December after an absence since the season of 1907–1908. With them, as Lionel and Lady Harriet, were Ober (Nancy), de Luca (Plunkett), Malatesta (Sir Tristan), and Tegani (The Sheriff), Bavagnoli conducting. The restoration, which was sung in Italian, almost rewon for the work the popularity it had enjoyed during the period of Conried, especially as it was generally well cast during the next several seasons. Luisa Villani, who was the original Fiora of *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, at the Milan *première* in 1913, joined the company on the same evening, singing Cio-Cio-San in a performance of *Butterfly* for the benefit of the Italian Hospital.

As a ghostly reminder of Toscanini was the outstanding new production of the season, Borodin's *Prince Igor*,# which Toscanini had prepared for presentation the previous year. The impetus for this production had come partially from the success of *Boris* in New York, and partially from the success of the London production of *Prince Igor* by Sir Thomas Beecham dur-

ing the season of 1912, in Covent Garden. In New York, the Polovetzian choruses and dances had been heard at a concert on 3 March 1911 by the Philharmonic Orchestra and the MacDowell Chorus under the direction of Kurt Schindler. At the Metropolitan, on 30 December, the overture and the third act were omitted, as they had been in the Diaghileff production in Paris, and later at Covent Garden. There had been some intention of giving the third act at the Metropolitan, but, according to W. J. Henderson, it was found to be unendurably dull, and was dropped out. Despite the splendours of the production, and the musical interest of the score, the work was given but nine times in this and the next two seasons, disappearing from the repertory thereafter.

Bodanzky's only new offering of the season was Hermann Goetz's setting of *The Taming of the Shrew*, in this version *Der Widerspänstigen Zähmung*. A revival of this work had been one of Bodanzky's labours in Mannheim, and the details of this production were followed in that given at the Metropolitan. In the cast, when it was given for the first time on 15 March, were Ober (Katharina), Sembach (Lucentio), Rappold (Bianca), Goritz (Baptista), Whitehill (Petruchio), Leonhardt (Hortensio), and Ruysdael (Grumio). There was little enthusiasm for the work, and the repetition on the 20th was the only other performance it ever received at the Metropolitan. Of all the other new operas produced during Gatti's directorship, only Converse's *Pipe of Desire* and Massenet's *Werther* were given no more than twice. Of rather more interest to the Metropolitan's subscribers had been Granados' *Goyescas* on 28 January. It marked not only the first time that Spanish had been the language of a performance at the Metropolitan, but also the first production of an authentically Spanish work, in any language, in that auditorium. Anna Fitziu made her debut as Rosario, in a cast that included Martinelli (Fernando), de Luca (Paquiro), Bloch (A Public Singer), and Flora Perini (Pepa). The solo dancers were Galli and Bonfiglio, the conductor Ba-

vagnoli. Though the charm of the music was admired by the critics, the work lacked dramatic interest, and could scarcely be considered, in the conventional sense, as an opera. There were five performances in this season, and none in the future. The scenery was designed by Rovescalli.

A practice that has never really taken root at the Metropolitan — the reconsideration and restudy of works in the standard repertory — was applied to *Rigoletto* before it was given for the first time in this season on 11 February. It had been out of the active repertory since the 1912–1913 season when it was given but once ; and the revival on this occasion was marked by new scenery by Vittorio Rota as well as a new Gilda, Maria Barrientos. It is indeed odd to note 'a new scenic production' for this revival, for the last performance of the opera, on 27 March 1913, had also been attended with new settings, which means that the use of the 1913 settings was confined to one performance at the Metropolitan. However, there were other aspects of curiosity in this production, for Caruso was no longer the extraordinary lyric tenor of his debut, and his voice was definitely darker, more baritonal in character.[43] The cast also included de Luca (The Jester), Rothier (Sparafucile), Perini (Maddalena), and Rossi (Monterone), with Polacco conducting.

[43] In Gatti's memoirs (*Saturday Evening Post*, 9 December 1933) he states that the revival was given in deference to a wish of Kahn's and that Caruso himself did not want to sing the role, saying that *Rigoletto* was no longer for him. Gatti continues to say that the performance itself was not good and the company dispersed with the conviction that the revival had been unsuccessful. He avoided looking at the papers the following day, certain that the reviews were unfavourable. To his surprise Caruso arrived jubilantly flourishing the morning papers, declaring that every paper had a flattering report of the revival. This Gatti attributes, in his account of the event, to the fact that *Rigoletto* had not been given in a number of years and the qualities of the music had made the press forget the poor performance. However, in *The Sun* of 12 February Henderson had written: 'It was as good a performance of *Rigoletto* as opera-goers are likely to hear in this period. Questions of style might easily be raised, and they might readily be directed at Mr. Caruso, whose advances in the realm of robustness led him at times perilously close to the robustious. But if he does not sing all the music of his part now with the aërial quality of tone and elegant finish which he disclosed at his debut, he imbues his delivery with much warmth and may be regarded as a sufficiently impassioned representative of the vicious ruler. It is a pity that every outburst of loud sound is treated by the bravo shouters as high art.' It is thus

Barrientos had made her debut in *Lucia* on 30 January, with Martinelli, Rothier, and Amato (Ashton), under the direction of Bavagnoli. She also sang in the hundredth anniversary performance of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Damacco, de Luca, de Segurola, and Malatesta on 5 February. For Barrientos, also, was the revival of *La Sonnambula* on 3 March, in which appeared Damacco and Didur (Rodolfo) with Polacco conducting. When it was given again on the 25th, the opera was followed by the Polovetzian dances out of *Prince Igor*, with Galli and Bonfiglio as solo dancers.

For the first time since the days of Conried, one conductor had command of the entire German repertory, that conductor being, of course, Artur Bodanzky. With but minor variations this continued to be the rule of the house during all of Bodanzky's career at the Metropolitan, and remains so today. Following his introduction with *Götterdämmerung* and *Der Rosenkavalier*, Bodanzky next presented *Parsifal*, on Thanksgiving Day, 25 November, being the first besides Hertz to direct the work in New York. To the cast that included Kurt (Kundry), Sembach (Parsifal), Braun (Gurnemanz), Weil, and Goritz, was added a new chorus recruited from the Opera School.[44]

Bodanzky thereafter conducted a performance of *Lohengrin* on 20 December, with Destinn, Urlus, Braun (Heinrich), Ober, and Weil; his first *Tristan* on the 24th with Kurt, Urlus, Ober, Weil, and Braun (Marke); and, on 7 January, a performance of *Die Meistersinger* with Hempel, Mattfeld, Sembach, Weil (Sachs), Braun, Goritz, and Reiss. In the *matinée* cycle of the *Ring* dramas, beginning on 3 February, Bodanzky directed *Das Rheingold* with Weil (Wotan), Matzenauer (Fricka), Ober (Erda), Sembach (Loge), Goritz (Alberich), Reiss, and Rappold (Freia); and *Die Walküre* on the 10th with Gadski (Brünnhilde), Kurt (Sieglinde), Ober, Urlus, Braun, and Ruysdael (Hunding). Kurt was heard as *Brünnhilde* in both *Siegfried* on the 17th, and *Götterdämmerung* on the 24th; in the first with Schumann-Heink (returned after an absence of thirteen years to sing Erda), Whitehill, Sembach, Goritz, Reiss, Ruysdael, and Mason (Voice of the For-

apparent that Caruso's account of the enthusiasm of the press was somewhat exaggerated.

[44] This auxiliary was one of the permanent effects of Conried's management, under which the school had been established.

est Bird), and in the second with Homer (Waltraute), Urlus, Braun (Hagen), Weil, and Heinrich (Gutrune). In *Parsifal* on Washington's Birthday, Urlus was heard for the first time in his career as Parsifal, with Kurt, Whitehill (Amfortas), Braun, and Goritz. On the 28th Maude Fay made her debut, as Sieglinde in a performance of *Die Walküre* with Gadski, Homer, Sembach, Braun (Wotan), and Ruysdael. For the first time since the days of opera in German, *Das Rheingold* was included in the regular subscription series when it was given on the 18th, with Kurt as Fricka, and the balance of the cast as in the cycle performance. As a concession to the subscribers, an intermission was provided, between the second and third scenes. There was an additional performance on a subscription night, with the same cast, on 29 March. Kurt's busy season also included her first appearance as the Marschallin in a performance of *Der Rosenkavalier*, given on 9 March while Hempel was on tour. Ober, Goritz, Mason, and Weil were again the principal singers. Though her characterization was admirable for its dignity, it was neither so well sung nor so touchingly acted as Hempel's.

As a contrast to the season's purely musical interests, there was a performance of *Carmen* on 17 February, that developed spectacular elements not provided by Bizet. The Carmen was Farrar (who had returned to the company this season as Mrs. Lou Tellegen), and she took advantage of the opportunity to display her 'temperament' at the expense of the good-natured Caruso, and their associates Alda (Micaëla), Amato, Braslau, and Sparkes. It pleased Farrar to slap Don José with uncalled-for vigour during the first act ; and in the scuffle of the third act she resisted José so realistically as to be finally deposited on the floor, to the consternation of Caruso and the confusion of the performance. When the opera was completed Farrar suggested that if Caruso did not approve of her impersonation, the management might engage another Carmen. 'No,' said the tenor, when the news was conveyed to him, 'we can prevent a repetition of the scene by getting another José.' The work was given again on the 25th with the same singers, and Farrar's performance was noted to be 'much chastened, much subdued, and much improved. She neither slapped Don José's face, nor did she maul the unhappy chorus girl. In the third act she did not shut off Mr. Caruso's wind, nor did she struggle

toward all four points of the compass.' [45] Amato, Rothier, and Mason (Micaëla *) were also in the cast.

There were, during this season, but twenty weeks of operatic performances, for the period from 3 April to the 29th was given over to the Diaghileff Ballet Russe, whose performances at the Metropolitan were included as part of the regular subscription series. It has been recently declared that the season lost a sum close to three hundred thousand dollars for the Metropolitan management — which may be attributed, in part, to lack of familiarity with the ballet by the public of the day, as well as to the expense of the undertaking. Also, the anticipation of the event had been reduced by the earlier two-weeks' engagement of the ballet at the Century Theatre beginning on 17 January, to which accrued some unfavourable publicity through the activities of the Catholic Theatre Movement. This group protested against the 'immoralities' of *L'Après-midi d'une Faune* and *Schéhérazade*, and controlled sufficient influence to have them Bowdlerized before they were presented again. Also the Diaghileff troupe was lacking Nijinsky, Karsavina, and Fokine when the company made its first New York appearance.

The Metropolitan engagement opened on 3 April with *Les Sylphides, Petrouchka, Le Spectre de la Rose,* and the Polovetzian dances. The dancers in *Le Spectre* were Lydia Lopokova and Alexandre Gavriloff. Aside from the resources of the subscription list, business was indifferent until 12 April, when Nijinsky, who had been rescued from internment in Budapest, finally made his American debut. He had arrived in New York on the 6th, but difficulties with Diaghileff about the details of his contract delayed his first appearance. When Nijinsky was finally ready to appear, Diaghileff, with rare shrewdness, introduced him to New York in *Le Spectre*, with Lopokova as his partner. He was immediately pronounced the most extraordinary male dancer that had yet been seen in New York. On the same afternoon he appeared in *Petrouchka,* replacing

[45] *Tribune*, 26 February 1916.

Massine as the puppet. The first performance of *Thamar* in New York, and a repetition of *Cléopâtre* were included on the bill for the evening. On the 14th Nijinsky was seen in *Les Sylphides* and *Carnaval ;* and on the following evening in the *pas de deux* from *La Princesse Enchantée* and *Schéhérazade. L'Oiseau de Feu* and the dances from *Prince Igor* were also presented. During the rest of the engagement Nijinsky danced on the 20th in *Petrouchka* with Bolm (The Moor), and Lopokova (The Ballerina) ; on the 28th in both Tcherepnine's *Narcisse* (with Klementovitch) and *Le Spectre de la Rose ;* and on the final day, the 29th, at both the afternoon and the evening performances. At the former Nijinsky was presented in *Le Spectre* (*Cléopâtre* and *Thamar* were also given) ; and at the latter he danced in the excerpt from *La Princesse Enchantée* and *Schéhérazade* (*Les Sylphides* and *Soleil de Nuit* completed the bill). It was the intention of Diaghileff to offer Nijinsky in *L'Après-midi d'une Faune ;* but the dancer insisted that Flore Revalles appear opposite him, and Diaghileff refused to permit Tchernicheva to be displaced. The result was no performance of *L'Après-midi* with Nijinsky.[46]

During the Metropolitan season the Diaghileff Ballet Russe presented three novelties : *Cléopâtre,* with music by Tanaiev, Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakoff, and Glazounow ; Balakirew's *Thamar,* and Tcherepnine's *Narcisse.* The total performances for each of the productions were : *Les Sylphides* (N),[47] *Le Spectre de la Rose* (N), *Soleil de Nuit,* and *Schéhérazade* (N), each eleven times ; *Petrouchka* (N), *Cléopâtre, L'Oiseau de Feu, Carnaval* (N), and the Polovetzian dances from *Prince Igor,* each nine times ; *Thamar,* six ; the *pas de deux* from *La Princesse Enchantée* (N), five ; and *Narcisse* (N), two. The *chef d'orchestre* for the season was Ernest Ansermet.

Just before the beginning of the ballet season it was an-

[46] Nijinsky finally appeared in *L'Après-midi* on the following 24 October in a season of Russian ballet at the Manhattan Opera House. Revalles was the leading danseuse.

[47] (N) indicates ballets in which Nijinsky appeared.

nounced that Gatti's contract, which had been extended, in 1915 to include the season of 1919, had been lengthened again, to 1921. At the close of the season, 18 May, Edward Ziegler joined the staff of the opera house as assistant to the manager, a post he retains to the present time. The position was created for Mr. Ziegler, and included activity in both the artistic and the administrative aspects of the Metropolitan. The announcement followed by a day the news that John Brown, for seven years business controller of the Metropolitan, had resigned his position. Mr. Ziegler was designated as 'administrative secretary' of the Metropolitan Opera Company. Most of the duties formerly associated with Mr. Brown were assumed by Ernest Henkel, who had been his assistant.

To aid the family of Enrique Granados (who, together with his wife, had been aboard the torpedoed *Sussex* in March) an enormous audience crowded the Metropolitan on 7 May for a benefit concert. They heard Kreisler, Casals, and Paderewski play the Beethoven trio in D, opus 70 (*Geister*) ; Casals accompany Kreisler for a group of solos ; then an interchange of courtesies in which Kreisler was the pianist, Casals the instrumental soloist. Kreisler also accompanied McCormack, Julia Culp sang a group of songs with Coenraad V. Bos, Paderewski played a number of solos, Casals accompanied Barrientos, and Kreisler played *obbligati* to the singing of McCormack.

1916–1917

WHEN Gatti returned to America on 16 October after his usual summer in Europe, his pessimism about singers had extended to the general subject of opera. 'If the war continues another year or two,' he said, 'it may become impossible to give opera.' The war did continue for another two years, and though it became impossible for the Metropolitan to give the works of Wagner and certain other German composers, opera in some form continued there without interruption.

Previous to the opening of the Metropolitan season, the Boston National Opera Company, directed by Max Rabinoff, with Robert Moranzoni and Fulgenzio Guerrieri as conductors, and José Mardones, Georges Baklanoff, Thomas Chalmers, Virgilio Lazzari, Giovanni Zenatello, and Riccardo Martin among the singers, offered a brief season at the Lexington Theatre. The best production of the week's season was *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, with Villani, Mardones, Baklanoff, and Martin, conducted by Moranzoni.

As in the year before, Gatti launched his season with a revival of a work that had been long out of the Metropolitan's repertory. On this occasion the work was Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, last heard at the Metropolitan on 11 January 1896, when two acts had been given for the benefit of Calvé. Gatti's revival offered Hempel (Léila), Caruso (Nadir), Rothier (Nourabad), and de Luca (Zurga), under the direction of Polacco. Though the opera was presented in an elaborate scenic production, the three performances of this season were all that it has ever had at the Metropolitan. A perfunctory performance of *Tristan* under Bodanzky (with Kurt, Homer, Urlus, Weil, and Braun) on 15 November, preceded the season's first important debut on the following day. This was the initial appearance of Gennaro Papi as a conductor at the Metropolitan, following his novitiate as an assistant director there. He presented a performance of *Manon Lescaut*, with Alda, Caruso, Scotti, and de Segurola (Geronte).

During this season Bodanzky made his first significant contribution to the Metropolitan's list of novelties, choosing Gluck's *Iphigenia auf Tauris*, in the version prepared by Richard Strauss for a production in 1912. It was first given at the Metropolitan on 25 November, with Kurt (Iphigenia), Rappold (Diana), Marie Sundelius (debut, First Priestess), Alice Eversman (Second Priestess), Sparkes (A Greek Woman), Sembach (Pylades), Weil (Orestes), Braun (Thoas), and Leonhardt (A Temple Attendant). Rosina Galli was the solo danseuse. Though the

cast was an admirable one musically, the lack of a real declamatory style among the singers available was altogether apparent in this production. Of particular interest were the settings by Monroe J. Hewlett, one of the first American designers to be so honoured by the Metropolitan. *Iphigenia* was among the German works dropped from the repertory in the next season. Thus, there were no performances beyond the five of this season.

In Strauss's edition, the work is compressed from four acts into three, with the last act in two scenes, between which Bodanzky introduced a 'Chaconne' from *Orfeo*. He also included the Lento in D minor from *Orfeo*, which was danced by Galli. To Gluck's scoring Strauss added trumpets and trombones, and an important textual change in the last act, after the appearance of Diana. Here Strauss constructed a new trio in A major on motives contained in a preceding aria of Orestes (in A minor), concluding with a new chorus. In the first act, Strauss ends his version with Iphigenia's aria in A, instead of with the ballet and chorus used by Gluck. The German text was in part a new translation from the French original of François Guillard, the rest a revised version of the conventional text. Bodanzky embellished the occasion with a few 'judicious' cuts, saying : 'Strauss made no "cuts" in the opera, because the work is not very long. However, I took the liberty myself of making a few cuts, which I think help strengthen the dramatic action.'

The season held two additional novelties, both of them performed for the first time in America. Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* was given on 22 December under the direction of Polacco, with Alda (Francesca), Martinelli (Paolo), Amato (Giovanni), Mason (Samaritana), Tegani (Istasio), Garrison (Biancofiore), Sparkes (Garsenda), Braslau (Altichiara), Delaunois (Donella), and Bada (Malatestino). Miss Queenie Smith, who attained a considerably more substantial celebrity on the musical comedy stage later, was noted as a 'Maid of Honor' in this production. The work was appraised as possessing the earnestness and some of the lyric stride of *L'Amore*, but lacking in both the originality and the power of that opera. It may, however, be recognized as comparatively a success, for there were five performances in this season, and four in the next.

Reginald de Koven and Percy Mackaye's *Canterbury Pilgrims*, given for the first time on 8 March, shared the one-season fate of the great majority of its American counterparts. The music was in de Koven's familiar manner, nearer to operetta than to opera ; but its lacks were emphasized by the literary pretensions of the libretto — which had already enjoyed a life as an individual play — to results that were far from happy. Bodanzky was the conductor for this, and the cast included Sembach (Chaucer), Althouse (Squire), Bloch (Friar), Ruysdael (The Miller), Mason (The Prioress), Ober (The Wife of Bath), Sundelius (Johanna), and Tegani (The Herald). The language of the work was English, of course ; but the German background of Sembach, Ober, and Bloch — who had essential roles in the opera — did not aid in making known the moderate attractiveness of the score and text.

For the first time during the directorship of Gatti, two operas by Mozart were presented in the course of the same season. *Die Zauberflöte* was retained in the repertory, the first performance on 20 November being sung by Garrison (Queen of the Night *), Kurt (Pamina), Urlus, Goritz, Reiss, Braun, and Mason in the principal roles. Curtis, Eversman, and Kathleen Howard (debut), appeared as the Damen ; Sparkes, Odette Le Fontenay, and Braslau as the Knaben. This was directed by Bodanzky, as was the revival of *Le Nozze di Figaro* on 24 January. Though the last performance, under Mahler, had occurred but eight years before, the memorable quality of that cast — Sembrich, Eames, Farrar, Scotti, Didur, and Paterna — was paralleled by little in this revival. Farrar and Didur (before as Figaro, now Almaviva) again participated with Matzenauer (The Countess), Hempel (Susanna), de Luca (Figaro), Malatesta (Dr. Bartolo), Howard (Marcellina), Reiss (Don Basilio), and Odette Le Fontenay (Barbarina). Three performances in this season and two in the next were the last under Gatti. As *Die Zauberflöte* also came under the ban against German works after America entered the war, this was the last

season at the Metropolitan to offer two Mozart scores. Both works were heard on 3 February, the *matinée* presenting *Figaro*, the evening *Zauberflöte*. Paul Eisler conducted the latter. Bodanzky also directed a revival of *Fidelio* at the *matinée* of 9 December, using the Mahler version which had become standard at the Metropolitan. Kurt was again heard as Leonore, with Sembach (Florestan), Goritz (Pizarro), Braun (Rocco), Reiss (Jacquino), Mason (Marzelline), and Weil (Minister of Justice).

The continuing incapacity of Lucrezia Bori necessitated the engagement of another leading soprano, and Claudia Muzio was brought from Italy to fill the need, although, as in the case of Edvina, her roles and character as an artist were sharply different from those of Bori. There was, however, Barrientos to take the place of Bori in the lyric-coloratura repertory. Muzio made her debut on 4 December as Floria Tosca, with Caruso and Scotti, the performance directed by Polacco. She was greeted as the most impressive acquisition to the Metropolitan since the advent of Bori herself. An inclination to put Muzio forth in roles for which she was not quite qualified, however, retarded somewhat the natural development of her talents. Her second appearance, on 9 December, was in a benefit performance of *Manon Lescaut* (for the Italian Hospital) with Caruso and de Luca, under the direction of Papi.

During the balance of her first engagement Muzio was heard as Nedda on 15 December, in *Pagliacci* with Caruso and Amato, Papi conducting; on the following day in *Il Trovatore*, with Martinelli, Homer, and Amato, Polacco conducting; and, after repetitions of these roles, on 27 January in *Aïda*, for the first time in her career, with Martinelli, Matzenauer, Amato, and Rothier (Ramfis), under the direction of Papi. In a later performance of *Il Trovatore*, on 2 February, with Muzio, Martinelli, and Ober, de Luca appeared as Count di Luna.*

Caruso returned to the role of Nemorino for the first time in twelve years when Donizetti's *Elisir d'Amore* was restored to the repertory on 30 December. In the cast were Hempel (Adina), Scotti (Belcore), Didur (Dulcamara), and Sparkes

(Giannetta), with Papi conducting. For Barrientos, there was the first performance of *Lakmé* during the directorship of Gatti, the last occurrence of the work having been in 1906–1907, when Sembrich was heard in the title role. In the revival, on 24 March, which was newly set and costumed, were Martinelli (Gerald), Delaunois (Mallika), Rothier (Nilakantha), de Luca (Frederic), Sparkes (Ellen), Minnie Egener (Rose), and Howard (Mistress Benson), under the baton of Polacco. The season's revivals were completed by the production of *Thaïs*, which was given for the first time by the Metropolitan company on 16 February. Farrar lacked by much the personal forcefulness which had been Garden's greatest strength in the role ; and the performance was not assisted, in its veracity, by the absence of natively French artists in the cast. This deficiency was particularly noticeable since the earlier performances both by Hammerstein and the Chicago company had acquainted New York with a genuinely Gallic style. Rothier (Palemon) was the only principal singer of French background in the production, which offered Amato (Athanaël), Garrison (Crobyle), Botta (Nicias), Delaunois (Myrtale), and Howard (Albine), Polacco conducting. *L'Oracolo* was sung again on 30 March, after a season's rest. Mason (Ah-Yoe) was the only change from the previous cast.

This season's performances of Wagner showed less alteration from those of the previous year than any given in a considerable period. There were no new singers of importance, nor was there a departure from the routine character that had come upon the performances. No works were restudied, nor were any restaged or freshened with new scenery. *Parsifal* on 30 November was given with Kurt, Sembach, Weil, Braun (Gurnemanz), and Goritz (Klingsor), distinguished by an unusually attractive group of Flower Maidens — musically, at any rate — including Mason, Garrison, Sundelius, Sparkes, and Curtis. *Das Rheingold* was retained in the regular subscription reper-

tory, an evening performance on 4 January offering Sembach (Loge), Goritz, Weil (Wotan), Kurt (Fricka), Homer (Erda), Rappold (Freia), and Althouse (Froh), with Braun and Ruysdael as the giants. In a performance of *Die Meistersinger* on 17 January Kathleen Howard appeared for the first time as Magdalena, a role in which she was heard to charming effect in subsequent seasons. Her associates in that cast were Hempel, Sembach, Weil (Sachs), Braun, Goritz, and Reiss. A later performance of the same work, on 19 March, presented Clarence Whitehill with the opportunity to sing Hans Sachs at the Metropolitan for the first time, with the collaboration of Urlus, Gadski, Mattfeld, Goritz, Reiss, and Braun. This characterization, which was to remain for a dozen years one of the most prized attributes in the Metropolitan's gallery of Wagnerian portraits, was noted as the best since the early performances of Emil Fischer, which spans virtually the whole of the institution's history. So long as Whitehill retained his vocal strength, his Hans Sachs remained a warm and vivid impersonation.

The *matinée* cycle of the *Ring* dramas began on 1 February, with the cast for *Das Rheingold* as it had been for the evening performance of the work, save that Matzenauer (Fricka) and Ober (Erda) replaced Kurt and Homer. In *Die Walküre* a week later were Kurt (Sieglinde), Gadski (Brünnhilde), Matzenauer, Urlus, Braun, and Ruysdael (Hunding). Gadski was also the Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* on 16 January, with Schumann-Heink (Erda), Sembach, Braun (Der Wanderer), Goritz, and Reiss. Kurt appeared as Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung* on Washington's Birthday, with Ober (Waltraute), Urlus, Braun (Hagen), Weil, and Sundelius (Gutrune). When *Siegfried* was presented again, on 29 March, *The Tribune* commented: 'Mr. Bodanzky made several cuts in the interminable [*sic*] score, which shortened the performance time by almost half an hour.'[48] Of interest among the German activities of the season, also, was the return of Homer to the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*, on Christmas Day, the role having for half a dozen years been enacted by Reiss. In this cast were Delaunois (Hänsel), Garrison (Gretel), Marie Tiffany (debut, The Sandman), Odette Le Fontenay (debut, The Dewman), Goritz, and Robeson (Gertrude). Hageman was the conductor.

[48] This was not written by Krehbiel.

For the third season successively there was not even a single performance of *Faust*, a state of affairs inconceivable at the Metropolitan even half-a-dozen years previously, and one that would have been equivalent actually to failure a dozen years before. As compensation, however, one might point to the presence of both *Boris* and *Prince Igor*, *Iphigenia auf Tauris* and *Der Rosenkavalier* — though those who missed their *Faust* would scarcely regard these as compensation.

The entrance of America into the war on 6 April was accompanied by a performance, in the Metropolitan, of *Parsifal* — the historic day being, ironically, Good Friday. No alteration was made in the schedule, a much more amicable acceptance of the hostilities than the Metropolitan later displayed. There were other performances of German works in German during the balance of the season : *Die Meistersinger* on 8 April, *Tristan* on the 13th, *Iphigenia* on the 19th ; and the separation of art from chauvinism seemed likely to be preserved at the Metropolitan. One immediate effect there was, however. This was the announcement from Johanna Gadski, on 10 May, of her 'retirement' from the Metropolitan, after a distinguished career that had begun with the company on 16 January 1900 — and in America, in 1895, with the company directed by Damrosch. It was common knowledge, however, that Gadski's contract had been allowed to lapse because of public feeling against her husband's alleged activities in America as a secret agent of Germany.[49] It was also in the home of Gadski, on 31 December 1915, that Goritz had indiscreetly celebrated in song the sinking of the *Lusitania* during the previous May. Out of respect for Gadski's long association with the Metro-

[49] He was Hans Tauscher, who left a captaincy in the German army when he married Mme. Gadski. He was engaged in the munitions business, as the American agent for Krupp and other firms, when he was arrested on 30 March 1916, on a charge of having 'wilfully, unlawfully, and feloniously set on foot and prepared the means for a military enterprise against the Dominion of Canada, having for its objective the destruction of the Welland Canal.' Tauscher was acquitted, and was a member of Count von Bernstorff's party when the German ambassador to the United States returned to Europe in 1917.

politan, she was permitted to finish the season there as scheduled, and to make the announcement of her 'retirement' herself. Her final performance at the Metropolitan was in *Tristan* on 13 April, with Urlus, Matzenauer, Whitehill (Kurwenal), and Braun (Marke), Bodanzky conducting. The attitude of the audience was friendly, if not warmly enthusiastic. Gadski returned in 1929, when she was nearing sixty, to sing Isolde with a travelling German Opera Company ; but her artistic career, as it was important to New York, ended with her final performance at the Metropolitan.

1917–1918

FOR the first time since the season of 1895–1896 the Metropolitan was bereft of German opera in German during this and the subsequent two seasons. This was a deprivation even worse than the earlier one, for the works were barred entirely, not merely in the language of their origin.[50] As late as 17 September 1917 the Metropolitan held firm to its intention of continuing German opera in the repertory, of preserving its pretensions to being an artistic institution disassociated from the prejudices of the mundane world. But as the opening of the season drew nearer, the firmness of that stand decreased ; and on 2 November it was announced that the German works would be dropped from the repertory for an indefinite period. To what the final pressure may be attributed one cannot say even now, but it was obvious that the official reason was disingenuous.[51] This stated that the works were eliminated 'lest Germany should make capital of their continued appearance to convince the German people that this nation was not heart and

[50] *Parsifal* returned late in the season of 1919–1920, but in English.

[51] In the *Saturday Evening Post* for 25 November 1933, Gatti says that several members of the board observed that it would not be possible to keep the German repertory. A week before the season began, he continues, the board called a meeting and it was decided to leave out the German operas, and he was informed that he must count only on the French and Italian repertory and what English and American works he had planned.

soul in the war.' Yet, even after England had been in the war for two years, Beecham continued to give Mozart and Wagner at Covent Garden, his one concession being to change the language of the performances from German to English. The Carl Rosa Opera Company also continued to give Wagner on its tours through England. Certainly, had it been so minded, Germany could have taken more comfort from that procedure, in a country so close to the scene of the war as England, than it could from anything in America, three thousand miles distant.

Impetus to the action of the Metropolitan was no doubt supplied by the agitation against Kreisler, Hempel, and Karl Muck, who were set upon by the public and the provincial press for the accident of birth which made them Teutonic subjects. Walter Damrosch spoke words of truth and dignity when he pointed out that Muck, as a citizen of Prussia, should not be required to play 'The Star-Spangled Banner' at his concerts with the Boston Symphony, in tribute to a country with which his own native land was at war. However, he mitigated the force of that judgment by assailing Muck on other grounds, chiefly moral.

The immediate effect of the Metropolitan's decision was primarily on the careers of five singers — Kurt, Ober, Sembach, Braun, and Goritz — who were informed on 2 November that the contractual obligations of the Metropolitan with them were at an end. On 17 November Ober announced that she would sue for fifty thousand dollars, on the basis of the twenty-four thousand dollars coming to her under her contract for 1917–1918, and in consideration of the inconvenience of her trip to America, and the expenses of her preparation for the season's activities. She had been guaranteed forty performances at six hundred dollars each. To the press on 17 November her lawyer, Benno Loewy declared : 'On the afternoon of November 2 the Metropolitan sent Frau Ober a registered letter discharging her. But they permitted her to rehearse until 10:30 that night.' There was doubt that Ober, as an enemy alien, could

bring suit, but her right to that action was upheld on 5 April 1918. On 27 April the newspapers reported that the Metropolitan had filed an answer to Ober's suit, in which it was declared that her contract had been terminated because of Ober's 'intense hatred' of the United States. There was also 'strong public sentiment' against her, the Metropolitan alleged. On 29 May Ober's answer was made known. She denied the charges of the Metropolitan and declared herself to be 'simply an artist.' She eventually returned to Germany, but the outcome of the suit did not reach the public.

Apart from the absence of a German repertory, the season achieved a higher level of distinction than had those immediately preceding. Two new conductors were present, and each added considerably to the effectiveness of the works under his direction. Robert Moranzoni had been brought from the Boston National Opera Company for the more substantial Italian repertory ; and Pierre Monteux was imported from Paris for the French list. Also augmenting the company were José Mardones, Florence Easton (formerly with the Chicago Opera Company), Julia Claussen, John McCormack, and Hipolito Lazaro. There were significant additions in other directions also, for Josef Urban and Norman Bel Geddes both contributed settings to the Metropolitan during this season for the first time.

Pursuing some elusive plan of his own devising, Gatti opened on 12 November with *Aïda,* the third time in ten years that the opera had been granted the place of honour. Wartime conditions dimmed somewhat the lustre of the inaugural festivities, for jewels were definitely less conspicuous, and the diamonds that had given the row of parterre boxes its distinctive name had been retired to the safe-keeping of vaults for the duration of hostilities. There was, however, no lack of customers, and the speculators who patrolled the sidewalks asked and received as much as twenty dollars for a single orchestra seat. It was as usual a Caruso opening ; and with him were Muzio, Matzenauer, Amato, Mardones (debut, Ramfis), and Sundelius (The

Priestess). Moranzoni conducted his first performance on this occasion. Following the triumphal entrance of Rhadames in the second act, the curtain was raised again, disclosing Basil Ruysdael, in the robes of a Pharaoh, holding aloft the American flag, to lead the singing of 'The Star-Spangled Banner' by the company and the audience.

The absence of German works from the repertory occasioned the substitution of *Boris* on the second night traditionally devoted to Wagner. Though the cast remained practically unchanged, with Didur, Matzenauer, Althouse, Braslau, Rothier, de Segurola, Sparkes, and Howard (The Nurse), the direction, on 14 November, had passed into the hands of Papi. His efforts resulted in a performance another step removed than Polacco's from the high standards established by Toscanini. On 16 November John McCormack, whose previous appearances had been as a guest artist, returned to the Metropolitan, for the first time officially a member of the company. The opera was *La Bohème,* with a cast that included Alda, Ruth Miller (debut, Musetta), de Luca, Didur, and de Segurola. On the following day Pierre Monteux made his debut as a Metropolitan conductor at an afternoon performance, to be recognized immediately as an artist whose ideals of performance were of a refinement not heard in that auditorium since the last performances under Toscanini. In view of his later activities in Boston, as a propagandist for both the recondite classics and the controversial modern works, it is somewhat surprising to record that his introductory opera was *Faust,* given for the first time at the Metropolitan since February 1914. The production had been newly designed by Urban, to mark the first of the many operas set by him. Farrar's Marguerite was much improved over the interpretation of her earlier years, with less of eccentricity in the acting than she had felt to be necessary with Chaliapine. Also in the cast were Martinelli (Faust), Rothier (Méphistophélès), Thomas Chalmers (debut, Valentin), Delaunois (Siébel *), Howard (Marthe *), and Louis

D'Angelo (Wagner, debut). New sets by Mario Sala were also seen for the first and second acts of *Tosca* when it was given on 19 November with Farrar, Martinelli, Scotti, Malatesta (Sacristan), and D'Angelo (Sciarrone), under the direction of Moranzoni. Both of these scenic productions are still in use.

For the first time in many seasons there were no performances of *Parsifal* on either Thanksgiving Day or Good Friday. The substitution of Verdi's *Requiem* on the latter date (29 March) with Sundelius, Braslau, Martinelli, and Mardones as the solo quartet, under the direction of Setti, was not inappropriate ; but *Carmen*, on 29 November, was hardly devotional. This was cast with Farrar, Martinelli, Whitehill, and May Peterson (debut, Micaëla), Monteux conducting. The lateness of the decision by the board of the Metropolitan regarding German operas had made it difficult to provide the opera's patrons with works of a comparable musical value ; but there was manifested no inclination to explore the repertories of the early French composers, the later Verdi, or Debussy. Instead, there was a paradoxical production of Liszt's *St. Elizabeth*, originally an oratorio ; [52] paradoxical because Liszt, of Hungarian birth, was as much a Central Entente composer as Wagner. Nevertheless, it was given at the Metropolitan under Bodanzky on 3 January, with a cast that included Easton (Elizabeth), Whitehill (Landgrave Ludwig), Schlegel (Landgrave Hermann), Matzenauer (Landgravine Sophie), Ruysdael (A Hungarian Magnate), and Robert Leonard (previously Leonhardt, the Seneschal). Constanze Bitterl and Margaret Belleri appeared as the children, Elizabeth and Ludwig. The scenery was by Urban. An English version of the text, by Constance Bache, was used.

Also a composer whose name was suspiciously un-Allied, Meyerbeer was nevertheless honoured by the restoration of *Le Prophète* on 7 Feb-

[52] Its last previous performance in New York had been in 1911, under Kurt Schindler.

ruary. It was given in Italian with a cast that began with the prospect of being 'all-star' but fell off rather badly towards the bottom. The singers were Caruso (Jean de Leyden), Matzenauer (Fides), Muzio (Bertha), Didur (Count Alberthal), Mardones (Zacharias), Bloch (Jonas), Schlegel (Mathisen), and D'Angelo (An Anabaptist), with Bodanzky conducting. For Barrientos, *I Puritani* was presented on 18 February, for the first time at the Metropolitan since 1884 — though it had been Hammerstein's opening opera in 1906 — with Lazaro (Lord Arthur), de Luca (Sir Richard), Mardones (Sir George), Rossi (Lord Walton), Perini (Henrietta), and Bada (Sir Bruno). Moranzoni was the conductor. Four performances in this season were the extent of the public career of this revival. Despite the ban on Wagner, Mozart was countenanced, probably because the one work of his in the repertory — by accident of the language in which it was written — was called *Le Nozze di Figaro*, rather than *Figaros Hochzeit*. It was given on 22 December with the same cast as in the previous year, save for Helen Kanders, who made her debut as Barbarina. There was a repetition on 11 February.

Monteux's influence on the repertory was expressed through the production of two interesting works, neither of which had been heard previously in America. Henri Rabaud's *Marouf*, given its American *première* on 19 December, endured for three years in the active repertory ; but Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Le Coq d'Or* won a response that has resulted in several revivals since its original production on 6 March. In *Marouf* were de Luca (Marouf), Alda (The Princess), de Segurola (The Vizier), Howard (Fatimah), Chalmers (Ali), and Rothier (The Sultan). Far from conventional opera, however, was *Coq d'Or*, which remains as one of the most imaginative and attractive productions that the Metropolitan has accomplished in its recent history. The work was given in Fokine's pantomime version, which he had prepared for the London and Paris productions of 1914, with a new *décor* by Willy Pogany. His designs are among the best ever devised for the Metropolitan stage. As presented in the Fokine arrangement, with the dancers who mimed the characterizations of the singers, the cast included :

Singers	*Dancers*	*Role*
Barrientos	Galli	The Queen
Braslau	Smith	Amelfa
Didur	Bolm	King Dodon
Ruysdael	Bartik	The General
Diaz	Bonfiglio	The Astrologer
Audisio	Hall	The Prince

The cast was varied during this season only by the appearance of Garrison as the Queen, at the last two performances on 12th and 20th April. Rafaelo Diaz, who had made his debut on 5 January as Nicias in a performance of *Thaïs* with Farrar and Whitehill, was widely admired for his performance of the Astrologer, and Marie Sundelius also did well, as the Voice of the Cock. Diaz, however, never matched the artistic effect of this performance in any later role he undertook at the Metropolitan. Monteux's conducting, the singing of Barrientos, the excellent dancing of Galli, Bonfiglio, and Bolm, mingled with the visual loveliness of the settings, established *Le Coq d'Or* as the happiest innovation of Gatti since his production of *L'Amore dei Tre Re.*

Curiously, the latter returned to the repertory in this season for the first time since the illness of Bori deprived the company of her services. Muzio had added the role of Fiora to her repertory, meanwhile, as Caruso had that of Avito ; and both were heard in those parts for the first time, when the work was revived on 14 March with Moranzoni conducting.[53] Amato (Manfredo) remained from the previous cast ; the others were new to the Metropolitan in these parts — Mardones (Archibaldo), Kanders (Ancella), Tiffany (A Young Woman), and Arden (A Shepherd). Caruso sang Avito twice again during this season, but never thereafter. Martinelli, who replaced Caruso on 6 April, was often heard as Avito in subsequent seasons. Scenery

[53] Regarding her performance *The Sun* of 21 April 1918 declared : 'In order to further glorify Miss Muzio's impersonation the role has been newly interpreted by that section of the press which now seems to regard it as a sacred duty to acclaim everything done at the Metropolitan Opera House.'

for this production was provided by Mario Sala. Caruso also added the role of Flammen in Mascagni's *Lodoletta* to his record when the work was given its American *première* on 12 January, but not even the additional presence of Farrar (Lodoletta) could assure the opera more than a two seasons' existence. Moranzoni conducted the first performance, which was cast with de Segurola (Franz), Amato (Gianetto), Didur (Antonio), Robeson (A Mad Woman), and Arden (Vannard).

To the growing list of native works were added two in this season ; which might seem a concomitant of the patriotic fervour of the moment, but was actually a result of the brevity of the two works chosen. They were Charles Wakefield Cadman's *Shanewis,* an opera in two acts, and Henry F. Gilbert's *Dance in the Place Congo,* which had been adapted for ballet purposes by Ottokar Bartik. When they were presented for the first time, on 23 March, the bill was completed by a performance of *L'Oracolo.* Though Gilbert's ballet was not retained in the repertory even as long as *Shanewis* — which totalled eight performances in two seasons — it has acquired the reputation of being among the best of the various American works in which the Metropolitan has interested itself, a distinction, if scarcely a valuable one. It is not unlikely that its origin had a bearing on this superiority — for it was not composed for performance in the Metropolitan, but merely as a concert-hall piece. The principal dancers in the first performance were Galli, Bartik, and Bonfiglio, and the production was designed by Livingston Platt. Cadman's opera was noted as possessing the lyric gift which has made his songs familiar to a large public,[54] but even that attribute did not weigh impressively against its lack of dramatic strength and of musical individuality. The work was cast with Braslau (Shanewis), Althouse (Lionel), Sundelius (Amy), Chalmers (Philippe Harjo), and Howard (Mrs. J. Asher Everton). It was played

[54] Among his more celebrated creations are 'At Dawning,' 'From the Land of the Sky-blue Water,' and 'I Hear a Thrush at Eve.'

before scenery designed by Norman Bel Geddes. Both works were directed by Moranzoni.

The other variation from the repertory of previous years was a revival of *La Fille du Regiment,* which had not been heard at the Metropolitan for fourteen years when it was given on 17 December. The earlier productions had been with Sembrich and Gilibert ; Gatti's revival served its purpose of allowing Hempel a new role during this and the next season, with Scotti (Sergeant Sulpice) and Carpi (Tonio). Papi was the conductor. When it was given during the next season, on 14 November 1918, Hempel favoured the audience with an interpolation of Ivor Novello's ballad, 'Keep the Home-fires Burning,' though the Armistice had already been signed. It is doubtful that Donizetti would have regarded this liberty with joy. During the current winter, however, the audience was deprived of this pleasure.

Of the singers acquired by the Metropolitan during this season, Florence Easton figured most prominently in the future history of the institution. Though her fame rests most securely on her accomplishments as a Wagnerian soprano, and particularly in the heroic roles, her debut was made as Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* on 7 December, with Althouse (Turiddu), and de Luca (Alfio). Her next performance on 22 December was in *L'Oracolo,* as Ah-Yoe, with Althouse, Scotti, Didur, Braslau, and Rossi. Following the *première* of *St. Elizabeth,* she was heard in the second performance of *Lodoletta* on 22 January,[55] replacing Farrar who was ill. These roles and their repetitions were the extent of Easton's activities during this season. Julia Claussen also began a career of considerable duration at the Metropolitan, in *Samson* on 23 November, singing Dalila to Caruso's Samson, with Whitehill (High Priest), Rothier, and Schlegel, the performance conducted by Monteux. In addition to McCormack — whose appearances were limited to three operas by Puccini, *La Bohème,*

[55] This Monday night performance was historically interesting because it occurred on Tuesday, in conformity with the ruling of the Federal Fuel Administration which had ordered all theatres in the city to be kept dark on one night of the week, for the duration of the war. Monday was suggested, for uniformity. However, as the Metropolitan was normally closed on Tuesday, a compromise was arranged on that basis, and the Monday night performances were resumed on 28 January.

Tosca, and *Madama Butterfly* [56] — Gatti added two other tenors to his company. Morgan Kingston, who had been a member of the Century Theatre company during the period in which opera was given there in English, was heard for the first time on 1 December, in *Il Trovatore*, with Muzio, Matzenauer, and de Luca ; and Hipolito Lazaro made his debut in *Rigoletto* on 31 January, with Barrientos, de Luca, Mardones, and Braslau. He remained a member of the company for several years, singing the Verdi-Puccini-Bellini repertory. McCormack was heard in *Bohème* on Christmas Day, with Peterson (Mimi), Miller (Musetta), de Luca, de Segurola, and Didur ; in *Butterfly* on 4 February, with Farrar, Scotti, and Fornia ; and in *Tosca* on the 20th, with Farrar and Scotti. Papi conducted *Bohème*, Moranzoni the two other performances.

Save for the production of *Le Coq d'Or*, the season at the Metropolitan was fairly obscured, both for the public of the day and in the history of opera in New York, by the month-long season of the Chicago Opera Association [57] in the Lexington Theatre. The alteration of the Chicago company's relations with the Metropolitan found them present now on a night-to-night basis, rather than merely as weekly guests. Though the company lost money, it did a quantity of business that was more than disquieting to the Metropolitan. As in the past, the company and type of productions were largely post-Hammerstein ; in fact, the original settings for *Louise*, as seen in the Manhattan Opera House, were discovered still to be in use when the Chicago group presented that work on 4 February.

Though Campanini had prepared his usual quota of novelties — plus the works of Massenet, Charpentier, and Debussy which were, except in name, yet novel to the New York public

[56] Though McCormack had long been, and is today, a magnificent Mozart singer.

[57] After a year of inactivity following the outbreak of the war, operatic activity was reorganized in Chicago for the season of 1915–1916, under the direction of Campanini. He was supported by a group of guarantors who underwrote production for two years. When this period expired, a campaign for support resulted in a further guarantee for a five-year period, extending from 1917–1918 to 1921–1922. The yearly guarantee fund was $110,000.

— the event of the season, as it is the event of most operatic seasons, was the debut of a new and impressive artist. Campanini had begun, on 23 January, with *Monna Vanna*, in which were presented Garden, Lucien Muratore, Baklanoff, and Huberdeau, under Marcel Charlier ; and followed it with the first appearances in New York of Rosa Raisa (Maliella) and Giacomo Rimini (Rafaele) in *I Giojelli della Madonna*, on the 24th. He then presented a characteristic *Thaïs* with Garden, Dalmorès, Dufranne, and Huberdeau on the 25th, and *Roméo* on the 26th, with Muratore, Genevieve Vix (Juliette, debut), Dufranne, Huberdeau, and Alfred Maguenat (Mercutio), before he scheduled the event which made the season memorable. This was the debut, on 28 January, of Amelita Galli-Curci, in Meyerbeer's *Dinorah*.

There had been no similar triumph in New York since the night Tetrazzini was first heard with the Hammerstein company. Such festivities are reserved for the advent of no singers but coloraturas, and the Metropolitan had uncovered none of that *genre* to inflame the public. The Chicago company had not been hesitant about proclaiming the merits of Galli-Curci's equipment, but there were few in the auditorium who were prepared for the amazing exhibition she gave. The press soberly reported that she had been accorded twenty-four curtain calls following the 'Shadow Song,' which she finally repeated. At the conclusion of the opera, according to statisticians present, she was recalled sixty times. In the cast were Rimini, Dua, and Huberdeau, with Conti conducting. Though Galli-Curci had been regarded with awe in Chicago since her debut on 18 November 1916, and had been acclaimed in Boston since her first appearance there, her success renewed the public amazement at the failure of the Metropolitan to secure so extraordinary a singer. There were stories circulated that Galli-Curci had been rejected by the management of the Metropolitan two years before, but, by her own words, these were untrue. To an interviewer shortly after her debut in New York, Galli-

Curci declared that she had never had an audition at the Metropolitan, but had been sent by her instructor in Italy to Campanini in Chicago.

In the remaining three weeks of the season Galli-Curci was heard five times, on each occasion by an audience that was large, hysterical, and indiscriminate. On 31 January the opera was *Lucia*, with Juan Nadal (Edgardo, debut), and Rimini (Ashton), with Sturani conducting; this was succeeded by *Dinorah*, on 6 February, and *Rigoletto* on the 9th, with Nadal and Stracciari — the latter a much improved artist since his Metropolitan appearances ten years before — and *Il Barbiere* on the 13th, with Nadal, Rimini, and Arimondi.[58] Her farewell on 15 February in *La Traviata*, with Nadal and Stracciari, was attended by as many persons as the theatre could accommodate uncomfortably; and three thousand more who had appeared to purchase admission were rejected. There was irony in the appearance of Melba with the company on 4 February in *Faust* with Dalmorès and Baklanoff. Her voice showed, understandably, the effects of a career that had embraced in New York alone almost twenty-five years; and though her artistry was no less striking, the disposition of the public to desert an old idol for a new one was characteristically in evidence.

To the lengthy, if not consistently impressive list of foreign works introduced by the visitors from Chicago, were added three in this season, none of which achieved so much as a modest success. The first was Sylvio Lazzari's *Le Sauteriot*, given on 11 February with Germaine Manny (Orti), Dalmorès (Indrick), and Dufranne (Le Docteur); the second was Mascagni's *Isabeau* — the Metropolitan also honoured his genius with a production of *Lodoletta* during this season — in which appeared Raisa (Isabeau), Forrest Lamont (Folco), Sharlow (Ermyngarde), and Rimini (Raimondo), on 13 February; and the other novelty was Hadley's *Azora*, which had been given on 26 January with Fitziu (Azora), Van Gordon (Papanzin), Lamont (Xalca), and Middleton (Ramatzin), under the direction of the composer. None of these was repeated during this season, or subsequently.

[58] In the lesson scene Galli-Curci sang the 'Bell Song' from *Lakmé* ('Dov'è l'Indiana bruna'), 'Charmant Oiseau' from David's *La Perle du Brésil*, and 'Home Sweet Home.'

Mary Garden had a lesser part in this season than she had had in others, appearing in *Thaïs* as mentioned, *Pelléas* on 31 January, with a new Pelléas, Alfred Maguenat, and Dufranne, Huberdeau, and Bérat ; and *Carmen*, on 8 February, with Muratore, Baklanoff, and Myrna Sharlow (Micaëla). Charlier was the conductor for all of these.

Though the New York season had the boon of Galli-Curci's great success, the year's operations of the Chicago Opera Association incurred a deficit in excess of the $110,000 guaranteed by the twenty-two underwriters. By their agreement with Harold McCormick, he was responsible personally for any greater sum.[59] The season's operatic activities were concluded with the announcement from the Metropolitan that Robert Leonhardt, Max Bloch, and eighteen members of the chorus had been dropped from the company because they were classified as enemy aliens. Not even the fact that, during the season just concluded, Leonhardt had caused himself to be listed as Leonard aided his cause. Similar measures were taken by Ludwig Burgstaller, who became Burgh Staller on the programmes ; and by Willy Tyroler, accompanist, who became William Tyroler.

1918–1919

THOUGH the opening of this season coincided with the signing of the Armistice on 11 November, the year at the Metropolitan disclosed little revision of the attitude which had banished opera in German from the house. The German section of the company had been virtually discontinued — save for certain artists whose abilities included familiarity with other languages and roles. This created a necessity for assembling almost an entirely new group, which, of course, could not be done in the course of a season in progress. Thus, the only score of German origin presented in the length of the twenty-three week

[59] Among his associates were J. Ogden Armour, R. T. Crane, Jr., Cyrus H. McCormick, Edith R. McCormick, Edward T. Swift, Samuel Insull, Charles G. Dawes, Julius Rosenwald, L. B. Kuppenheimer, Robert Allerton and the Congress Hotel Company.

season was Weber's *Oberon*, sung, as it had been written, in English. There could be a further exception for *Marta*, by von Flotow ; but its character and the Italian text used at the Metropolitan set it apart from the Mozart-Beethoven-Strauss repertory.

The Metropolitan returned definitely to the diamond standard for this opening. Though much of the excitement of the Armistice had been dissipated on the previous Thursday, when the report of a false Armistice was circulated, there remained sufficient capacity for thanksgiving to make the evening a memorable one in the Metropolitan's history. The opera was, as it had been for the opening of the 1915–1916 season, *Samson et Dalila*, with Homer, Caruso, and Robert Couzinou (debut, The High Priest) as the principal singers, under the direction of Monteux. When the first act was completed, the curtain rose again to disclose the flags of the Allies, held aloft by the hands of more or less appropriate standard-bearers. The American banner was held by Louise Homer ; the Italian, by Caruso ; the French, by Rothier ; the Belgian, by Couzinou ; the Serbian, by Reschiglian ; and the British, rather curiously, by Paolo Ananian. As the ensemble sang the national anthem of each of these, the chorus waved small American flags.

These festivities dispatched, the season resumed its course ; *Aïda* had been deprived of its place of honour on the opening night, but Gatti fulfilled his obligation to that work as soon afterwards as the calendar permitted, presenting it on the second night, 13 November, with Muzio, Giulio Crimi (Rhadames, debut), Chalmers (Amonasro), and Sundelius (The Priestess), under the direction of Moranzoni. The important debut not only of the week, but of the season, occurred on 15 November when Rosa Ponselle whose previous career had been largely in vaudeville, was heard for the first time at the Metropolitan. Her role was Leonora in *Forza del Destino*, given for the first time in the history of the auditorium, with Caruso (Don Alvaro), de Luca (Don Carlos), and Mardones (The Abbot), with Papi conducting. Also making debuts on this evening

were Alice Gentle (Preziosilla) [60] and Giordano Paltrinieri (Trabuco). Ponselle's extraordinary voice was justly admired ; and the Metropolitan was congratulated for acquiring a vocalist of extreme promise, though one whose position beside those of the great names in its history was yet to be established. Besides repetitions of *Forza,* Ponselle's appearances were restricted to two additional *premières* — *Oberon,* and the one-act American novelty, *The Legend* — which will be discussed later in this chapter.

For the first time since the *première* of *La Fanciulla del West,* the Metropolitan was privileged to present new material by Puccini, when his trilogy of one-act operas # was produced on 14 December. As with the earlier work, this was a world *première,* given outside the regular subscription series, with the prices increased to a seven dollar charge for orchestra chairs (the prevailing rate for regular performances was still six dollars). For the skeptics who contend that time alone can establish the true worth of a score, it is valuable to observe that the best of the short dramas was unanimously agreed to be *Gianni Schicchi.* Neither *Il Tabarro* nor *Suor Angelica* has attained even partially the modest success of *Schicchi,* though the presence of Muzio in the first and Farrar in the second permitted ten performances of each in the next several seasons. *Schicchi,* however, earned a respect on the basis of the music in its score, the charm of the story, the lightness and felicity of the setting — to all of which the performances of de Luca (Schicchi), Easton (Lauretta), and Didur (Simone) were valuable contributions. Moranzoni was the conductor for the entire bill. The first subscription performance of the trilogy was on 23 December, the casts remaining unchanged.

With the production of *Oberon* # [61] on 28 December, Artur Bodanzky exercised his talents as an operatic arranger and

[60] On 21 December Braslau replaced Gentle.

[61] A full account of the revisions may be found in Bodanzky's preface to his edition of *Oberon,* published by G. Schirmer and Company, New York.

revisor for the first time at the Metropolitan. The production [62] was in English and Bodanzky's reduction of the dialogue — to permit the performance of as much of Weber's music as could be included in the time allotted for the opera — altered the original character of the work more than slightly. His recitatives were built out of motives from the opera, and there was also an interpolated orchestral version of Weber's 'Moment Capriccioso' (opus 12) as an *entr'acte*. As in most productions with English texts at the Metropolitan, the language was successfully disguised by the performers, though to Althouse (Oberon), Rosa Ponselle (Rezia), and Alice Gentle (Fatima), it was a native tongue. The most intelligible of the singers was Albert Reiss (Sherasmin), a German. The singing of Ponselle, Martinelli (Sir Huon), and Sundelius (A Mermaid), and the settings of Josef Urban were the outstanding attributes of the performance.

To the fortuitous accident of the war, which turned the Metropolitan's attention towards the French repertory, may be attributed the appearance of several of the season's other novelties. The first, on 24 January, was Xavier Leroux's *La Reine Fiammette*, which had originally been given in Paris with Mary Garden as Orlanda in 1903. It was the obvious intention of this production to provide a new role for Farrar, but it served that purpose only briefly, retiring from prominence after the four performances of this season. With her (as Orlanda) were Lazaro (Danielo), Didur (Giorgio d'Ast), Rothier (Cardinal Sforza), and Mary Ellis (Viola and Angioletta). Boris Anisfeld's excellent scenic designs were an important feature of the production. Monteux conducted this work as well as the revival of Gounod's *Mireille*, which was given for the first time in New York in French on 28 February. Previous performances, in the Academy of Music during 1884, were in Italian. In the cast were Barrientos (Mireille), Hackett (Vincent), Whitehill (Ourrias), and Rothier (Ramon). There were extra-musical interests in this production of *Mireille*, for the scenery had been painted from designs by Victor Maurel, the eminent baritone, who lived in New York after his retirement from the operatic stage. Not only had Maurel studied painting before deciding on a career as a singer ; *Mireille* has a background in Provence, which was familiar to Maurel from a boyhood spent there.

[62] The last previous performance of *Oberon* had been on 2 November 1870, in Niblo's Garden.

Monteux had his best opportunity since *Coq d'Or* — and the first chance to demonstrate the true direction of his talents — in this season's presentation on Strawinsky's *Petrouchka* #, the first time it had been danced by the Metropolitan ballet. Adolph Bolm, who had appeared as Petrouchka with the Diaghileff Ballet during its season in 1916, staged this production and danced that role. His principal associates were Galli (The Ballerina), Bonfiglio (The Moor), and Bartik (The Old Magician). Though an achievement to be compared with that of the Ballet Russe was not to be expected, this *Petrouchka* had its merits, particularly when it is appraised as part of an opera company's seasonal occupation. The scenery and costumes were provided by John Wenger.

The failings of the Metropolitan's repertory, emphasized by the lack of Wagner, were not redeemed by the new American works produced during this season. Adhering to the custom of the previous year — when the opportunity of a Metropolitan hearing had been granted to two composers by choosing brief works — the Metropolitan discovered not only two new works, but two composers previously unknown to fame. Joseph Breil and John Adams Hugo were the musicians who enjoyed a brief celebrity on 12 March, with the production of *The Legend* by the former, and *The Temple Dancer* by the latter. Following the two repetitions of each, the operas returned to the obscurity from which they had issued. To the credit of Breil was the incidental music for *The Birth of a Nation,* and for D. W. Griffiths's other epic, *Intolerance ;* but the talents indicated by such accomplishments were of slight utility in the opera house. In recent years one of his works has attained great familiarity. It is the 'Perfect Song,' used as a radio signature by 'Amos 'n Andy.' His opera furnished roles for Ponselle (Carmelita) and Althouse (Stephen) ; in Hugo's work were Easton (The Temple Dancer), and Kingston (A Temple Guard). Moranzoni conducted both. Geddes designed the scenery for *The Legend ;* and James E. Fox, of the Metropolitan's staff, that for

The Temple Dancer. It was stated that the works were selected as the best among twenty-five scores submitted by American composers ; but Cadman's *Shanewis,* which shared the evening with the novelties, was, in contrast, at least the equal of *Lodoletta.* The season's final novelty was the Riccis' *Crispino e la Comare,* heard for the first time in this auditorium on 18 January, with Hempel (Annetta), Scotti (Crispino), and Braslau (la Comare). As in the Hammerstein production for Tetrazzini, Hempel sang Benedict's *Carnival of Venice* as an interpolation. There was new scenery by Pieretto Bianco. The performance was conducted by Papi.

In its conventional aspects the season differed little from those immediately preceding and following. *Boris* was retained, but *Prince Igor* was not ; and of the recent novelties, *Marouf, Lodoletta, Coq d'Or, L'Amore dei Tre Re, L'Oracolo, Shanewis* and the revived *Prophète* were again presented. Didur continued to be the only *Boris* that New York had known ; when the work was presented on 25 November there remained from the original cast no less than four other important characters — Homer (Marina), Althouse (Dmitri), Rothier (Pimenn), and Reiss (The Simpleton). Mary Mellish made her debut as Princess Xenia, with Papi conducting. On the following evening, in *La Bohème,* with Alda, Crimi, Chalmers (Schaunard), and de Segurola (Colline), Margaret Romaine (Musetta), and Luigi Montesanto (Marcello) made debuts. The Metropolitan career of neither was extensive.

John McCormack was nominally a member of the company again in this season, but he made only a single appearance, as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* on 26 December, in which were also Farrar, Chalmers (Sharpless), and Fornia, with Moranzoni conducting. There was more significance in the progress of Mabel Garrison, who added *Lucia di Lammermoor* to her roles at the Metropolitan on 25 January, with Martinelli, de Luca, and Rothier (Raimondo) as her principal collaborators. She was also heard in the role that is most closely identified with her Metropolitan career — the Queen in *Coq d'Or* — on 17 March (earlier performances had Barrientos in the part) ; and in *Rigoletto* on the 5th, with de Luca, Braslau (Maddalena), and Hackett. The

last named, identified as Carlo Hackett, made his debut on 31 January, in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* with Hempel, de Luca, Mardones (Don Basilio), and Malatesta (Dr. Bartolo), to be appraised as one of the most promising lyric tenors to be acquired by the Metropolitan in recent years. When Hackett reappeared on 14 February, he reverted to the anglican 'Charles,' by which he has been known since. Another American singer, Reinald Werrenrath joined the company during this season, his first appearance being in *Pagliacci* (Silvio), with Easton, Caruso, and Montesanto, on 19 February. In this, as in his Valentin in a performance of *Faust* on 26 March, with Farrar, Martinelli, and Rothier, his art as a singer was more admirable than his skill as an actor, a disparity which he never quite surmounted during his career at the Metropolitan. Also new was Millo Picco who was the Manfredo in *L'Amore* on 7 April (with Muzio, Martinelli, and Mardones, Moranzoni conducting). Picco had been engaged for appearances beginning with the next season, but anticipated that arrangement in order to replace Chalmers, who was ill.

To honour the outstanding member of the company on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his debut in opera, the Metropolitan offered a 'gala' for Enrico Caruso on 22 March. In addition to a musical programme, there were gifts by the dozen. Caruso participated in the performance, which offered : Act III of *Elisir d'Amore,* with Barrientos, Sparkes, Scotti, and Didur ; Act I of *Pagliacci* with de Luca, Muzio, and Werrenrath ; and the coronation scene from *Le Prophète* with Matzenauer, Mardones, and Diaz. The presentation of the gifts was prefaced by a speech by Otto Kahn, who lavished upon Caruso not only his puissance as an orator, but also a gold medal from the management of the opera company. From the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company came an Italian silver vase, twenty-four inches high ; from the chorus, a silver cup ; and from the orchestra, a silver floral vase. There were also parchments of commendation from the directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, the directors of the Philadelphia Opera Company, and the directors of the Brooklyn Academy of Music ; also many gifts from individuals. The proceeds from the sale of tickets, as Caruso requested, were contributed to the Emergency Fund of the Metropolitan Opera

Company. An unexpected feature of the evening was the threat of Mayor Hylan to withhold the presentation of the city's flag to Caruso if James M. Beck delivered his scheduled eulogy to the singer. Beck finally consented not to appear, charging that Hylan's animus was an outgrowth of Beck's opposition to the policies of Hearst during the war. Caruso finally received the flag of the City of New York from the hands of Commissioner of Police Enright.

With *Parsifal* yet absent from the repertory, the Good Friday observances in the Metropolitan this year took the form of a concert, on 18 April. The programme included Palestrina's *Missa Brevis*, which the Metropolitan chorus had prepared for a private concert of the Friends of Music several weeks before, with the 'Credo' omitted; Gounod's *Gallia*, with Sundelius as soloist; and Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, for which Ponselle, Matzenauer, Hackett, and Mardones were the assisting quartet. For the evening performance Gatti offered *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, with Easton, Martinelli, Picco, and Didur, under the direction of Moranzoni.

Undiscouraged by the deficits of the previous season, the Chicago Opera Association returned to the Lexington Theatre on 27 January, opening its four weeks with *Gismonda*, by Février, the composer of *Monna Vanna*. In the cast were Garden (Gismonda), Charles Fontaine (debut in New York, Almerio), Dufranne, Huberdeau, Bérat, and Marcel Journet — the only singer, save Scotti, from the period of Grau still active in New York. Though there was the fame of Sardou's play to assist it, also the conducting of Campanini, the success of *Gismonda* was negligible.

Also new to New York, and given during this visit of the Chicago group, were four other operas. Leroux's *Le Chemineau* — he was also the composer of *La Reine Fiammette* — was presented on 31 January, with Maguenat, Yvonne Gall, Sharlow, Baklanoff, and Dua, under the direction of Louis Hasselmans, who was later to join the Metropolitan. Its success was no more impressive than that of his earlier opera. To the long list of Massenet's works produced in New York was added a twelfth on 11 February, when his *Cléopâtre* was given with Garden (Cléopâtre), Maguenat (Marc Antoine), Fontaine (Spakos), Fitziu (Octavie), and Huberdeau (Emnius), Charlier conducting. Also there

was a revival of Catalani — composer of Gatti's *La Wally* — with the presentation of *Loreley* on 13 February. It was cast with Fitziu (Loreley), Dolci (Walter), Florence Macbeth (Anna), Lazzari (Rudolph), and Rimini (Baron Hermann). Though the work was scarcely a success, the score had sufficient quality to justify a Metropolitan production in the season of 1921–1922. The *première* was conducted by Polacco, who had transferred his activities to Chicago after leaving the Metropolitan. The last of the Chicagoans' novelties may be attributed to such an exchange of courtesies as one occasionally observes in the operatic world, for it was the one-act *Le Vieil Aigle* by Raoul Gunsbourg, director of the Monte Carlo opera. Its New York history consisted of one performance on 28 February, with Gall, Fontaine, and Baklanoff.

The chief financial support to the visit of the Chicago Opera Association to New York was the reappearance of Galli-Curci, in whom the interest of the public had even increased over its hysterical enthusiasm of the year before. She returned on 4 February, in *Linda di Chamounix*, whose last performance in New York had been in a post-season of opera with Patti in 1890. Galli-Curci's voice had declined from the prime condition of her first season, and there was already noticeable the falseness of pitch which was to become more acute during her later career in the Metropolitan. Stracciari was the Antonio of this performance, and the audience was vast in size, ebullient in temper. In addition to appearances in *Lucia*, on 7 February and 1 March, *Il Barbiere* on 12 February, *Dinorah* on the 20th, and *Traviata* on the 26th, Galli-Curci was also heard in *Crispino e la Comare* on the 17th, with Trevisan (Crispino), and Stracciari (Fabrizio), providing an excellent opportunity for contrast with Hempel's approach to the work, as it was also in the Metropolitan's repertory this season. Melba was scheduled to appear during this visit in *La Bohème* on 27 February, but difficulties with the management intervened, and a rather curious substitution offered a performance of *Pelléas* instead, with Garden, Maguenat (Pelléas), Bérat (Genevieve), Auguste Bouilliez (Golaud), and Huberdeau (Ärkel), under the direction of Charlier.

The extent of operatic activity in New York at this time may be gauged from the record for Saturday, 1 February, on which were presented eight different operas — the three works of the Puccini tryptich, *Coq d'Or* and *L'Oracolo* at *matinée* and evening sessions at the Metropolitan ; *Thaïs* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Lexington ; and *Martha,* in English, by the American Society of Singers at the Park Theatre, where they were giving a season of opera in English. Although the sponsors of the Chicago Opera Association declared their satisfaction with the results of the season in New York, the whole year's operations compiled a deficit of nearly three hundred thousand dollars. The activities of the company, however, were not seriously curtailed.

On 8 March Oscar Hammerstein let it be announced that he was planning to resume the production of opera in New York when his agreement with the Metropolitan terminated in the following February. He died, however, on 2 August 1919.

1919–1920

THOUGH *Tristan* had been the last score of Wagner to be given a performance in the Metropolitan, on 13 April 1917, *Parsifal* was the first of the dramas to be returned to the repertory, on 19 February 1920. In this choice there was more than small irony, for of all the scores of Wagner to be introduced to New York, *Parsifal* had been accompanied by the most considerable objection, not only from Wahnfried, but from the local clergy. Yet, less than a score of years later the very element of contention — its religious character — influenced the Metropolitan management to regard it as the one work by Wagner with which a beginning might most safely be made. It was a beginning, however, attended by the compromise of an English text — in a sense, a safety-valve for public feeling.

To supply the other lacks of the Wagnerless Metropolitan, a company headed by Otto Goritz and Margarete Ober initiated

a season of German opera in German at the Lexington Theatre during October. The start was not propitious ; an injunction was sought against the performances, obtained, and then vacated — following which the American Legion transferred its attentions temporarily from Red-baiting to art, demonstrating vigorously outside the theatre against the performances. Patronage was thus discouraged, and though the company changed the language of its performances to English, and attempted to continue, the enterprise collapsed. Personal feeling against Goritz and Ober no doubt had its place in this agitation, but the fact that America was still technically in a state of war with Germany — the peace treaty was not ratified by the Senate until 18 October 1921 — stimulated the patriots to a defence of their 'treasured ideals,' at the expense of a few helpless singers, violinists, 'cellists, etc.

Opera at the Metropolitan moved to a new high level during this season ; a new high level financially, that is, for prices for single tickets advanced from a scale of one to six dollars, to a rate of a dollar and a half to seven. The increase in the lower category was the first since the dollar rate for the family circle was established by Grau in 1891. The flush of war-time prosperity, however, established this alteration as but a slight inconvenience, if any at all, for the Metropolitan's patrons. For once, the opening night performance — *Tosca*, on 17 November, with Farrar, Caruso, and Scotti — was overshadowed by a later date on the opera social calendar. This was the Prince of Wales 'gala' on the 18th, the most socially exciting event the house had sheltered since the visit of his kin, Prince Henry of Prussia, in 1902. The Prince was greeted at the entrance to the house by Otto Kahn and Clarence Mackay, who together escorted the Prince to the box of J. Pierpont Morgan. In the royal box were Admiral Halsey, Viscount Grey, and William Philips, Assistant Secretary of War. During the intermission the Prince went to Henry P. Davison's box, then to the smoking room. *En route* he encountered General J. J. Pershing in the

corridor, and invited him to join the party in the royal box — the General had been in the Kahn box previously — and after the intermission, Mrs. Grover Whalen and Mrs. Rodman Wanamaker also joined the royal party. The evening's music included scenes from *Pagliacci*, *Oberon*, *Forza del Destino*, and *Samson ;* the singers : Alda, Easton, Ponselle, Delaunois, and Howard ; Caruso, Amato, Laurenti, and Paltrinieri. The impression of this event upon society may be deduced from the sale by Miss Georgine Iselin of her box privileges for the evening, for three hundred dollars ; or fifty dollars each for the six seats.[63]

As in the season immediately preceding, *Aïda* was again the second night opera, on 19 November, the evening containing the debuts of Renato Zanelli (Amonasro), Gabriella Besanzoni (Amneris), and Giovanni Martino (Ramfis). The other principal singers were Muzio, Martinelli, and Tiffany (The Priestess). After a year's absence because of illness, Amato officially returned to the Metropolitan on the 20th as Marcello in *La Bohème* with Alda, Hackett (Rodolfo), Romaine, Didur, and de Segurola. On the following night the principal new conductor for the season, the Parisian Albert Wolff, made his debut. He filled the place in the French repertory formerly occupied by Pierre Monteux, departed for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. As with that conductor, Wolff was introduced in *Faust*, on the 21st, sung by Farrar, Martinelli, Rothier, Couzinou (Valentin), Delaunois, and Howard (Marthe).

What was to be the final new role sung by Caruso at the Metropolitan was added to his list on 22 November, when he was heard for the first time as Eleazar in *La Juive*. It was without doubt the most striking artistic triumph in his career. Some quality in the character had inflamed Caruso's imagination ;

[63] This, however, was but a small part of the $9525 received by Miss Iselin through the rental of her box for 47 of the season's 115 subscription performances. According to *The New York Times* of 3 March 1926, she received $550 for the use of her box on the opening night of the season — or $91.66 for each chair. See page 373 for a full discussion of this arrangement.

and the impersonation he finally presented was the product of more care and study, especially dramatically, than any of the thirty-five other roles he sang during his career in New York. It was particularly impressive as the accomplishment of a singer whose position in the esteem of the public was inviolate ; and spoke more highly for his development as an artist than any verbal tribute could. Curiously, it was also the last opera in which he appeared at the Metropolitan, on 24 December 1920. In the cast of the revival presented by Gatti were Ponselle (Rachel), Orville Harrold (debut, Leopold), Evelyn Scotney (debut, The Princess), Rothier (Cardinal Brogni), and Chalmers (Ruggiero). Bodanzky conducted the performance, for which scenery had been designed by Urban. This was the first production of *La Juive* at the Metropolitan since the period of opera in German.[64]

On the afternoon of 22 November Jeanne Gordon was heard for the first time in the Metropolitan, as Azucena in a performance of *Il Trovatore*, with Muzio, Kingston, and Amato, Papi conducting. Further debuts of the early season were recorded in the first *Boris* on the 24th, when Adeline Vosari (debut, Xenia), Louise Bérat (debut, The Innkeeper), Octave Dua (debut, The Simpleton), and Harrold (Dmitri *), joined Didur, Rothier, de Segurola, and Delaunois who remained from previous performances of *Boris*. Both Bérat and Dua had been taken over from the Chicago company. Harrold, of course, was a discovery of Hammerstein's. The quality of the Metropolitan's *Boris* had continued to decline, causing Krehbiel [65] to point out 'the accretion of perfunctoriness and carelessness' in the performance, which 'Signor Toscanini knew how to prevent . . . from spreading during his artistic administration.'

The great gap left in the Metropolitan's repertory by the absence of German operas in German — the proportion of such works, in an average pre-war season was about a third of the total performances given — necessitated a continuance of the extraordinary innovations that had been adopted during the

[64] It was given then on 7 December 1887 with Niemann (Eleazar), Lehmann (Rachel), Fischer (Cardinal Brogni), Alvary (Leopold), and Schröder-Hanfstängl (The Princess), titled *Die Jüdin*. In the next season Paul Kalisch was heard as Eleazar. Earlier, Materna had been heard as Rachel.

[65] *Tribune*, 25 November 1919.

seasons of 1917–1918 and 1918–1919. In quality their average was somewhat higher than those immediately preceding, and among the season's new productions there was at least a commercial success — *Zaza ;* a welcome 'novelty' by a standard composer — Tchaikowsky's *Eugen Onegin ;* and a mildly interesting off-shoot of Debussy — Albert Wolff's setting of Maeterlinck's *L'Oiseau Bleu. Parsifal* — save for the text and certain deficiencies of the cast — was, of course, *Parsifal.*

The season's first novelty, however, was none of these. It was Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri,* on 5 December, announced as 'first time in America,' though earnest research disclosed that it had been given in the Academy of Music in 1858 and elsewhere. The programme of the performance noted it as given for 'the first time in this opera house.' The florid music of the work was not suitable to most of the cast, Sundelius (Elvira) and Hackett (Lindoro) achieving the greatest merit. Also in principal roles were Besanzoni (Isabella), de Luca (Taddeo), Didur (Mustafa), Picco (Haly), and Howard (Zulma). The first act was divided into two parts, the finale of the original first act thus coming at the second curtain. Ballet music from *Mose in Egitto,* also by Rossini, was interpolated by Papi, the conductor. The reception of the work was barely more than apathetic ; and after three repetitions, it was abandoned by the Metropolitan.

More of a gala occasion was the world *première* of Wolff's *L'Oiseau Bleu* # on 27 December, with the composer conducting, and both M. and Mme. Maeterlinck in attendance. The event was reserved for a Saturday evening, and the receipts were divided among four charities, American and foreign. Though Maeterlinck's book was not the subject for operatic treatment that *Pelléas* had been, Wolff had composed an able and cohesive score, if scarcely one distinguished by individuality or striking treatment. Easton (Mother Tyl), Bérat (Grandmother Tyl), Ellis (Mytyl), and Delaunois (Tyltyl) were admirable in their roles, and the scenery by Boris Anisfeld was widely praised. Maeterlinck spent the evening in a parterre

GERALDINE FARRAR
Photo. Bain

box with Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., Baron and Baroness de Cartier de Marchienne, and Henry Russell. With Mme. Maeterlinck in the adjoining box were Mrs. Newbold Le Roy Edgar, Mrs. John Sanford, and the Otto Kahns. There were twelve performances of *L'Oiseau Bleu* during this and the next season.

After futile experiments with *Iris, Lodoletta, La Reine Fiammette,* etc., Gatti finally discovered a work to delight the hearts of the 'Gerry-flappers' [66] in Leoncavallo's *Zaza.* The performance on 16 January was programmed as an American *première,* but the work had been given during the season of 1915–1916 in Chicago by the company presided over by Campanini. *Zaza* was nearly a score of years old, having first been performed at La Scala in 1900 by Toscanini. Considering its resources of popular appeal, it is curious that it had not appeared at the Metropolitan earlier — Hammerstein's plans for a production had never materialized — or that it has not been revived for another *prima donna* after the departure of Farrar in 1921, before which twenty performances had been recorded in three seasons. In the cast with Farrar were Amato (Cascart), Crimi (Dufresne), and Howard (The Mother). Moranzoni was the conductor. An emphasis of a different sort was present in the first performance in New York — as an opera — of Tchaikowsky's *Eugen Onegin* #, on 24 March. There had been concert performances a decade before under Damrosch, and the 'Letter Scene' was familiar, of course ; but the production under Bodanzky was the first in New York as the opera had been planned by Tchaikowsky. As usual, with this conductor, there were 'certain omissions,' and the language of the performance was Italian. Among the performers were Muzio (Tatiana), de Luca (Onegin), Martinelli (Lenski), and Didur (Prince Gremine). The audience at the *première* was very large and its enthusiasm seemed genuine. However, though *Onegin* managed to exceed the total for *Pique Dame* by four performances — it had seven in all — it can scarcely be said that Tchaikowsky is a firm favourite among the opera-goers of New York.

The restoration of *Parsifal* to the repertory on 19 February was marked by circumstances of more importance than merely the performance of an opera after a lapse of years. It launched the Metropolitan on an effort to accustom its audiences to the use of English texts for foreign works ; and it introduced the settings by Urban which remain in use to the present time. Though the first of these innovations seemed of more lasting significance at the time, the use of English for works by Wagner

[66] The coinage of Henderson for the young, female enthusiasts for Farrar.

was abandoned within a short period. It cannot be said that the Metropolitan entered upon the venture merely as a stop-gap, for the preparation of a new text was entrusted to H. E. Krehbiel, for forty years a champion of opera in the vernacular as the solution to the problems involved in habituating European opera to the American soil. But this intent, if it really existed, was defeated by the casting for the work. Gurnemanz, who has almost as many lines, in the two acts in which he appears,[67] as all the other characters together, was entrusted to Rothier, whose excellent French has long been admired at Metropolitan performances. Kundry was sung by Matzenauer, of Hungarian origin ; Didur, a Pole, was Klingsor ; and Ananian, an Armenian, was Titurel. Only Whitehall (Amfortas) was intelligible in the majority of his lines ; Harrold (Parsifal) much less so, though better than the others. It could scarcely be said that this was a cast equipped to give opera in English a thorough-going trial. Really admirable in this production was the group of solo Flower Maidens — Sundelius, Ellis, Delaunois, Romaine, Tiffany, and Gordon. The public appetite for Wagner, though it was the consecrational *Parsifal,* was demonstrated by five additional performances in the limited weeks remaining in the season, repetitions being offered on 28 February, 10th and 19th March, 2nd and 21st April. In the next to the last of these (Good Friday), Easton appeared as Kundry. The cast remained otherwise intact at all the performances.

The extraordinarily uneven merit of Urban's settings has long been a source of amazement to persons dependent upon the Metropolitan for their *Parsifal.* The scene in the Temple of the Grail is undoubtedly one of the most impressive in the Metropolitan's warehouse ; the others are hardly more than indifferently utilitarian. For this, as in other settings done by Urban for the Metropolitan, the reasons are not far to seek. He was, initially, an architect, and only secondarily a painter.

[67] First act : Gurnemanz 216 lines, other characters 232. Third act : Gurnemanz 153, other characters 147. Totals : Gurnemanz 369 lines, others 379.

There is the fine Ziegfeld Theatre and the plans for the 'new' Metropolitan opera on Kahn's Fifty-seventh Street site to testify to his skill as an architect — a skill reflected in the setting for the Temple of the Grail, which is also largely architectural. There is the inferiority, to them, of most of his settings, as evidence of his failings as a scenic designer. But a comparison of his original drawings with the settings as afterwards executed demonstrates incontestably that his conceptions were rarely seen at even half their inherent effectiveness on the Metropolitan's stage. The rest had been lost irrevocably between the drawing board and the emergence of the drops from the paint shop. His extensive employment at the Metropolitan was a tribute to his comprehensive understanding of the practical problems of the Metropolitan stage, and to his indifference to the finished product as bearing upon his professional reputation. He was, by the evidence of these accomplishments, able and easy-going ; a combination of merits that made him invaluable to the Metropolitan. Such dissatisfaction as he might have had with the finished work did not prevent him from executing further commissions for the Metropolitan as long as he lived.

In place of the obscure composers of American origin who had been favoured for Metropolitan production in the previous season, the institution this year placed its faith in Henry Kimball Hadley, one of the most prolific of American musicians, and one of the dullest. On 31 January was given to the Metropolitan's audience his opus 90, a two-act opera entitled *Cleopatra's Night,* based on a story by Théophile Gautier. Frances Alda was Cleopatra ; and the cast included Harrold (Meiamoun), Gordon (Mardion), Tiffany (Iras), Reschiglian (Marc Antony), Picco (A Eunuch), and Louis D'Angelo (Chief Officer), with Papi conducting. The composer was present to bow his thanks and make a speech. Of the elements in the production, the most praise was bestowed upon the scenery by Norman Bel Geddes. There were four performances in this season, of which Hadley conducted the one on 3 March personally.

In addition to *Faust* and his own *L'Oiseau Bleu*, Wolff was heard as the director of three other French scores : *Carmen*, on 27 November, with Farrar, Martinelli, Couzinou, and Sundelius, was regarded as the best in the Metropolitan since those under Toscanini ; this was followed on 10 December by *Samson*, with Caruso, Besanzoni, Rothier, and Couzinou (High Priest) ; and *Marouf*, at the *matinée* on 20 December, cast as in the previous year save for Dua (Chief Sailor). In Rabaud's opera Wolff had made cuts that shortened the work by about twenty minutes. At a later *Samson*, on 26 February, Matzenauer and Whitehill replaced Besanzoni and Couzinou ; and in a *Carmen* on 12 March Werrenrath was heard as Escamillo. Giuseppe Bamboschek, who had previously devoted himself to the Metropolitan's Sunday night concerts, made his first appearance as an opera conductor on the evening of 20 December, presenting a performance of *Faust* in which were Farrar, Martinelli, Couzinou (Valentin), and Mardones (Méphistophélès). The last named departed from tradition by scorning the conventional crimson, dressing himself, instead, as a knight of the sixteenth century. Another *Faust*, under Wolff on 19 April, presented one of the earliest entirely American casts of principals to be heard at the Metropolitan, and one that is still impressive. The singers were Farrar, Ellis (Siébel), Howard (Marthe), Harrold (Faust), Whitehill (Méphistophélès), and Chalmers (Valentin). Though Whitehill's singing of his role was not of extraordinary quality, his conception was intellectually of high individuality. During this season *Coq d'Or* had the services of two conductors — Bodanzky on 9 January and subsequently until Bamboschek assumed the direction on 3 March.

After a three years' internment in Austria, Emmy Destinn returned to the Metropolitan — as a Czecho-Slovakian subject — on 8 December in *Aïda* (the role of her debut in 1908) with Crimi, Zanelli (Amonasro), Besanzoni (Amneris), and Martino (Ramfis). In addition to singing in repetitions of this opera, Destinn was heard as Santuzza on Christmas Day, in a performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Althouse and Chalmers. Moranzoni was the conductor on this occasion. For Mabel Garrison there was a production of *Il Barbiere*, with a new *décor* by Urban, when she appeared as Rosina for the first time on 27 November. The opera was conducted by Papi, and the cast included Hackett, de Luca (Figaro), Mardones (Basilio), Malatesta (Dr. Bartolo), and Bérat (Bertha). In the manner of Sembrich, Garrison was fond of singing Strauss's 'Voce di Primavera' in the lesson scene. Garrison also added Lady Harriet in *Marta* to her Metropolitan repertory on 13 December, in a performance with Caruso, de Luca, and Perini (Nancy), under the direction of Bodanzky. In a performance of *Madama Butterfly* on 13 March, Florence Easton returned to a role that she had sung in the fall of 1906 with the Savage Opera Company. She appeared as Cio-Cio-San for the first time in the Metropolitan, with Martinelli, de

Luca, and Ingram. In the same opera on 20 February, Hackett was heard, for the first time in his career, as Pinkerton, the cast including Farrar, Scotti, and Fornia.

Though Cleofonte Campanini had died suddenly of pneumonia on 19 December in Chicago,[68] the opera company of that city made its customary visit to New York — this time for five weeks — beginning at the Lexington Theatre late in January. Two seasons' experience had instructed the Western visitors in the operatic taste of the New York public, and the season they had prepared was more varied and interesting than either of its predecessors. The first performance, on 26 January, served to introduce a new tenor, Edward Johnson, who made his New York operatic debut [69] in *L'Amore dei Tre Re* (Avito), with Garden, Baklanoff (Manfredo), and Lazzari (Archibaldo), under the direction of Marinuzzi. Johnson was approved as being 'altogether the artist that had been heralded,' and familiarity has increased the respect for his gifts and intelligence. He was later heard as Luigi in *Il Tabarro* and Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* when the Puccini triptych was given on 11 February, also in Camille Erlanger's *Aphrodite* at the American *première* on the 27th. In this Johnson was Demetrios to Garden's Chrysis, with Van Gordon (Bacchis), Herbert (Myrto), Warnery (Timon), and Mojica (Philodeme). Louis Hasselmans was the conductor. The celebrity of Pierre Loüys' story and the identification of Garden with the Paris *première* in 1906 created a considerable journalistic interest in the work, permitting the management to advance the top price for seats from the usual charge of six dollars to ten, and yet fill the auditorium. The opera had been modified considerably, the second act (in the temple) being completely omitted, as well as the crucifixion of the slave in the third act. There remained, nevertheless, enough of the sensational for *The Times*

[68] There were rumours of an invitation to Toscanini for the post vacated by Campanini, but the plans were never consummated. Mary Garden eventually became the general director, in succession to Herbert Johnson and Gino Marinuzzi.

[69] Johnson had appeared in Oscar Straus's *Waltz Dream*, in New York during 1907–1908.

to comment, on 28 February : 'There is, in fact, a good deal in *Aphrodite* that is not pleasant to the eye of decency or to the ear, either.' The work was not given again, nor has it been revived since.

In addition to the company's strength in female personalities, with Garden, Raisa, and Galli-Curci, it was unusually well-equipped with tenors and low voices, including Johnson, Bonci, Schipa, Dolci, and Mojica among the former ; Ruffo, Dufranne, Huberdeau, Maguenat, and Warnery among the latter. Bonci was heard in *Un Ballo in Maschera* on 31 January, with Van Gordon, Baklanoff (Renato), and Macbeth (The Page), under Teofilo di Angelis ; and Schipa made his first New York appearance on 5 February, in a performance of *La Sonnambula* with Galli-Curci.

A performance of *Pelléas* on 27 January was distinguished by the presence of the librettist, Maurice Maeterlinck, who was visiting New York for the *première* of *L'Oiseau Bleu.* The performance, with Garden, Maguenat, Dufranne, Huberdeau, Claessens (Genevieve), and de Philippe (Yniold), was said to be the first, in public, that Maeterlinck had ever heard. To the eager press after the performance, Maeterlinck commented : 'In spite of being tone-deaf, I passed a very pleasant evening.'

To the blending of novelties and conventional works, the Chicago group added *Norma* on 3 February, the first performance of the work in New York since the performance with Lehmann at the Metropolitan, on 3 February 1892, twenty-eight years before. In the performance at the Lexington were Raisa (Norma), Sharlow (Adalgisa), Dolci (Pollione), and Lazzari (Oroveso), with Marinuzzi conducting. Raisa's popularity [70] earned the work a repetition during the brief season on the 19th, though the artistic merit of the production was not impressive. Titta Ruffo returned on the 13th, making his reappearance in Thomas' *Hamlet,* in which he had enjoyed so extraordinary a success in November 1912. With him in this cast were Macbeth (Ophelia), Van Gordon (Gertrude), Trevisan (Polonius), and Mojica (Marcello). Charlier

[70] Concerning a performance of *La Gioconda* on 25 February, with Raisa, Van Gordon (Laura), Claessens (La Cieca), Dolci, and Rimini (Barnaba), *The Times* recorded : 'The audience, as at all of the Russian soprano's appearances during the season, was the largest the building could hold.'

was the conductor. When Ruffo next appeared, on the 20th, in *Rigoletto* with Galli-Curci and Schipa, a detachment of police was required to control the opera-goers who attempted to purchase tickets. In addition to the performances noted, Galli-Curci was heard in *La Traviata* on 2 February with Dolci and Maguenat ; in *Don Pasquale* on the 14th with Rimini and Trevisan ; in *Dinorah* on the 18th with Rimini (Hoël), Mojica (Corentino), and Lazzari (A Huntsman) ; and again in *La Traviata* on the 26th with Schipa and Galeffi. The vocal quality of her performances was highly erratic.[71] During this month *Falstaff* had its first New York presentation, since those of 1910 in the Metropolitan, on 6 February, with Raisa (Mistress Ford), Sharlow (Anne), Rimini (Falstaff), Schipa (Fenton), and Defrere (Ford). The conductor was Marinuzzi.

In addition to the production of Erlanger's work, the Chicago company demonstrated its French bias by also presenting novelties by Messager and Ravel. The former's *Madame Chrysanthème,* based on the story by Pierre Loti which also provided the background for *Madama Butterfly,* was given its New York *première* on 28 January, with Tamaki Miura (Madame Chrysanthème), Dufranne (Yves), Fontaine (Pierre), Warnery (Kangourou), Dorothy Follis (Oyouki, debut), and Claessens (Madame Prune), the conductor being Hasselmans. There was no repetition. On the evening of the same day Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole* was heard for the first time in New York, with Gall (Concepcion), Maguenat (Ramiro), Warnery (Gonzalve), Cotreuil (Inigo), and Defrere (Torquemada). Hasselmans conducted this performance, as he did the revival at the Metropolitan on 7 November 1925. The other operatic novelty of this visit was Reginald de Koven's *Rip Van Winkle,* the book — as that for the same composer's *Canterbury Pilgrims* — being the work of Percy Mackaye. As in the case of the earlier work, *Rip Van Winkle* was more operetta than opera, regardless of the composer's designation. The cast for the New York *première* on 30 January included Evelyn Herbert

[71] On 10 August 1935 Galli-Curci was operated upon and a goitre was removed from her throat. In *The New York Times* of 11 August Galli-Curci declared that the existence of an obstruction in her throat had been known to her for fifteen years. It undoubtedly affected her singing, particularly in the matter of pitch, during all of this period.

(Peterkee), Edna Darch (Mrs. Rip Van Winkle), Baklanoff (Rip Van Winkle), Dufranne (Hendrick Hudson), Cotreuil (Dirck), Huberdeau (Nicholas Vedder), and Edmond Warnery (Jan Van Bummel). Alexander Smallens made his debut as an operatic conductor in New York on this occasion.

Also of American origin were two ballets new to New York — Felix Borowski's *Boudour*, given on 16 February with Mme. Lloyd (Boudour), Oukrainsky (Caliph Abbass), and Pavley (Sahadie), with the composer conducting ; and John Alden Carpenter's *Birthday of the Infanta*. There was regret that the latter was presented but once, on 23 February, as a benefit for the Society for the Prevention and Cure of Tuberculosis, for the score and performance were both regarded as unusually attractive. At the *première* the principal dancers were Ruth Page (The Infanta), and Bolm (Pedro), with Hasselmans conducting. The scenery was by Robert Edmond Jones. As part of a double bill, *L'Heure Espagnole* was also presented. Among the other works presented by the company, and not in the active repertory of the Metropolitan were *Le Jongleur* on 4 February ; *Louise*, on the 7th, and *Thaïs* on the 9th (all with Mary Garden) ; and *Hérodiade*, on the 12th with d'Alvarez (Hérodiade), Maguenat (Herod), Gall (Salome), and Fontaine (Jean).

Despite the vigorous competition of the Chicago visit, the Metropolitan's year was financially successful, Richard Aldrich in *The Times* of 25 April recording, in a summing up of the season : 'Large houses have been the rule.'

1920–1921

THE effects of the war on the musical life of New York were noticeably diminished with the beginning of this season. On 7 October the German language made its first appearance in a public concert since America's entry into the war, when Alma Simpson, a soprano, sang Brahms' *Wiegenlied* and Schumann's *Aufträge* during a song recital. There was no riot ; but German as the language for the performance of operas at the Metropolitan was not restored until 28 November 1921.

During this first month of the musical season there was to be noted a change in the emphasis of New York's concert activ-

ity which was to have a considerable bearing on the future of the Metropolitan. Within four weeks there were as many orchestral concerts as there had been in three months during 1900. Furthermore, this increased activity was marked by a heightening of the interest of society in orchestral concerts. Thus the prestige of the Metropolitan — both musical and social — as the focal point of the city's musical life was considerably challenged. With the increasing number of orchestral concerts during the next decade, the greater prominence of symphonic conductors — Mengelberg, Stokowski, Koussevitzky, Furtwängler, and finally, Toscanini — the eminence of the Metropolitan could not fail to be affected.[72]

The important events at this period of the Metropolitan continued to be the re-introduction of the banned scores by Wagner, with *Tristan* and *Lohengrin* added to *Parsifal* in this season. English was invariably the language. When *Tristan* was performed during the first week, on 20 November, it was given in the translation by H. and F. Corder, revised by Sigmund Spaeth and Cecil Cowdrey. New settings had been provided by Urban, and remain in use at the present time. Of the text not one line in fifty was intelligible. However, Whitehill (Kurwenal) was again conspicuous for his fine articulation. Matzenauer (Isolde), Gordon (Brangaene), Sembach (Tristan), Blass (King Marke), Leonhardt (Melot), Dua (The Shepherd), and Bada (A Sailor's Voice) were variously below Whitehill's level. Though Matzenauer had coped successfully with the requirements of certain soprano roles in the Wagnerian repertory, she was not well suited to the *tessitura* of Isolde's music. There was, moreover, an unfortunate contrast between her voice and Gordon's, which was much lighter in colour. At a performance on 29 January, Easton sang her excellent Isolde for

[72] This fact was not obscured from the Metropolitan's directors. Conversationally, late in the 20's, Otto Kahn confided his belief, to a colleague of the author's, that the blame for this change reposed with the press. He felt that the activities of orchestras and conductors were disproportionately emphasized, to the disadvantage of the opera.

the first time at the Metropolitan, Marion Telva being the Brangaene. The restoration of *Lohengrin* on 2 February had many of the same qualities as the *Tristan*, for Matzenauer (Ortrud), Sembach (Lohengrin), Blass (Heinrich), Leonhardt (The Herald), and Whitehill (Telramund) were again in the cast. The admirable Elsa was Florence Easton ; Bodanzky was again the conductor, and the sets were the work of Urban. Later in the season, on 3 March, Harrold (Lohengrin), Gustafson (Heinrich), and Claussen (Ortrud) replaced Sembach, Blass, and Matzenauer. A performance of *Parsifal* on 10 December was a replica of the previous year's, save for Blass who returned to a role (Gurnemanz) which he had created at the Metropolitan seventeen years before. On the 31st, Kundry was sung by Easton, with Sembach (Parsifal), Leonhardt (Amfortas), and Rothier (Gurnemanz).

There was no premonition, in the performance of *La Juive* on 15 November, that this would be the last opening in which Caruso would participate. The cast was largely as before — Ponselle, Harrold, Scotney, and Rothier, with Bodanzky conducting — to the complete satisfaction of a very large, very dressy audience. His appearances continued, as in past seasons, regularly twice or three times a week, until 8 December, when he strained his side during 'Vesti la giubba' in a performance of *Pagliacci*, with Destinn and de Luca, finishing the opera with difficulty. The ailment was diagnosed as intercostal neuralgia. Caruso was put to bed, his side strapped with plaster. He refused to consider himself an invalid, however, and insisted on singing according to his schedule.

His next appearance was on the 11th, a performance of *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. At seven forty-five, in his dressing room, costumed as Nemorino, Caruso coughed, and a spot of blood was visible in his handkerchief. A flow of blood then started that could not be staunched by an adrenaline spray. Caruso would not hear of cancelling the performance, however, and after a delay of ten

minutes the opera began. Despite a constant stream of blood that used up handkerchief after handkerchief passed to him from the chorus, Caruso sang magnificently ; and the first act was completed with no interruption. As he exhausted the handkerchiefs, Caruso deposited them in the well at the centre of the stage.

His wife and several advisors — Bruno Zirato, Edward Ziegler, Nina Morgana, and William J. Guard — who were gathered backstage, pleaded with him not to continue ; and after long indecision, Caruso permitted Herbert T. Swin, manager of the auditorium, to inform the audience of the situation. 'If you wish, he will go on with the performance,' said Swin. The shouted 'No's' of the audience indicated their opinion, and Swin announced that the performance was at an end. Caruso was taken to the Vanderbilt Hotel, where he then lived, and was put to bed. The flow of blood ceased soon afterwards ; and Caruso felt well enough to sing in *Forza del Destino* on 13 December and in *Samson* on the 16th ; but a performance of *Elisir* announced for the 22nd was cancelled when an increase in the pain from the neuralgia made his appearance impossible. To the public it was announced that Caruso was suffering from 'lumbago.' Though his voice was not impaired, the pain in his side sapped his strength, and it was only after much deliberation that he appeared in *La Juive* on the 24th, with Easton, Harrold, Rothier, and Scotney. It was his 607th performance at the Metropolitan ; and his last. On Christmas Day Caruso collapsed. His ailment was diagnosed as pleurisy — a 'very painful case,' said Evan M. Evans, the distinguished physician. There followed the long illness, the uncertainty, the deceptive convalescence, and the trip to Italy which was cut short by Caruso's death in Naples on 2 August 1921.

The concern over Caruso's health very naturally took precedence over all else during this season ; but there was much, nevertheless, that was both varied and interesting. Previous to the development of Caruso's affliction Giuseppe Danise (Amonasro) made his debut in *Aïda*, which

was again brought forth as the second night opera on 17 November. Destinn, Matzenauer, Martinelli, Rothier (Ramfis), and Sundelius were Danise's collaborators, under the direction of Moranzoni. Fatefully, the illness of Caruso and the advent of the tenor who most nearly succeeded him in the estimation of the public — Beniamino Gigli — overlapped in this season, for Gigli made his debut on 26 November in a revival of Boïto's *Mefistofele,* which was also designed to provide José Mardones with a new role. The first purpose was accomplished to the praise of Gigli's beautiful voice and to the scorn of his provincial manner, but an illness of Mardones compelled the substitution of Didur (Mefistofele), who was credited with an excellent performance. In the cast were Alda (Margherita), Easton (Elena), Perini (Pantalis), and Howard (Marta), with Moranzoni conducting. In a repetition, on 25 December, Frances Peralta made her debut as Elena. On 22 November, another tenor had joined the Metropolitan. This was Mario Chamlee — an American by birth, despite his Italian stage name — who made his first appearance in *Tosca* with Farrar and Scotti, under the direction of Moranzoni. The continuance of *Zaza* in the repertory provided Martinelli with an opportunity to appear as Dufresne * on 19 November, with Farrar, de Luca (Cascart *), and Tiffany (Natalia). On the evening of the 27th Nina Morgana made her debut as Gilda in a performance of *Rigoletto* with Chamlee (The Duke), and de Luca (The Jester).

With the departure of Monteux, *Petrouchka* had been dropped from the Metropolitan repertory, but what might be construed as an outlet for the aspirations of the ballet was presented on 2 December, Pick-Mangiagalli's *Il Carillon Magico.* It was officially described as a 'mimetic-symphonic comedy.' The principal dancers were Galli (Pierrot), Florence Rudolph (Columbine), and Bonfiglio (Harlequin), and the music was no more than amiable and undistinguished. There were no performances after the five of this season. Also new to the Metropolitan was *Andrea Chenier,* given for the first time in the house on 7 March, though it had been presented in New York by both the Hammerstein and Boston National Opera companies since its *première* at the Academy in 1896. This was a production that had been planned for Caruso, but assigned to Gigli, whose associates were Muzio (Madeleine), Danise (Gerard), Didur (Mathieu), Perini (The Mother), and Bada (A Spy). The work was conducted by Moranzoni. A recurrence of tracheal catarrh, with which Gigli suffered during February, required the substitution of Crimi on 26 March and 20 April (Chenier). During his first season Gigli was also heard in *La Bohème* on 4 December, with Alda, Anna Roselle (debut, Musetta), Didur, Scotti, and Picco. Gigli sang well enough to earn a handsome tribute of applause, but somewhat astonished the more sensitive among his audience by advancing to the footlights for his bows in mid-opera. On 2 December Gigli was heard

in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Turiddu *), with Destinn and Chalmers ; with Destinn and Scotti in *Tosca* on the 10th ; in *Lucia* on the 17th, with Garrison, de Luca, and Mardones ; and as Avito in *L'Amore dei Tre Re* on 1 January, with Easton, Mardones, and Amato (Manfredo).

After a dozen years during which *Louise* # had been identified in New York with Hammerstein and Mary Garden, the Metropolitan finally undertook its presentation on 15 January. Curiously, however, the popularity which the work had won in its first years in New York was never duplicated in this revival. The Louise of Farrar was no such striking achievement as that of Garden ; but it is doubtful if the discrepancy was so great as their relative success would indicate. Undoubtedly the score had aged, but there was also lacking to the Metropolitan's production the authenticity, and essential Frenchness which had distinguished the performances at the Manhattan. Harrold (Julien) was scarcely a Dalmorès, nor did Whitehill match the supreme characterization of Gilibert as the Father. For the first time the opera was given in full, with Le Noctambule's scene as written (it had been omitted in previous performances in New York), and the complete duet at the end of the third act. The cast further included Bérat, excellent as the Mother, Delaunois (Irma), Perini (Gertrude), and Diaz (The Noctambulist), with Wolff conducting. When Farrar retired after the season of 1921–1922, *Louise* vanished with her, not to return till the revival for Bori eight years later.

Gatti's single operatic novelty during this season was Karol Weiss's *Der Polnische Jude*, presented on 9 March in an English version by Spaeth and Cowdrey as *The Polish Jew*. The work was far from new, for its *première* had occurred in Prague in March 1901 ; nor did it contain elements of interest beyond its derivation from the story by Erckmann-Chatrian which also supplied Sir Henry Irving with his famous melodrama 'The Bells.' Two repetitions, following the *première*, were the total of its performances by the Metropolitan company. In the cast were Delaunois (Annette), Howard (Katharine), Chamlee (Christian Brehm), Chief Caupolican (debut, Hans Mathis), Gustafson (A Polish Jew), and Bada (A Notary). Bodanzky conducted the first performance, Paul Eisler the repetition on 25 March. At each of its three performances, *Il Segreto di Susanna* was also presented. Wolf-

Ferrari's little comedy had returned to the repertory on 9 March, in tribute to Lucrezia Bori, who rejoined the company after an illness and convalescence that had taken five years out of her Metropolitan career. In the cast with Bori were Scotti and Paltrinieri, Papi conducting. Bori's return to the company had occurred on 28 January, in *La Bohème* (Mimi), in which her associates were Gigli, Roselle, and Scotti. There was enthusiastic applause when she entered the garret, and after 'Mi chiamano Mimi' a deluge of corsage bouquets swept in the general direction of the stage. Her next role was Fiora in *L'Amore* on 3 February, with Gigli, Didur, and Danise (Manfredo *), under Moranzoni; this was followed by *L'Oracolo* (Ah-Yoe) on 5 February, with Chamlee, Scotti, and Didur; *Pagliacci* (Nedda), on the 12th, with Martinelli, and Amato; the revival of *Il Segreto di Susanna* noted above; and appearances as Micaëla in *Carmen*, the first on 11 March, with Easton, Harrold, and Whitehill, conducted by Wolff.

To the Italian repertory was added Verdi's *Don Carlos* on 23 December, when it was given for the first time in the history of the Metropolitan.[73] This version was prepared by Papi, who conducted, and used material from three earlier editions. In the cast were Ponselle (Elizabeth), Matzenauer (Eboli), Martinelli (Don Carlos), de Luca (Marquis de Posa), Didur (Philip II), Dalossy (Tebaldo), Sundelius (Voce dal Cielo), Gustafson (A Monk), and Bada (Lerma). Both scenery and costumes were the work of Urban. There was no American novelty in this season, Hadley's *Cleopatra's Night* being retained from the previous season.

Probably in few previous seasons of the Metropolitan had the director been so inconvenienced by the illnesses of his personnel. In addition to the major catastrophe of Caruso's collapse, Harrold suffered an attack of bronchitis, Gigli was incapacitated by tracheal catarrh, Mardones was lost to the company during the first and last months of the season, Dua had to surrender his contract because of illness, Sembach had diphtheria in December, and Farrar, Amato, Garrison, and Chalmers were affected at one time or another during the winter. Nevertheless, the robustness of the subscription list, plus the drawing power of other singers on the roster, kept the company from serious

[73] It had been given by Maratzek in the Academy of Music on 12 April 1877.

financial difficulties. The flow of post-war prosperity continued ; though it was the era of the 'H.C.L.' — the familiar designation of the newspapers for the high cost of living — opera was enjoying a revival of popular favour which found expression in a variety of ways. There was a six-weeks' season by the Chicago Opera Association, since 13 January under the direction of Mary Garden ; and at a gala benefit of *Carmen* on 22 February by the Metropolitan company — for the child-feeding fund of the European Relief Council, a charity presided over by Herbert Hoover — a sum of almost sixty thousand dollars was raised. To be sure, this is not essentially related to the prosperity of opera in New York, but the choice of an operatic performance for the purpose implies that the interest of the public was yet undiminished. From the audience at the performance six thousand dollars was raised in contributions, and the sale of boxes — H. P. Whitney paid five thousand dollars for one, and then offered it for resale — swelled the total from the sale of seats impressively. In the cast were Farrar, Martinelli, Rothier, and Mardones with Wolff conducting.[74]

Though the winter of 1921 saw the Chicago Opera Association in New York for six weeks — the longest of its various visits — there was less accomplished in that period than in the briefer stays either before or after. The company had shifted its place of operations to the Manhattan Opera House, and the season beginning on 24 January was in several other ways reminiscent of Hammerstein. There were novelties, but only two, neither of them important. *Jacquerie,* by Gino Marinuzzi, was presented on 4 February, for the first time in New York, with Yvonne Gall, Edward Johnson, and Carlo Galeffi singing the leading roles. It was a fairly lurid tale of seduction and

[74] On 22 April was a 'gala' for Prince Albert of Monaco, present as the guest of the Henry Fairfield Osbornes. For his pleasure was presented a mixed bill that included the second act of *Il Barbiere* with Chase, Hackett, de Luca, Didur, and Malatesta ; the Coronation scene from *Boris,* with Didur ; the first act of *Tosca* (Muzio, Chamlee, and Scotti) ; and the 'Bacchanale' from *Samson.* Cora Chase had made her debut on 4 February as Rosina in *Il Barbiere* with Hackett, de Luca, and Mardones (Basilio).

deception, causing H. E. Krehbiel [75] to describe it as 'moral muck' — 'essentially and materially vile.' On the 21st the Chicago company gave for the first and last time in New York Leoncavallo's *Edipo Re.* The one-act score had been written for Titta Ruffo ; and his importance to both the Chicago and New York *premières,* in a role which kept him on stage for virtually all of the work's sixty minutes, prompted the suggestion that the opera should have been called *Titta Rex.* In the cast with him were Dorothy Francis (Jocasta), Dentale (Tiresias), Paillard (Creontes), and Oliviero (A Shepherd).

Rather more important than either of these was New York's first performance of *Otello* since 31 January 1913, when Slezak had made his final appearance at the Metropolitan, with Alda and Scotti, Toscanini conducting. In the Chicago production on 1 February were Ruffo (Iago), Charles Marshall (debut, Otello), and Raisa, with Cimini conducting. There was a repetition on the 12th sung by the same cast, but Rimini was the Iago of a performance on 4 March. Ruffo's voice adorned the music gratefully, though his acting was scarcely subtle. The unexpected virtue was the able singing of Marshall, admirable both in power and expressiveness, but his subsequent career was not of the quality that this performance promised.

There were the usual performances of *Lucia, La Sonnambula, Il Barbiere, Rigoletto* and *La Traviata* for Galli-Curci, but she extended her repertory, in New York, to include *Roméo et Juliette* on 9 February with Muratore and Dufranne (Capulet) ; *La Bohème* (Mimi *) on the 24th, with Bonci, Rimini, and Dorothy Francis (Musetta). Garden undertook no new roles in this season, satisfying herself with *Carmen, Monna Vanna* — a performance of this opera on 25 January was conducted by Henri Morin (debut) — *Thaïs, Le Jongleur de Notre Dame,* and *L'Amore.* For this last the Chicago company was able to offer a cast of Garden, Johnson, Galeffi, and Lazzari to challenge the Metropolitan's Bori, Gigli, Didur, and Amato. The visitors had a further advantage in the conducting of Marinuzzi, next to Toscanini and Moranzoni the best interpreter of this score.[76] Of the new artists introduced to New

[75] *Tribune,* 5 February.

[76] The New York career of Toscanini was resumed in this winter, for he returned on 28 December to conduct the orchestra of La Scala in a concert at the Metropoli-

York, none was of enduring importance. The Scotch tenor, Joseph Hislop was heard as Cavaradossi in a performance of *Tosca* on 26 January with Gall and Baklanoff. On 7 February, with Hislop (Pinkerton), and Baklanoff (Sharpless), the company offered a performance of *Madama Butterfly* with Rosina Storchio, the original Cio-Cio-San of the *première* in 1904 at La Scala. There had been, however, better singing and acting performances at the Metropolitan in the intervening years — Farrar's, Destinn's, and the Easton's, to name but three — and Storchio's accomplishment was not highly regarded. During this season, also on the 7th of February, it was announced that Galli-Curci's future appearances in New York would be at the Metropolitan. She was heard for the last time with the Chicago Opera Association (in New York), in a performance of *La Traviata* on 2 March with Schipa and Galeffi.

In addition to the 155 performances of opera by the Metropolitan company between 15 November and 23 April — an average of almost seven performances weekly, for an operatic week of five days — plus the six-weeks' season of the Chicago Opera Association (forty-four performances), New York supported approximately seven hundred concerts in its large halls during the music season of 1920–1921. This was more than a hundred and fifty in excess of those during the previous season, and marked by much the largest amount of musical activity in the history of the city. On 25 January, for example, there were orchestral concerts in New York by three separate organizations — Stock and the Chicago Symphony at Carnegie Hall ; Toscanini and the orchestra of La Scala at the Metropolitan ; and Mengelberg and the National Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in the afternoon. Also, in the evening, was a performance of *Monna Vanna* at the Manhattan with Mary Garden.

During the spring the news of Caruso's apparent recovery, after the low days of February and March, was transmitted to the American public much as the day-by-day reports from the bedside of a President. By 23 May the study of X-ray plates convinced the doctors that Caruso was well advanced

tan, as part of an American tour. His programme began with 'The Star-Spangled Banner' and the 'Marcia Reale,' followed by the A minor concerto of Vivaldi (in the version by Sam Franko), the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven, Debussy's *Iberia*, Respighi's *Pines of Rome*, and the Prelude and Love-death from *Tristan*.

towards recovery, and a change of climate was suggested. Before that, however, on 8 May, Gatti-Casazza, about to sail for Europe, informed the press : 'Enrico Caruso will without any doubt again take his glorious post at the Metropolitan.' Caruso went abroad on 28 May, spending June and July in Naples and Sorrento. On 15 July the decline began ; and on the 28th it was discovered that another abscess had developed. Treatment was delayed, however, and, though Caruso went to Naples for an operation on the first of August, his condition was hopeless. There was no operation. He died at 9:05 A.M. on Tuesday, the second day of the month.

ENRICO CARUSO

IN the less than a score of years during which Enrico Caruso sang in America, he established the financial security of two organizations which he served — the Victor Talking Machine Company and the Metropolitan Opera Company. The years since his death are now well towards fifteen and many winds of change have swept through the world of music — the Victor Talking Machine Company has become RCA-Victor, and the Metropolitan Opera Company has become the Metropolitan Opera Association, Incorporated. But the fame of Caruso is scarcely less great today than it was when his appearances were frequent at the Metropolitan Opera House. Despite the singers by the score who have passed before the American public since 1921, he is still the best loved, the most vividly remembered. A recent motion-picture,[77] indeed, found it financially advantageous to advertise the reproduction of Caruso's voice, even though it had been 'dubbed-in' from a record nearly twenty years old.

To no other singer that was included in the personnel of the Metropolitan during these years has so tenacious an affection affixed itself, nor was it an emotion based merely on the quality

[77] *Escapade*, produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

of the sound that came from his throat. In the glorious radiance of its timbre, in the life-giving abundance of its tone, and in its plenitude and virility, his voice seemed something supernal and inexhaustible. The capacity for giving pleasure possessed by Caruso was equalled by no figure of his time in all the realm of music, and in other spheres, only by Chaplin. Today, with Caruso dead and Chaplin only infrequently alive, the gift has virtually lapsed from currency, with only Walt Disney as a possible successor to these laurels.

They are cherishable laurels, indeed, though with Caruso they were dearly bought. For, in the words of Henderson,[78] Caruso in his early days was 'a lyric tenor second to none in the history of opera.' But the assumption of dramatic roles, and the constant performance of them — Canio in *Pagliacci,* Rhadames in *Aïda,* later Samson, Jean of Leyden, Eleazar, etc. — cost him the command of his early lyric eloquence. No voice could withstand unaltered the amount and kind of usage to which Caruso's was subjected. Only his extraordinary physique and robust constitution limited what could have been deterioration to merely a change of timbre.

Aside from its effect upon the true nature of Caruso's voice, this divergence towards more sensational roles — in which, to quote Krehbiel, he 'delighted the ears of the groundlings' — affected tremendously the character of the repertory presented during his years at the Metropolitan. In the first nine seasons of *Pagliacci's* history at the Metropolitan — between 1893 and 1902 — there were exactly sixteen performances of the opera, or an average of less than two a season. In the next eighteen seasons, there were one hundred and four performances, or nearly *six* per season. Of this total, Caruso participated in no fewer than seventy-six, or well over two-thirds of the total number. Furthermore, the continuing popularity of *Pagliacci* is attributable in large part to the impetus provided to it by Caruso, for almost every audience believes that any tenor who dons the

[78] *The Sun,* 23 January 1921.

costume of Canio, beats a drum, and makes loud vocal noises is affording a remarkably close approximation of Caruso. In the single season of 1911–1912 there were nine performances of *Pagliacci,* in eight of which Caruso was the Canio.

His part in establishing the popularity of *Aïda* — by far the most frequently performed opera in the repertories of Gatti and Conried — was almost as great. In the fifteen years preceding the arrival of Caruso it was offered forty-six times, an average of about three performances in a season, or a number justified by its inherent musical interests. In the sixteen seasons during which Caruso sang Rhadames — he omitted it from his list from 1918 onward — it was given one hundred and ten times, or nearly seven times a season, year in and year out. Of this total, Caruso was heard in sixty-four performances, or in nearly three of every five. It might be said that the lengthening of the seasons had a part in the larger totals for these works in later years — but there was no comparable increase in the performances of the Wagner scores, or those by Mozart, Weber, etc.

It is apparent that on such materials as these the success of the Metropolitan during the profitable years of Gatti was founded, and was perpetuated even when the figure who gave it meaning was gone. That success, of course, was primarily financial — but the exploitation of a few operas with a favourite singer can hardly be said to merit, for the Metropolitan, the 'blue-ribbon of the operatic world,' as the partisans of the house liked to believe it did. Perhaps it was this type of commercialism that built up the subscription list and permitted the production of those 'novelties' which marked the last three decades of the Metropolitan's repertory. But a considerable number of these were Italian in origin and theatrical in character, produced with an eye to commercial success. Since they were uniformly unsuccessful, it would have been no more costly, and certainly more valuable for the prestige of the house — not to mention the pleasure of the limited number of music-lovers who are also opera-goers — if the Metropolitan had allotted at least

equal energy to the investigation of the repertories of Mozart, Gluck, and Händel which have languished for most of this period.

It is not likely that Caruso would have been less a beloved artist if he had appeared as Canio or Rhadames merely two or three times in each season, instead of five, six, seven, or eight times. Nor would the sense of personal loss have been less universally felt at his death. Since he apparently cared little for great wealth, it is hardly likely that Caruso would have himself objected to reduced activity and diminished earnings in New York. It is interesting to know, for example, that he appraised his own services at a valuation considerably lower than that put upon them by the Metropolitan. Before the contract which gave him his largest fee at the Metropolitan was agreed upon in 1914, Caruso was allowed the option of naming any sum to which, in his opinion, he felt himself entitled. Four thousand dollars per performance was set as the maximum, or an amount double the sum he had been receiving up to that time. Caruso replied to Chairman Kahn that he would be satisfied with twenty-five hundred dollars per performance. Any amount in excess of that, he declared, would place upon him an obligation which he did not feel equal to discharging ; it would constantly be urging him towards an effort which, he felt, would interfere with the quality of his performance. For the remaining seven years of his association with the Metropolitan, he was content to receive this fee, though many another artist — none of whose importance to the Metropolitan was so great, at the time, as Caruso's — would certainly have taken advantage of the opportunity to bank a maximum sum when it was offered.[79]

Even in endorsing the cheques which he received for each performance during his career at the Metropolitan, Caruso preserved the conscientiousness that characterized everything relating to his art. On each voucher, which he saved carefully and filed for future reference, he noted a personal appraisal of

[79] I am indebted for these details to Bruno Zirato, secretary to Caruso during the last years of the tenor's life.

his own performance. From a number of these, relating to his middle years at the Metropolitan, there may be observed the following — for a performance of *Carmen* on Wednesday evening 27 January 1915, the inscription was a mere 'Buona' ; for a *Manon* on Friday evening 29 January 1915 — 'Buona in generale — Magnifico il III Atto' ; for an *Aïda* on Saturday evening 12 December 1914, only the Italian equivalent of 'Fairly Good.' On the other hand, he was occasionally rapturous about his own performance, as is shown by the voucher for a performance of *Rigoletto* on Thursday evening 30 March 1916, which is inscribed 'Meravigliosa.'

Caruso's earnings as a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, both in opera and concert, were :

Year	*Fee*	*Appearances* [80]	*Total*
1903–1904	$ 960	29 in opera, plus 2	$ 29,807.62
1904–1905	1152	54 " " " 3	65,664
1905–1906	1344	60 " " " 4	87,984
1906–1907	1440	62 " " " 0	89,280
1907–1908 [81]	2000	68 " " " 2	140,000
1908–1909	2000	42 " " " 2	88,350
1908–1909	2500	7 outside appearances	14,500
1909–1910	2000	57 in opera, plus 1	116,350
1910–1911	2000	28 " " " 2	61,000
1911–1912	2000	50 " " " 0	100,000
1912–1913	2000	50 " " " 1	103,000
1913–1914	2000	50 " " " 0	100,000
1914–1915	2500	28 " "	70,000
1915–1916	2500	49 " "	118,000
1916–1917	2500	49 " "	118,000
1917–1918	2500	50 " "	125,000
1918–1919	2500	49 " "	122,000
1919–1920	2500	47 " "	117,000
1920	2500	10 " "	25,000
			$1,690,935.62

[80] This table shows the number of opera performances sung by Caruso in New York and on tour, as well as the concerts given under contract with the Metropolitan. In later years, his concerts were separately managed and are not included in this table. For several concerts Caruso received more than the fee for his opera performances, accounting for the discrepancies in the totals for 1903–04, and 1905–06.

[81] Previous to 1907–1908, the figure expressed in dollars is the equivalent, at the prevailing exchange, of the francs stipulated in Caruso's contract. The number of these was : in 1903, 5000 ; in 1904, 6000 ; in 1905, 7000 ; and in 1906, 7500.

During his New York career, Caruso appeared in thirty-six different roles, in as many operas. The works in which he appeared were : *Rigoletto, Aïda, La Traviata, Il Trovatore, Un Ballo in Maschera, Tosca, La Bohème, Manon Lescaut, Madama Butterfly, La Fanciulla del West, Lucrezia Borgia, La Gioconda, L'Amore dei Tre Re, L'Elisir d'Amore, Lucia di Lammermoor, Pagliacci, Lodoletta, Cavalleria Rusticana, La Sonnambula, La Favorita, Marta, Fedora, Le Prophète, Les Huguenots, Faust, Carmen, Germania, Armide, Adriana Lecouvreur, Manon, Julien, Samson et Dalila, Les Pêcheurs de Perles, L'Africaine, Iris* and *La Juive.*

EPILOGUE

THE years from 1915 to 1921 do not lend themselves as easily to summary and analysis as the discernible periods before and afterwards, for several reasons. The most prominent of these reasons was, of course, the World War ; and the second, though superficially not so extraordinary a disaster, was even more extensive in its lasting effects upon the Metropolitan. This, naturally, was the loss of Toscanini.

The most obvious effect of the war upon the Metropolitan was the ban upon those German works whose further performance, so it was said, would have belied the sincerity of America's interest in the conflict. But there were secondary effects almost as important as this. There was not only the loss of the works themselves ; there was the substitution of a number of scores which would otherwise, most likely, never have reached production in the Metropolitan — *Lodoletta, La Reine Fiammette, Mireille, St. Elizabeth, The Polish Jew, Crispino e la Comare,* to name but a half dozen. Of all the substitutes for the works of Wagner, *Oberon* alone may be regarded as reasonable compensation.

Thus a consideration of the repertory during this period yields little that can be regarded as definitely illustrative of a recognizable trend, outward factors being of such great im-

portance. But it is difficult to understand the leisureliness with which the rejected scores were restored, when the war was over and the animus against things Teutonic began to abate. The beginning was made timidly with *Parsifal* in 1919–1920, *Tristan* and *Lohengrin* followed in 1920–1921, and *Die Walküre* in 1921–1922. It might be thought that a restoration of the complete *Ring* cycle should have been the next enterprise of the Metropolitan — but that did not occur until the season of 1924–1925, a full three years later. There were presentations, meanwhile, of *Tannhäuser, Die Meistersinger,* and *Der Rosenkavalier ;* but also the production, in the German department of the company's activities, of such works as *Die Tote Stadt* and *Mona Lisa.* These might well have awaited the completion of more important business, had they not been required as 'vehicles' for this or that new singer. Meanwhile, neither *Falstaff* nor *Otello, Pelléas* nor *Khovanshchina* — all possible, since they were by 'Allied' composers — were brought forward to fill the gaping emptiness in the Metropolitan's serious repertory.

During this period, too, there first began to be apparent the lack of a central artistic authority in the affairs of the Metropolitan. This was obviously a result of Toscanini's departure ; but it was significant of more than the loss of merely a single personality. The standards of Toscanini, the kind of performances he insisted upon, were not limited merely to the works under his own direction, during his years at the Metropolitan. It was an influence which affected all the phases of the repertory, and which manifested itself in works in which he was in no way involved personally. It is not my contention that Toscanini was in himself an indispensable asset to the Metropolitan — but the failure of the institution to secure a musician of at least comparable ability, or to invest in some *other* personality, even an inferior one, a relative jurisdiction and authority — *this* was the failure that was catastrophic.

The quality of the singers added to the Metropolitan roster

during this era is illuminated most completely by the inordinate number of new names, for a large number of the fresh personalities were present plainly on a trial basis. Of the half a hundred singers introduced in principal roles during these six seasons, less than a dozen — Muzio, Gigli, Easton, Johnson, Hackett, Schumann, de Luca, Mardones, Ponselle, Garrison, and Gordon — initiated important careers at the Metropolitan. To these may be added Julia Claussen, Louis D'Angelo, Kathleen Howard, and Pompilio Malatesta who remained at the Metropolitan for the most of the recent period to sing subsidiary roles. But who of contemporary opera-goers recalls the appearance in the Metropolitan of Edvina, Villani, Le Fontenay, Couzinou, Besanzoni, Montesanto, Martino, Zanelli, or Kingston — all of whom sang principal roles during these years — recalls, indeed, whether they were male or female ?

To these two categories of singers must be added a third — since it is larger than either of these — composed largely of American singers who were deemed worthy of Metropolitan appearances, but who lacked the capacity or the patience to establish themselves firmly in these surroundings. It is a long list, and would include, if limited to merely a dozen, Mary Ellis, Mary Mellish, Reinald Werrenrath, Mario Chamlee, Thomas Chalmers, Margaret Romaine, Marie Tiffany, Chief Caupolican, Ruth Miller, May Peterson, Cecil Arden, Alice Gentle, and Evelyn Scotney. It is plain that this period — 1915–1921 — launched the Metropolitan fairly upon the troubled seas of its recent inferior singing.

The one department of the institution to demonstrate genuine animation and progress during this period was the ballet. For the first time in the Metropolitan's history, it produced important works in its own field, with the assistance of dancers as able as Adolph Bolm, Giuseppe Bonfiglio, Rosina Galli, Ottokar Bartik, and Florence Rudolph. It was a development undoubtedly influenced and conditioned by the visit of the Russian

ballet — which actually gave Bolm to the Metropolitan — and the brief presence of Monteux. In fact, ballet presentations ceased after a relatively brief time.

From the one hundred and twenty performances which Gatti had given in his first season — 1908–1909 — the number continued to march relentlessly forward. The highest total to this time was recorded in the last of Caruso's seasons — 1920–1921 — when one hundred and fifty-five performances were given in a season three weeks longer than that of 1908. If the normal number of performances given in the first season — an average of six a week — had been preserved, this would have meant an increase of eighteen performances. But the increase of thirty-five was almost double — the normal eighteen — meaning that in seventeen of the twenty-three weeks, an additional performance had been crowded in. It is the contention of the Metropolitan that the musicians' union required payment for eight performances a week, whether they were given or not. However, the effect upon the quality of the orchestral playing and upon the general character of the ensemble could not fail to be disastrous, especially since the number of orchestral players had been reduced and the general quality of the conductors had declined. But the institution continued to be the proud possessors of a balanced budget, and a surplus besides — extenuators of all failings !

The Post-Caruso Seasons — 1921–1932

1921–1922

From 1911 to 1920, the average number of Caruso's appearances at the Metropolitan was almost forty in a season ; which meant that aside from *Armide* and *Le Prophète,* a considerable proportion of the season's schedule was automatically given over to the repetition of the conventional tenor repertory. The other less conventional operas with which Caruso was associated — *Julien, Samson, Les Huguenots, L'Africaine* — were not long

enough in the active list (during his years at the Metropolitan) to colour it importantly. This domination of the typical season by a single figure was a characteristic of the Metropolitan's history during the years from 1903 to 1920. It was — for an operatic organization that generally followed the path of least resistance — a reasonable concomitant of the presence of so potent a personality. What was censurable, however, was the unwillingness of the Metropolitan to revise that procedure when the person who had justified it was gone for ever. There was no disposition, upon Caruso's death, to recognize that an irreplaceable figure had departed : Gigli, Martinelli, Lauri-Volpi (when he arrived), Fullin, Fleta, etc., were all advanced as plausible substitutes for a voice whose like the Metropolitan had never heard before, and has not known since. It was the persistence of this attitude which stamped the Metropolitan for the next fourteen seasons of its history as a static and, at times, a retrogressive institution ; and kept it almost wholly innocent of the important changes in methods of staging and production which were taking place elsewhere in the theatrical and operatic world.

However, in terms of his own objectives, Gatti's resourcefulness had prepared the Metropolitan admirably for the crisis created by the death of Caruso. The season of 1921–1922 saw Amelita Galli-Curci, Maria Jeritza, and Titta Ruffo become members of the Metropolitan Opera Company for the first time ; and Feodor Chaliapine, now to be respected as the greatest singing actor of his day, returned after his early, unhappy experience in 1907–1908. The end of the season, however, saw another link with the past severed ; for Geraldine Farrar ended her fifteen-year career at the Metropolitan. There had been alarm in the Metropolitan when Caruso died, for fear that the subscription list would be drastically affected, but the opening of the season found the subscription sale larger than ever before, as many persons thought this an opportune time to obtain seats, under the impression that many cancellations would fol-

low the death of Caruso. There were very few cancellations, and the new subscribers accepted whatever locations were available.

For only the second time since 1903, the opening of the Metropolitan season on 14 November, lacked the presence of Caruso. In his stead, however, there was the solace of a vocalist who had stirred more curiosity than had any other since the arrival of Caruso. For the debut of Galli-Curci a new scenic production of *La Traviata* had been prepared, the work of Urban. Otherwise the novelty of the occasion had been lessened by the frequent appearances of the singer with the Chicago Opera Association in New York ; and somewhat lessened as well were her vocal qualities, which were never again of their early brilliance. Her associates in the principal roles were Gigli and de Luca. There was also a new production (Italian in origin) for *Lucia* when it was presented with Galli-Curci on 17 November, with Gigli, Danise, and Mardones, under the direction of Papi. Between these two events, on the 16th there was a restoration of the second-night performance of Wagner — for the first time since 1917 — with a presentation of *Lohengrin* in which were Easton, Sembach, Matzenauer, Whitehill, and Gustafson (Heinrich).

Though Galli-Curci had been rapturously received on the opening night, the season acquired a new momentum with the debut of Jeritza on the 19th, at the first Saturday *matinée*. To the interest of a new singer concerning whom New York had no preconceptions was added the presentation of a new opera, Erich Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt*,# indicating that Gatti had made an unusual effort to make Jeritza's entry an auspicious one. Indeed, it had been his desire to introduce her to America in 1914, but the outbreak of the war and the difficulty of obtaining her release from foreign commitments had delayed that introduction seven years. The quality of Jeritza's performance imparted an interest to *Die Tote Stadt* that few contemporary scores — *Rosenkavalier* and *L'Amore* aside — had contained in their

Metropolitan presentation, but after six performances in this season and four in the next it vanished from sight and hearing. No doubt the cruel *tessitura* of both the principal roles influenced that retirement. Harrold, who appeared as Paul, is commonly held to have impaired his voice permanently through this effort ; and the voice of Jeritza (Marietta) also showed its effects. In the cast were Leonhardt (Frank) and Telva (Brigitta), with Bodanzky conducting. That fine artist, George Meader, began a ten years' career at the Metropolitan in *Die Tote Stadt* as Victorin. Scenery was provided by Kautsky of Vienna, marking the third new production of the week. This total was further swelled on the 26th when *Rigoletto* was offered with Galli-Curci, Chamlee, de Luca, and Rothier, with new scenery from Milan by Vittorio Rota.

The full extent of Jeritza's value to the Metropolitan was not realized immediately, however ; not until she was presented in her next role, after a repetition of *Die Tote Stadt* on 24 November. This occurred on 1 December, when Jeritza was heard for the first time in *Tosca.* For the first time in the history of the Metropolitan, and, no doubt, in the history of opera in America, a soprano impersonating Floria Tosca delivered 'Vissi d'arte' from a prone position, gazing into the footlights — and such a furore as this provoked had never before been heard in the auditorium. The impression was more of a concerted nervous eruption from the audience than merely decorous applause. Jeritza might have had as long and as spectacular a career in New York without this *Tosca ;* but no role in which she afterwards appeared was impressed so vividly with her personality. There were mutterings in the press at the unorthodox interpolation by Jeritza, and the singer produced a tale that cited Puccini's admiration for the device. All of which was highly irrelevant — for so potent a means for impressing an audience, once discovered, would never leave a *prima donna's* characterization ; least of all, a *prima donna* with Jeritza's taste for the spectacular. In the cast with Jeritza were Scotti, the

classic Scarpia of the Metropolitan, and Aureliano Pertile, a tenor who made one of the most inconspicuous debuts ever recorded, as Cavaradossi. The conductor was Moranzoni. Jeritza's other roles during this season were Santuzza (for the first time on 10 December, with Pertile, Perini, and Picco) ; Sieglinde, in a performance of *Die Walküre* to be discussed later in this section ; and Elsa in *Lohengrin* on 6 January, with Sembach, Whitehill, Blass, and Matzenauer.

An equally extraordinary event in the Metropolitan's history, though one of infinitely higher artistic calibre, was the first Boris by Chaliapine, on 9 December. It was not only the artist's first appearance in the Metropolitan in over a dozen years ; it marked the first time that he had sung this role in America. The idiosyncrasies of his first engagement were no longer so aggressive, and those that remained were regarded as the prerogatives of a great artist. As in all his subsequent appearances in the role at the Metropolitan, Chaliapine sang in Russian, the other principals and the chorus using the Italian text. His associates were Gordon (Marina), Howard (The Nurse), Delaunois (Theodore), Harrold (Dmitri), Rothier (Pimenn), and Ananian (Varlaam). Probably no one in the theatre regarded Chaliapine with so much awe as did the conductor, Papi, which did not contribute strikingly to a vigorous performance by the orchestra. However, it may merely have been caution, for Chaliapine's eccentricities are legendary. In a subsequent performance of *Boris*, on the 14th, Pertile was heard as Dmitri, Matzenauer as Marina.

For Ruffo there had been planned a revival of *Ernani*,[82] but the performance of 8 December found the baritone indisposed, and it was given with Danise (Don Carlos), Ponselle (Elvira), Martinelli (Ernani), and Mardones (Don Ruy Gomez). Papi was the conductor. Although Ruffo's absence was deplored and Ponselle's singing was deficient in style, the performance was

[82] The last previous revival of *Ernani* at the Metropolitan was on 28 January 1903. It was given at the Manhattan Opera House on 11 December 1907.

FEODOR CHALIAPINE

well received. Ruffo at length made his debut on 19 January in *Il Barbiere*, singing Figaro brilliantly — with Cora Chase (Rosina), Chamlee, Mardones (Don Basilio), and Malatesta (Dr. Bartolo) — but he was not heard in *Ernani* until the 29th. Aside from his appearance as Don Carlos, the cast of the opera was unchanged. A recurrence of his indisposition, following this performance, kept Ruffo inactive for the remainder of the season.

Also a revival, on November 30, for Farrar, was the first performance of Massenet's *La Navarraise* since those of 1895 for Calvé. This was the last new role undertaken by Farrar at the Metropolitan. It was not one of her auspicious essays, for her ability as an actress did not encompass the tragic power required for success in this work. In the cast with her were Rothier (Garrido), Crimi (Araquil), D'Angelo (Remigio), Paltrinieri (Ramon), and Ananian (Bustamente). It was given as part of a double bill, followed by *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Ponselle, Gigli, and Chalmers.

Though there were new settings, during this season, for *Rigoletto*, *Lucia*, and *Traviata* — not to mention *Ernani*, *Loreley*, and *La Navarraise* when they were revived — there were none for *Die Walküre* when it was restored to the repertory on 16 December. This was the first of the reinstated works by Wagner to be prepared for presentation in German, though the language was used for this season's performances of *Tristan*, the first of them given on 28 November, with Sembach, Matzenauer, Gordon, Whitehill, Blass, and Meader (Shepherd *).[83] It has been customary, in the last several years to excuse the non-replacement of the *Ring* sets of 1913 on the basis of a projected removal to a 'new' Metropolitan, in which scenery built for the present house would not have been usable. Yet the new productions for *Lucia*, *Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, and similar repertory works later indicate a marked inconsistency of policy which it is difficult to reconcile with this argument. It is now the contention

[83] German had been heard for the first time in the Metropolitan since the war during the previous season, on 6 March 1921, when Johannes Sembach performed Walther's 'Preislied' in German. The rest of the programme — devoted entirely to Wagner — was performed in English, including excerpts from *Tristan* and *Parsifal*.

of the management that in a 'new' Metropolitan a more modern staging of Wagner would have been attempted, but that *Lucia, Rigoletto, Traviata,* etc., would have been carried over unaltered. In *Die Walküre,* when it was revived, were Whitehill (Wotan), Sembach, Gustafson (Hunding), Matzenauer (Brünnhilde), Gordon, and Jeritza (Sieglinde). Jeritza was a picturesque Sieglinde, but her Moravian accent and the vagaries of her singing were scarcely kind to Wagner.

The desire of the management to use Jeritza as Elsa in *Lohengrin* resulted in a number of polyglot performances — the first on 6 January — the principals singing in German, the chorus using English. With Jeritza were Matzenauer, Whitehill (Telramund), Sembach, and Blass. On the 30th Louis Rosza (Telramund) made his operatic debut in New York, and on 16 February Harrold was the Lohengrin. The other characters remained constant. The season's Wagner was completed by *Parsifal,* sung on 9 December with Matzenauer, Sembach, Gustafson (Gurnemanz), Whitehill (Amfortas), and Didur ; and on 14 April with Easton (Kundry), Harrold, Blass (Gurnemanz), and Whitehill. Bodanzky was the conductor for all the preceding works.[84]

To the especial credit of the season of 1921–1922 was the first production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in New York — the first work by this composer to be heard at the Metropolitan since the performances of *Figaro* in 1917–1918. In his designs for the opera Urban followed the lines of a revival of *Così fan tutte* at the Residenz Theatre in Munich, and compressed the dimensions of the unsuitably large Metropolitan stage by constructing an inner platform upon it. In an article of 14 July 1935 in *The New York Times,* Olin Downes says that this innovation was 'of Mr. Gatti's own devising.' Regardless of its origin, this idea was most handsomely suited to the production, enhancing by much the effective presentation of the score. In the cast heard at the first performance on 24 March were Easton (Fiordiligi), Bori (Despina), Peralta(Dorabella), de Luca (Guglielmo), Meader (Ferrando), and Didur (Don

[84] *Parsifal* continued to be given in English. The transition to German had been accomplished with less difficulty in *Die Walküre* and *Tristan* because of the lack of a chorus in the first, and the use of it but briefly in the second.

Alfonso), with Bodanzky conducting. Though Didur's voice was no longer the instrument it had been ten years before, the quality of the singing, as well as that of the ensemble, was of uncommon excellence for contemporary presentations of Mozart in New York. The recitatives throughout were much abbreviated, and two arias of Ferrando were omitted. Four performances in this season, three in 1922–1923, two in 1923–1924 and in 1925, plus a single one in 1927–1928 brought the total for this revival to twelve.

Though in the previous season but three additions to the repertory had been made, this year was marked by no fewer than eight alterations from the preceding list. With those already detailed were Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Snegourotchka*, Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys* and Catalani's *Loreley*. In the unexplored Russian works Gatti had found a fertile field ; and though his productions were not unfailingly authentic — neither in language nor singers — the interest in their freshness, and the worth of the music placed them among the most admirable of his various endeavours. When *Snegourotchka* # was presented on 23 January, in French, with scenery by Boris Anisfeld, it marked the *première* in America for this work. Some of the music was familiar through its use in *Le Soleil de Nuit*, a ballet in the repertory of the Diaghileff troupe, also recently presented in America by de Basil's Ballet Russe. The cast for *Snegourotchka* included Bori (Snegourotchka), Harrold (The Czar), Yvonne d'Arle (Koupava), and Rothier (King Winter). Bodanzky was the conductor. The popularity of the work never approached that of *Boris*, and it was even well behind that of the subsequent presentation of *Sadko*, eight performances being its Metropolitan record.

Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys* was also new to New York when it was given for the first time on 5 January. The only previous announcement of its production, during the period of opera in German, had not been fulfilled (1889). Wolff played the familiar overture before the second act, and the performance of the opera once again demonstrated this to be the best music in the score. In the cast were Gigli (Mylio), Ananian

(St. Corentin), Danise (Karnac), Rothier (Le Roi), Ponselle (Margared), Alda (Rozenn), and Picco (Jahel). The season's Italian novelty was Catalani's *Loreley*, which had been introduced to New York by the Chicago Opera Association on 13 February 1919. Gatti and Toscanini had planned the production of this work in 1908, but the difficulty of preparing it had diverted their attention instead to the same composer's *La Wally*. Though it doubled the total of performances for that work, its eight performances in two seasons can scarcely be termed impressive. At the first hearing in the Metropolitan on 4 March the cast offered Muzio (Loreley), Sundelius (Anna of Rehberg), Gigli (Walter), Mardones (Rudolph), and Danise (Baron Hermann). The conductor was Moranzoni.

To the strength of the company in this season were added several new personalities, of whom only Louis Hasselmans, the conductor, endured for an extended career at the Metropolitan. In the manner of Monteux and Wolff, Hasselmans made his debut directing *Faust*, on 20 January, a performance with Farrar, Martinelli, and Whitehill. He remained in charge of the French repertory for fourteen years, until the spring of 1936. During his first season he conducted *Carmen*, on the 25th, with Farrar, Martinelli, de Luca, and Bori (Micaëla) ; *Le Roi d'Ys* on the 27th ; *Manon* on 3 February with Farrar, Chamlee (des Grieux *), de Luca, and Rothier ; *Louise* on the 8th, and *Samson et Dalila* on 6 April, with Claussen, Martinelli, Rothier, and Whitehill. There were repetitions of these works also. Yvonne d'Arle made her debut as Musetta in a performance of *La Bohème* on 1 December, with Alda, Crimi, de Luca, Didur, and Mardones. Though her name indicates otherwise, d'Arle was a local product whose prominence at the Metropolitan was not much more extensive than those of the similar sopranos who preceded — and followed — her in the role of Musetta. Also briefly a member of the company was Viola Philo, who made her debut on 20 December as the Priestess in *Aïda*, with Peralta, Pertile, Matzenauer, Danise, Mardones, and Gustafson. Moranzoni conducted. The final new singer was Manuel Salazar, tenor, whose first appearance occurred on 31 December, as Alvaro in a performance of *Forza del Destino* with Ponselle, Delaunois, Didur, Danise, and Chalmers.

The retirement of Farrar in this season, occurring simultaneously with the warm reception of Jeritza conveyed the impression that her decision was motivated, in part at least, by pique at the success of the new soprano. However, her intimate friends had known Farrar's intention to retire from opera when she reached forty, and from the concert stage ten years later.

Both of these intentions she fulfilled. Her actual decision regarding the opera was made public on 18 January ; and after that, each of her performances was attended by demonstrations of affection and expressions of regret that her career at the Metropolitan was approaching its end.

Following a performance of *Madama Butterfly* on 23 January, Farrar responded to the frenzied applause of her adulators by inquiring of them the role in which they preferred to see her for the last time. There were immediate cries of 'Tosca !' (to indicate their loyal preference for her in the role that had been Jeritza's greatest triumph) and the name was taken up by the audience, which continued to shout for five minutes. Finally the demonstration was quieted when Farrar pointed out that the choice was, finally, the director's, and suggested that they write their suggestions to him. (Was she mindful, perhaps, of Fremstad's farewell — as Elsa — in one of her least happy roles ?) Farrar's last *Tosca,* however, occurred on 10 April ; her last *Carmen* on the 17th, with Harrold, Mardones, and Sundelius, was attended by a barrage of bouquets from the 'Gerry-flappers,' concealed in the first row. Three volleys in all found their way over the footlights.

Her actual farewell, on the last Saturday *matinée* of the season, 22 April, found Farrar in *Zaza,* her last memorable creation at the Metropolitan — and also the last performance of the opera in the house. In the audience were a whole brigade of 'Gerry-flappers,' nearly five hundred in all ; each of them carried a small white pennant inscribed 'Farrar' ! At the conclusion of the opera an enormous banner reading 'Hurrah Farrar ! Farrar Hurrah !' was strung from one side of the parterre to the other, to the accompaniment of hysterical squeals of delight from her partisans. It was obvious that Farrar could not escape without making a speech ; and she finally said, among other things, 'I am leaving this institution because I want to' — either a proud rebuff to the words of the gossip-mongers, or a

pert rebuke to the persons who had associated her departure with Jeritza's arrival.[85] While the 'Gerry-flappers' massed themselves about the two rear exits of the house, on Thirty-ninth and Fortieth Streets, Farrar was carried out to her automobile on Seventh Avenue. She was then driven to Fortieth Street where the demonstration continued with the banners stretched across the street, and confetti showering out of the windows.

When the Chicago Opera Company opened its season on 23 January, with d'Alvarez, Muratore, and Dufranne in *Samson* under Polacco, it was understood that the ensuing five weeks would mark the last visit of the company to New York. Nevertheless, Garden, who was still the director, informed the press : 'This idea of rivalry is all bosh. I have only the friendliest feeling for the Metropolitan Opera Company and so far as I am concerned I should like to see a *cordiale entente* established.' The company did not further such an ideal of harmony by giving New York its first opportunity to hear a genuinely contemporary score in the opera house — Prokofieff's *L'Amour des Trois Oranges* — by reviving *Salome*, or by venturing into German opera for the first time. After promises of production for three years, Prokofieff finally conducted his own work in New York for the first time, on 14 February in the Manhattan Opera House. There was no excess of enthusiasm for the opera among the listeners, either professional or lay. The *décor* by Boris Anisfeld and the quality of the performance were the subjects of the audience's praise. In the cast were Cotreuil (King of Clubs), Mojica (The Prince), Irene Pavloska (Princess Clarice), Dufranne (Tchelio), Nina Koshetz (Fata Mor-

[85] On 19 January it was disclosed that Jeritza had been engaged for a four-year period. Gatti also expressed a hope, at this time, that Farrar would return to the company for the season of 1923–1924, inasmuch as her concert engagements for 1922–1923 prevented any change of plans even if she did reconsider her decision to abandon opera. Also, in answer to rumours that Farrar had been offered a contract for only half a season — an explanation for her irritation — Gatti stated that Jeritza's arrangement was also for an equivalent period. This was announced as a definite policy for the future, in order to diversify the seasons as much as possible.

gana), and James Wolfe (Farfarello). There was no repetition, a scheduled one for 6 February being cancelled because of the illness of Mojica. The performance of *Salome* on 4 February was the first in New York since Hammerstein had presented his day of Strauss in the same house on 24 March 1910. In the Chicago revival Garden was again Salome, with Riccardo Martin (Herod), Eleanor Reynolds (Herodias), and Dufranne (Jochanaan). The conductor was Polacco, as he was also for the repetitions on the 10th and 18th of February.[86]

Lack of competent principal singers defeated the aspirations of the Chicago company towards the works of Wagner in the original tongue. There were two attempts in New York during this visit, neither of them distinguished. In *Tristan* on 31 January was Beatrice Kottlar (debut, Isolde), Richard Schubert (debut, Tristan), Eleanor Reynolds (Brangaene), William Beck (Kurwenal), and James Wolfe (debut, Marke) ; and in *Tannhäuser* on 8 February, Raisa (Elisabeth), Van Gordon (Venus), Schubert (Tannhäuser), and Schwarz (Wolfram). The conductor for *Tannhäuser* was Angelo Ferrari ; for *Tristan*, Polacco. In other directions, however, the company continued its acquisition of able singers who were unknown to New York, presenting Maria Ivogun, Claire Dux, and Joseph Schwarz. The charm of Ivogun's voice and her artistry as a singer were enthusiastically recognized when she made her debut on 28 January in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, with Schipa (Almaviva), Trevisan (Figaro), and Lazzari (Don Basilio). In the lesson scene she sang a vocal version of Strauss's 'Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald,' also dell'Acqua's 'Villanelle.'

[86] Much in the manner of Hammerstein, who had denied any interest in *Salome* during Conried's difficulties in 1906, and subsequently produced the work when he had the singers for it, Gatti-Casazza during this revival declared that he did not consider the score worth producing. Further, he said, it was not an extraordinary work of art, nor had he ever thought so. There was a Metropolitan revival, however, on 13 January 1934. In the portion of his memoirs published in the *Saturday Evening Post* for 23 December 1933 Gatti says that though he found the music of *Elektra* very heroic and intense, he believed *Salome* to be more lyrical and better theatre.

On the evening of the 28th Mary McCormick appeared in New York for the first time, as Micaëla in a performance of *Carmen* with Garden, Muratore, and Baklanoff. Schwarz made his debut in *La Traviata* (Germont) on the 24th, with Graziella Pareto (Violetta, debut), and Schipa, winning a repetition of 'Di Provenza il mar.' He was also heard in *Pagliacci* (Tonio), on 2 February, when Dux made her debut (Nedda), the tenor being Ulysses Lappas. The second portion of this bill was Carpenter's *Birthday of the Infanta*, presented with Mme. Felsan (Infanta), Pavley (Gypsy), and Oukrainsky (The Dwarf). Both works were directed by Alexander Smallens. During her final season in New York Garden was heard in *Pelléas* on 25 January, with Maguenat, Dufranne, and Cotreuil ; in *L'Amore* on 30 January, with Johnson, Baklanoff, and Lazzari ; in *Louise* on 7 February, with Lappas (Julien), Baklanoff (The Father), and Claessens (The Mother), Grovlez conducting ; in *Thaïs*, with Dufranne and Ritch (Nicias) on the 16th ; on the 21st in *Le Jongleur*, with Dufranne, Payan, Dua, and Defrere ; in *Monna Vanna*, with Muratore, Baklanoff, and Cotreuil on the 23rd ; and in the final performance of the visit — *L'Amore* with Johnson, Baklanoff, and Lazzari — on the 25th.

With the passing of the Chicago company, there passed also one of the masterpieces of operatic literature, for their performance of *Otello* on 22 February was the last offered in New York by a company properly equipped for its presentation. Baklanoff (Iago), Raisa (Desdemona), Marshall (Otello), Claessens (Emilia), Mojica (Roderigo), Lazzari (Lodovico), and Oliviero (Cassio) were the principal singers. The conductor was Cimini. A dozen years have passed since *Otello* was last heard in New York from a first-rate company.

Though the expiration of his contract was still more than a year off, Gatti received, on 5 March, an extension which carried his term of service forward to 1 May 1926. In making the announcement, Otto Kahn thanked Gatti in the name of his directors and the public of New York, declaring that his fourteen years as manager were 'characterized . . . by steadfast adherence to high artistic standards.' Garden, however, was less fortunate ; and the close of the season found her ready to announce her retirement from the Chicago Opera Association on 23 April, leaving behind her a deficit of one million one hundred thousand dollars for the season's operations. This obliga-

tion was discharged by Harold F. McCormick, following which Samuel Insull took over the presidency of the enterprise.[87] Though there was no official communication regarding the Metropolitan season, it was understood that the attendance had been larger than ever before.

1922–1923

OUT of tribute to Jeritza and her *Tosca,* Gatti offered that combination for his fifteenth opening night, on 13 November 1922, with Martinelli and Scotti as her leading associates.[88] As the procedure before had been Caruso-Toscanini openings, then Caruso openings, so Gatti embarked on a new practice with the loss of the great tenor. From 1921 on the openings were distributed among his leading female singers, all of them sopranos. Galli-Curci, in the preceding season, was succeeded in this year by Jeritza, who also opened the 1923 season ; then by Rethberg in 1924, Ponselle in 1925 and 1926, Jeritza again, followed by Ponselle, Bori, Müller, and Ponselle — until 1932, when for the first time since the death of Caruso a male singer was the principal performer of the evening. This was Lawrence Tibbett, who was heard as Simon Boccanegra.

Also retrospective was the season's second night, 15 November, given over to *Boris* with Chaliapine, Matzenauer, Delaunois, Harrold, and Mardones, under the direction of Papi. During this season, Chaliapine appeared in two other operas. The first of these were Boïto's *Mefistofele* on 18 November, in which he returned to a role that had earned him the greatest

[87] The organization also assumed the name of the Chicago Civic Opera Company, and established itself on a firm foundation by setting up a guarantee fund of $500,000 a year for five years. It was the original plan to find five hundred people who would subscribe, each year, whatever percentage of $1000 was needed to meet the deficit. But the plans were altered, and smaller sums were accepted as guarantees. The number of guarantors, within a half dozen years, totalled nearly three thousand, instead of the five hundred originally contemplated.

[88] Though the Metropolitan was still Toscanini-less, it could scarcely be said to be *Tosca*-less during these years. In 1921–1922, and 1922–1923 — in consequence of the interest aroused by Jeritza, and the departure of Farrar — the work was performed sixteen times !

censure during his earlier visit to the Metropolitan. Chaliapine demonstrated the value of that experience by comporting himself with considerably greater restraint. His loin-cloth was larger, his gestures less earthy ; and the audience was thus at liberty to concentrate on the artistic values in his performance. Alda and Gigli were his principal collaborators, with Moranzoni conducting. During the intermission after the Garden Scene, Georges Clemenceau, premier of France during the war, appeared in a box, and was greeted heartily by the audience. Chaliapine was also heard in two performances of *Don Carlos* (Philip II of Spain), including in his performances the soliloquy at the beginning of the third act, which is sometimes omitted. Though a rule against encores had been in force at the Metropolitan for a dozen years, Chaliapine indulged himself and the audience, at the first performance on 2 December, by repeating a portion of the soliloquy when the applause was unusually prolonged. The lack of control possessed by the Metropolitan management over Chaliapine's performances was demonstrated by his repetition of the licence when the work was given again on 13 December. On both occasions Papi was the obedient conductor and the associated singers were Martinelli, de Luca (Rodrigo), Peralta (Elizabeth), Gordon (Princess of Eboli), and Rothier (Grand Inquisitor). At the second performance of *Boris*, on 20 November, Edward Johnson was heard for the first time in the Metropolitan as Dmitri. His debut had occurred a few days before, on the 16th, as Avito in a performance of *L'Amore* with Bori, Danise, and Didur. His fine voice and manly bearing, as well as the remembrance of his past achievements with the Chicago Opera Association, earned him a warm reception and began the popularity with both the public and his associates which endures with his appointment to the directorship of the company in the spring of 1935.

The season's Wagnerian restorations made no further progress towards permitting the cycle of the *Ring* dramas to be heard again in New York. The only score by Wagner to be added

was *Tannhäuser*. Its retirement had antedated those of the other works still out of the repertory, for there had been no performance of *Tannhäuser* in 1916–1917 — even before patriotic fervour had been extended to the works of a man thirty-odd years dead. In the revival at the Metropolitan on 1 February 1923 was provided the opportunity for Jeritza to add another role to her list in New York, for she appeared as Elisabeth, with Matzenauer (Venus), Taucher (Tannhäuser), Bender (Landgraf Hermann), Bloch (Heinrich), Gustafson (Reinmar), Whitehill (Wolfram) and Delaunois (The Shepherd). There was new scenery by Kautsky, which remains the production currently in use. The work was given in the Paris version, though then, as since, a particularly valuable portion of the music of Venus in the first scene was omitted.

Such energies as the Metropolitan might have devoted to other works of Wagner were transmitted instead to the revival of *Der Rosenkavalier* and to the production of von Schillings' *Mona Lisa*. For the first time since the war there was a visible attempt to reconstruct the disbanded German section of the company. In the three previous seasons a knowledge of the English texts for the standard German repertory was a prerequisite for employment in this department at the Metropolitan, a prerequisite that few native German artists possessed. The intention of presenting Wagner in English was finally abandoned in this season, to the distress of the champions of opera in English, and to the relief of almost every one else. To what extent this decision was influenced by practical considerations — the desire to use Jeritza in Wagnerian roles whose English texts she could not master, the inability of the management to assemble a group of singers who were both plausible performers and possessors of a knowledge of English — will never be known. But it is fairly apparent that this trial of opera in English was hopelessly handicapped from its inception. However, the return to the use of German resulted in the organization of a German ensemble which not only permitted the reinstatement of

the works more quickly, but provided for an exploration of the new German literature. This opportunity, however, was not to be improved strikingly by the Metropolitan. In the next dozen years there were productions of *Jonny Spielt Auf*, *Violanta*, *Jenufa*, *Schwanda*, *Die Aegyptische Helena* — besides *Salome* and *Elektra* — hardly a representative list when the activities of Hindemith, Berg, Weil, Schoenberg, etc., are considered.

The revival of *Der Rosenkavalier* # acquainted New York with almost a wholly new cast when it was given on 17 November. Beside Bodanzky, who conducted, only Schlegel (the Polizeikomissär), and Pietro Audisio (Major-domo to the Princess), remained from the pre-war production. Paul Bender (debut, Baron Ochs) was hailed as a considerable improvement over the unfortunate Goritz, memory of whose ability was obscured by the fresher impression of his over-zealous patriotic services to Germany during the war. Easton (Marschallin von Werdenberg), Jeritza (Octavian), Gustav Schützendorf (debut, Faninal), and Sundelius (Sophie), were able successors to the various interpreters of these roles. New scenery for the revival was provided by Kautsky. Also a product of the same studios was the background for von Schillings' *Mona Lisa* #, in which were introduced Barbara Kemp — the composer's wife — and Michael Bohnen, when the work was first presented on 1 March. The ability of Kemp as an actress was admired, though there was no rapture aroused by her voice or by her singing of Mona Fiordalisa's music. Bohnen (Francesco) was respected, however, in both aspects of his performance, an impression that was but strengthened in his latter roles, until his eccentricities evicted all trace of artistic conscience from his characterizations. Also in the cast were Taucher (Giovanni), Gustafson (Sandro), Peralta (Ginevra), and Telva (Piccarda). The conductor was Bodanzky. There were five performances of *Mona Lisa* in this season. There would doubtless have been more than one in the next season had not Kemp withdrawn from the company for

reasons that were variously reported, and will be discussed later.

Among the German artists introduced to New York during this winter were Elisabeth Rethberg and Sigrid Onegin, two of the most prominent women singers of the day. Though the best accomplishments of Rethberg have been in the German repertory, and certain of Onegin's as well, they were both introduced in *Aïda* on 22 November, as Aïda and Amneris, with Martinelli, Danise, Mardones (Ramfis), and Edmund Burke (The King). Both new singers were appraised as excellent artists, whose services would be of salient value to the company. On the following evening, the first in a procession — during the next dozen years — of new German tenors was heard, Curt Taucher making his debut in *Die Walküre* (Siegmund), with Jeritza (Sieglinde), Gordon, Matzenauer (Brünnhilde), Bender (Hunding *), and Whitehill. *The Tribune* of 24 November pronounced Taucher to be 'dramatically and vocally thrilling,' a judgment that was scarcely supported by the singer's subsequent achievements.

Taucher was heard as Tristan on 27 November, with Matzenauer, Onegin (Brangaene *), Whitehill, and Bender (Marke *) ; as Parsifal on 8 December, in German, with Matzenauer, Bender (Gurnemanz *), Whitehill (Amfortas), Schützendorf (Klingsor), and Gustafson (Titurel) ; and again in *Die Walküre* on the 18th, a performance in which Rethberg appeared for the first time in a German role (Sieglinde). She was plainly more at home in this genre than as either Aïda or Nedda — (she had done the latter part for the first time on 2 December, in a performance of *Pagliacci* with Kingston and Danise). Her greater suitability for German parts was also demonstrated when she appeared in a performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* (Sophie), on the 23rd. Delia Reinhardt was also presented to New York for the first time in this season, making her debut on 27 January in a performance of *Die Walküre* (Sieglinde), with the season's usual cast. An illness shortly after prevented any extensive activity by Reinhardt, but she was heard again on 20 April, as Elsa in a *Lohengrin* with Claussen, Harrold, Whitehill, and Bohnen (Heinrich). In addition to their appearances in *Mona Lisa*, Kemp and Bohnen were also heard together in *Parsifal* on 3 March, as Kundry * and Gurnemanz *, with Taucher, Whitehill, and Schützendorf ; in *Lohengrin*, on the 8th, as Elsa * and Heinrich *, with Harrold,

Whitehall, and Claussen (Ortrud) ; and in *Tristan*, on 4 April, as Isolde * and Marke *, with Taucher, Onegin, and Whitehill. As Gurnemanz, Bohnen has had no peer at the Metropolitan. There was a rather significant exchange of compliments after the season's final performance of *Boris* on 14 March, when Bohnen presented Chaliapine with a ring in tribute to the Russian's great art, and Chaliapine flattered the German with a gold watch chain. The significance lay in the later tendencies in Bohnen, whose objective seemed to be the status of a Teutonic Chaliapine. However, eccentricities that were bearable in Philip II of Spain, or Mefistofele were decidedly objectionable in Wotan, Hagen, or King Marke. They cost Bohnen the esteem of many who respected his native gifts.

The Italian repertory was embellished by new sets for *Madama Butterfly* when that opera was given on 24 November at the *matinée*, with Easton (Cio-Cio-San), Martinelli, Scotti, Perini (Suzuki), and Arden (Kate Pinkerton). They were the work of Urban, as were also those for *Roméo et Juliette*, which was given on the following evening for the first time at the Metropolitan in eleven years. From the previous Metropolitan production remained Bada (Tybalt), and Rothier (Frère Laurent). The rest of the cast was new in this auditorium, and included Bori (Juliette), Gigli (Roméo), Delaunois (Stephano), de Luca (Mercutio), Didur (Capulet), and D'Angelo (Duke of Verona), with Hasselmans conducting. The revival of interest aroused by this work was testified by its ten performances in this season. Bori also added Violetta to her roles, appearing in *La Traviata* for the first time at the Metropolitan on 30 November, with Gigli and Danise, Moranzoni conducting.

For the first time since 1894, Rossini's *Guglielmo Tell* was included in a subscription season at the Metropolitan. The opera was revived on 5 January, with Ponselle (Matilda), Martinelli (Arnold), Danise (Tell), Mardones (Walter Fürst), and Didur (Gessler). The presentation was in Italian, under the direction of Papi, with new scenery by Rota. Five performances in this season and four in the next were the extent of this revival. Also new to the regime of Gatti was Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, presented on 21 March, with Ponselle (Selika), Gigli (da Gama), Danise (Nelusko), Didur (Don Pedro), Mario (Inez),

Telva (Anna), and Rothier (Grand Inquisitor).[89] There were a score of performances in the next half dozen years, and the work has had another restoration since, in the settings devised for this production by Urban. Bodanzky was the conductor. Urban's labours for the season also included a new *décor* for *Thaïs*, when Jeritza made her first appearance in the title role on 14 December. The principal assisting artists were Harrold (Nicias) and Whitehill (Athanaël), with Hasselmans conducting. *Thaïs* brought the largest attendance for any Christmas *matinée* during the directorship of Gatti.

There was no American novelty presented during this season, nor were there any performances in English. In contrast to the several previous seasons, in which there had been presentations, in the vernacular, of standard repertory works, the agitation for opera in English had subsided completely. Instead of the production of a new English or American work, Gatti presented another Italian novelty, Franco Vittadini's *Anima Allegra* #, on 14 February. It was neither better nor worse than the norm of such innovations, the performances of Bori (Consuelo), Lauri-Volpi (Pedro), and Armand Tokatyan (Lucio, debut), providing the occasion with its principal interests. Also in the cast were Didur (Don Eligio), Mario (Coralito), and Telva (Frasquita). Moranzoni directed the performance, for which Antonio Rovescalli of Milan had designed the scenery. Of the artists new to the Metropolitan in this cast, Queena Mario had made her debut as Micaëla in *Carmen* on 31 November, with Easton, Martinelli, de Luca, and Charlotte Ryan (debut, Frasquita), Hasselmans conducting; and Giacomo Lauri-Volpi began his career in *Rigoletto* on 27 January, with Galli-Curci, de Luca, and Rothier, under the direction of Moranzoni. The splendour of his voice was widely admired, but neither his art nor his taste was of similar quality. Tokatyan had been heard as Turiddu in a concert version of the opera on Sunday evening, 19 November, with Peralta, Picco, and Telva.

[89] The last previous performances at the Metropolitan (two) had been in 1906–1907, the first on 10 January 1907, with Caruso, Fremstad, Rappold (Inez), and Stracciari (Nelusko).

During this season Lauri-Volpi was also heard in *La Bohème* (Rodolfo), on 31 January, with Alda, Scotti, Rothier, Picco, and Sundelius ; in *La Traviata* (Alfredo) on 3 February, with Galli-Curci and Danise ; in *Tosca*, with Jeritza and Scotti on the 6th ; two days later in *Il Barbiere*, with Galli-Curci, Ruffo, and Didur ; in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Ponselle on 22 February ; and in *Madama Butterfly* on 21 March, with Scotti and Sabanieeva. The latter, who has been called upon to replace numerous indisposed sopranos during her lengthy career at the Metropolitan made her first appearance in a prophetic manner ; for it was as a substitute for Delia Reinhardt, in *Madama Butterfly*, on 24 February, with Gigli and Scotti. From a Russian opera company that had toured America in the previous winter the Metropolitan acquired Ina Bourskaya, who made her debut as Carmen on 2 March, in a performance with Martinelli, Mardones, and Morgana (Micaëla). Both Ruffo and Galli-Curci were again members of the company. The former appeared in *Aïda* (Amonasro) on 18 January — with Rethberg, Martinelli, Gordon, and Mardones — in addition to his more usual roles in *Ernani, Pagliacci,* and *Il Barbiere*. Galli-Curci made her season's farewell in *La Bohème* (Mimi), on 23 February, with Harrold, de Luca, Mardones, D'Angelo, and Sundelius.

To the German artists that were introduced to New York by the Metropolitan during this season was added another and more varied assortment of personalities during the engagement of the German Opera Company at the Manhattan Opera House. The retirement of the Chicago Opera Association from the field in New York had left the Metropolitan without competitors ; but the slimness of its own Wagnerian repertory provided the opportunity for the particular kind of opposition that the German company promised to provide. There was high-sounding talk of a 'Wagner Festival,' and of 'bringing Bayreuth to New York' in the preliminary announcements, little of which was fulfilled by the performances of the company. It had two excellent conductors, Leo Blech and Edouard Mörike, and a number of able singers, of whom four or five were really excellent ; but the orchestra was poor, the productions badly set, and the ensemble not impressive. To the public desire to hear these works, rather than the manner in which they were presented, may be attributed the success of the three weeks' season, and the extension for three weeks more.

As a choice for the opening was *Die Meistersinger*, which had not been heard in New York for six years when it was given on 12 February 1923. In the cast were Meta Seinemeyer (Eva), Robert Hutt (Walther), Friedrich Plaschke (Sachs), Alexander Kipnis (Pogner), Jessyke Koettrick (Magdalena), Desidor Zador (Beckmesser), and Benno Ziegler (Kothner). The vocal qualities of Kipnis, Plaschke, Seinmeyer, and Hutt were generally approved, but the highest praise was bestowed upon Blech, who conducted splendidly. On the second evening, 13 February Friedrich Schorr sang for the first time in New York, appearing as an impressive Wolfram in a performance of *Tannhäuser*. The work was given in the Dresden version, with Seinemeyer, Elsa Alsen (Venus), Adolph Lussmann (Tannhäuser), and Kipnis (Landgraf Hermann). Edouard Mörike conducted the third performance on the 14th, a *Lohengrin* in which Jacques Urlus, formerly of the Metropolitan, was the Lohengrin, with Elsa Wuehler (Elsa), Theodore Latterman (Telramund), Mme. Lorenz Hoellischer (Ortrud), and Ernst Lehmann (Heinrich). On the following day two artists who later sang with the Metropolitan company appeared for the first time in New York. Editha Fleischer was Woglinde in a *matinée* of *Das Rheingold* ; and Marcella Roeseler was heard as Rosalinde in the evening's *Die Fledermaus*. Fleischer sang Adele in this performance, which was conducted by Otto Schwartz.

The highest artistic level of the German Opera Company's season was reached in the various performances of *Tristan*, under the direction of Mörike. The first of these occurred on 16 February with Eva von der Osten (Isolde), Urlus (Tristan), Ottilie Metzger (Brangaene), Latterman (Kurwenal), and Kipnis (Marke). Though his orchestral material was crude, Mörike demonstrated a superior understanding of the score, and exemplary musicianship. It is not likely that New York had heard so poetic an interpretation of this score since the departure of Toscanini.

During this season Schorr was heard in *Die Walküre* (Wotan) on 20 February, with Alsen (Brünnhilde), von Osten (Sieglinde), Metzger (Fricka), Urlus, and Lehmann, Blech conducting ; in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Van der Decken) on the 24th, with Eugene Gottlieb conducting ; as Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* on the 28th, in which Claire Dux, *als Gast*, was the Eva, with Hutt, Lehmann (Pogner), Zador (Beckmesser), and Koettrick (Magdalena) ; and in repetitions of these roles during the extension of the season. By 8 March it was common gossip that his fine abilities had been recognized by the Metropolitan, a rumour

that was confirmed by his debut there in the following season. He has been a particular adornment of the institution ever since.

In addition to presenting the complete *Ring* cycle for the first time in New York since 1917, the Germany Opera Company also sang its *Götterdämmerung* on 2 March with the Norn scene, which had not been heard since the early performances directed by Toscanini. The Waltraute scene was also included in this version. In the performance of *Das Rheingold* on 15 February, Schützendorf, on loan from the Metropolitan, appeared as Alberich, to replace Zador, who became ill on the day of the performance.

During the three supplementary weeks, Joseph Schwarz made a guest appearance in *Tannhäuser* (Wolfram) on 6 March; and Ernest Knoch joined the company as guest conductor of the same work on 15 March. During the last week *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* was revived for a guest appearance by Maria Ivogun, and *Marta* for Claire Dux. There was also a restoration of *Fidelio* on 18 March, with Alsen (Leonore), Fleischer (Marzelline), Hutt (Florestan), Lattermann (Rocco), Schorr (Pizarro), and Kipnis (Minister), directed by Mörike. *Der Freischütz* and *Hänsel und Gretel* also were given, on the 21st and 23rd. None of these works had been heard in New York in half-a-dozen years. The interest in the company's activities was sufficient to justify the announcement that they would return for another season during the following winter.

1923–1924

OPERA at the Metropolitan continued, in at least two ways, its upward trend during this season. There were more works in the repertory than ever before (43), and there were more performances in the season (176). For the first time the period of performances reached their maximum length of twenty-four weeks. This continued to be the regular plan for the Metropolitan's yearly activities for almost a decade, until the decline

of public support for the institution during the depression years of 1932, 1933, and 1934 forced a reduction to sixteen, and then to fourteen weeks. But regardless of the season's length, the weekly average of performances remained at or slightly above seven, on five operating days — plus Sunday concerts.[90] This meant a minimum of eight playing sessions weekly for the orchestra. If in 1898 the press referred to the 'overworked orchestra' when it played merely on twenty-four consecutive days, what term of compassion could be applied to a group that for twenty-four consecutive *weeks* — in the seasons from 1923 to 1932 — played not merely every day, but on two of these days twice — *plus* rehearsals.[91] Such a schedule clearly indicates the emphasis of these years to have been increasingly in the direction of mass presentation of opera, with the quality of the individual performance dependent on the particular cast available rather than on a consistent ideal of ensemble or production.

To Jeritza was again accorded the honour of opening the season, with *Thaïs* on 5 November. Her principal associates were Tokatyan and Whitehill, with Hasselmans conducting. An audience that filled the theatre was present, and it was announced that the sale of tickets by subscription was again 'larger than ever.' There were new sets by Rota and Rovescalli (of Italy, from designs by Angelo Parravicini) for *Aïda* on 7 November, when the opera was sung by Rethberg, Matzenauer, Martinelli, Danise, Mardones, Phradie Wells (Priestess, debut), and

[90] In 1934–1935 for example, the season of fourteen weeks offered 106 performances of opera, or seven and a half per week, on five regular days — Tuesdays and Sundays omitted.

[91] In an interview printed in the New York *Herald* for 9 December 1923, the orchestra manager, Anthony Abarno, declared that the orchestra has a regular membership of eighty, divided, nationally, as follows : one Hungarian, three Russians, three Belgians, four Frenchmen, thirteen Germans, nineteen Americans, and thirty-seven Italians. He said, further, 'We are the best paid opera orchestra in the world, the salaries ranging from $125 a week and upward, with the first instruments, of course, receiving more than the other players.' One of the performers, in describing the orchestral routine said, 'Just as an indication of the strain of the work, we had a rehearsal yesterday, and last night we played a Wagnerian work from 7:30 until midnight, and this morning we had another rehearsal.'

James Wolfe (The King, debut). The search for a successor to Caruso continued with the debut of Miguel Fleta in *Tosca* on the 8th, with Jeritza and Scotti, but his career at the Metropolitan was not extensive.

To the Metropolitan's gallery of Wagnerian portraits were added several memorable creations on the 9th with the restoration of *Die Meistersinger*. Schützendorf's Beckmesser, Meader's David, and Bender's Pogner were all new to the house ; and in reality, so was Whitehill's Sachs also, for it had been seen but briefly in the last previous performances of *Die Meistersinger*, at the close of the season of 1916–1917. The Eva of this performance was Easton, with Howard (Magdalena), Rudolf Laubenthal (Walther, debut), and Arnold Gabor (The Night Watchman, debut). The production was newly designed by Kautsky. Laubenthal remained a permanent fixture at the Metropolitan until the close of the season of 1932–1933, but he never improved materially the poor vocal method which burdened the essentially good quality of his voice.

In the repetition of *Die Meistersinger* on the 19th, Rethberg sang her excellent Eva for the first time at the Metropolitan, the others in the cast being as before ; and on 23 February Schorr was heard as Sachs for the first time at the Metropolitan, with Reinhardt (Eva *), Telva (Magdalena), Taucher (Walther), Rothier (Pogner), Schützendorf (Beckmesser), and Meader. The performance was marred by the collapse of Reinhardt, who fainted a dozen measures before the end of the quintette. She was revived at the fall of the curtain, and completed the role. The evening was distinguished, however, by the beautiful, mellow impersonation of Schorr. He had made his debut a week before, on 14 February, in *Tannhäuser* (Wolfram), as a substitute for Whitehill, who was ill. In the cast were Jeritza, Gordon (Venus *), Taucher, and Gustafson (Landgraf Hermann). Thus, by an accident, Schorr was able to make his debut in a role which permitted a true gauge of his ability, for he had originally been scheduled for introduction to New York as Telramund, in a later performance of *Lohengrin* — one of his definitely poorer roles. During this season Schorr was heard on 1 March as Telramund ; on the 5th in *Tristan* (Kurwenal), which has only recently become one of his better parts ; as Wotan in *Die Walküre* on 17 March, described by Lawrence Gilman in *The Tribune*, as 'superbly sung' ; and as Amfortas in *Parsifal* on 18 April.

Also added to the Metropolitan's German list in this season was *Siegfried* on 2 February, and *Der Freischütz* on 23 March, the last previous performance of Weber's opera having been in 1910. There were new settings for this by Urban ; but none for *Siegfried,* for which the Kautsky production was already ten years old, as were those for the rest of the *Ring.* In *Siegfried* were Taucher (Siegfried), Easton (Brünnhilde *), Whitehill (Der Wanderer), Matzenauer (Erda), Schützendorf (Alberich *), Sabanieeva (Voice of the Forest Bird), and Meader (Mime *). In contrast to the performances of *Der Freischütz* under Hertz — in which spoken dialogue had been used — Bodanzky's revival offered recitatives composed by the conductor, also an interpolation of the *Invitation to the Waltz* for the ballet. By far the outstanding impersonation of the opera, and one of the most impressive he ever accomplished was Bohnen's Caspar, a figure of great puissance, and magnificently sung. Also beautifully sung was Rethberg's Agathe. The cast included Taucher (Max), Schützendorf (Prince Ottokar), Schlegel (Kuno), Mario (Ännchen), Gabor (Killian), Rothier (A Hermit), Wolfe (Zamiel), and Hunter, Guilford, and Ryan as the Bridesmaids. Nanette Guilford had made her debut as the Countess in *Rigoletto* on 10 November with Mario, Fleta, and Danise ; Louise Hunter's introduction was by way of the sextette from *Lucia,* at a Sunday night concert on 11 November, with Egener, Tokatyan, Bada, Gabor, and Mardones. At the season's final performances on 10 April Sabanieeva replaced Mario, and Meader was heard as Max, with Schützendorf adding the lines of Zamiel to his duties as Ottokar.

The German performances of the season were embellished by the presence of Onegin, who returned to sing her first Fricka in *Die Walküre* on 29 December, with Matzenauer, Rethberg, Laubenthal, Whitehill, and Gustafson ; and by the addition of Karin Branzell, whose debut on 6 February was also as Fricka in *Die Walküre.* At this performance Bohnen appeared as Wotan *. Two days later Branzell was heard as Ortrud, in a *Lohengrin* with Jeritza, Taucher, Whitehill, and Bohnen (Heinrich) ; and, somewhat in the manner of Matzenauer, first as

Brangaene, on 5 March, with Easton, Taucher, Schorr, and Bohnen ; and then as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* on the 17th, with Rethberg, Gordon, Taucher, and Schorr.[92] She returned to contralto roles thereafter, displaying her versatility in the Italian repertory with an appearance as Amneris on 7 April, in a performance of *Aïda* with Rethberg, Martinelli, Danise, and Mardones ; and as Dalila on the 14th, with Martinelli (Samson), de Luca, and Rothier. She was the Azucena on 19 April — the season's final performance — in *Trovatore*, with Ponselle, Martinelli, and Danise. The conductor, Moranzoni, bade his farewell to the Metropolitan.

Though Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz* had stirred no great enthusiasm when it was presented with Calvé (see p. 57), it was given another chance for life on 15 November under the direction of Moranzoni, with a new production designed by Urban. Despite an excellent performance by Bori (Suzel), and a cast that included Fleta (Fritz), Danise (Rabbi David), and Merle Alcock (Beppe, debut), the opera was dropped from the repertory after but two repetitions. It was given as part of a double bill with *L'Oracolo*, cast on this occasion with Mario (Ah-Yoe), Scotti, Didur, Chamlee, and D'Angelo. Also a revival of an opera associated with a *prima donna* of the past was *Fedora*, in which Conried had introduced Lina Cavalieri to America on 5 December 1906. Gatti's revival was for Maria Jeritza, who was seen as Fedora, with Martinelli in the role formerly sung by Caruso (Count Loris), Scotti again as De Siriex, Mario (Countess Olga), and Ellen Dalossy (Dmitri). It provided excellent opportunities for the display of Jeritza's various abilities, and the work remained in the repertory for the next two seasons. A particularly lavish job of designing had been done by Urban, who also provided a new production for *Carmen* on 22 November, with Easton, Martinelli, Mardones (Escamillo), and Morgana. Bourskaya was again heard as Carmen in this season, both Harrold and Fleta as Don José ;

[92] Though Branzell did not undertake soprano roles frequently, her knowledge of them was responsible for an unusual accomplishment in the following season, on 27 January 1925, at the Academy of Music in Brooklyn. During a performance of *Walküre*, Claussen, singing Brünnhilde, lost her voice during the second act. Following the *Todesverkündigung*, Claussen retired, and Branzell, who had by then completed her evening's singing as Fricka, continued as Brünnhilde.

for a change there was also a German Micaëla, Delia Reinhardt, sharing the role during this season with Morgana, Sundelius, and Mario.

Three further works new to the directorship of Gatti were presented in 1923–1924, but not one of them survived for a repetition in a subsequent season. Massenet's operas in New York mounted above a dozen with the production of *Le Roi de Lahore* on 29 February. The leading female role was sung by Reinhardt (Sita), the leading male role by Lauri-Volpi (Alim, Roi de Lahore). Also in the cast were de Luca (Scindia), Rothier (Timur), Mardones (Indra), and Alcock (Kalad). The scenery was the work of Boris Anisfeld, and the score was prepared and conducted by Hasselmans. *Le Roi* abdicated after five appearances. Even less frequently offered were Raoul Laparra's *La Habanera* # and Primo Riccitelli's *I Compagnacci,* given as a double bill on 2 January. There were but two performances after the *première,* though some critics regarded *La Habanera* as one of the best among the unfamiliar scores presented by Gatti at the Metropolitan. It had been included in the prospectus of the Metropolitan as early as 1908, but had waited for fifteen years before enjoying its fleeting prominence. In the meantime, the American *première* had become the privilege of the Boston Grand Opera Company, which presented the work on 14 December 1910, with Blanchart (Ramon), Robert La Salle (Pedro), and Fely Dereyne (Pilar). At the Metropolitan the principal singers were Easton (Pilar), Danise (Ramon), Tokatyan (Pedro), and Rothier (The Father). The work was conducted by Hasselmans. There was new scenery by Rovescalli and Joseph Novak, the latter staff painter for the house. *I Compagnacci* was new not only to New York but to America, but even novelty could not allevitate the banalities of the book and score. Rethberg (Anna Maria), Schützendorf (Bernardo), Gigli (Baldo), and Didur (Venanzio) sang the principal roles. Moranzoni conducted.

A minor part in *I Compagnacci* # (The Herald) fell to Law-

rence Tibbett, who was seen at the Metropolitan for the first time in a role of any consequence as Valentin in *Faust* on 30 November.[93] Since the latter was a performance that marked Chaliapine's first appearance as Méphistophélès since 1907, and since he chose to repeat 'Veau d'Or,' it is scarcely surprising that Tibbett's official entry was a quiet one. Alda and Martinelli were the other principal singers. In *The Tribune* it was recorded that Tibbett had made a 'pleasant impression,' and that he possessed a 'voice as light-waisted as his physique.' Both filled out in time.

On 1 December Tibbett was heard as Marullo in *Rigoletto*, the cast including Mario, Fleta, de Luca, and Mardones. Later in the month, on the 17th, he sang Fleville in *Andrea Chenier*, and on the 19th he appeared as Silvio in *Pagliacci*, with Rethberg, Fleta, and de Luca. On 17 January Tibbett was heard as the Herald in *Lohengrin*, on the 24th as d'Obigny in *Traviata*, and on the 26th as Morales in *Carmen*. These roles, and particularly repetitions of Valentin occupied Tibbett during this season. Another performance of *Faust* with Chaliapine brought $25,500 to the box office, for the benefit of the Milk Fund. This was announced to be a record sum for any performance other than a 'gala' at multiplied prices. Alda, Tokatyan, de Luca (Valentin), and Anthony (Siebel) were the subordinate singers.

For Galli-Curci, who appeared as The Queen, there was a revival of *Coq d'Or*, on 21 January, after an absence of two years from the repertory. It was given, as before, in the Fokine version, with the settings of Pogany. Galli again mimed the Queen, Bonfiglio the Astrologer (again sung by Diaz), and Bartik, the General (sung by D'Angelo *). Didur (Dodon), Audisio (The Prince), and Reschiglian (A Knight) had also sung in the original production, but their counterparts (Alexis Kosloff, Isidor Swee, and Domenico da Re) were new. Alcock was heard as Amelfa (danced by Florence Rudolph), with Laura Robertson supplying the Voice of the Golden Cock. The conductor was Bamboschek. When Galli-Curci completed

[93] His actual first appearance was on 24 November as Lovitzky, a minor role in *Boris*. Curiously, the programme did not indicate this to be his debut, nor was there such a designation on the programme of *Faust*. In the next performance of *Boris*, on 12 December, Tibbett sang Tchelkaloff.

her season's engagement — after appearances in *Lucia, Il Barbiere, La Traviata, Rigoletto,* and *Roméo* (on 11 February, with Tokatyan, de Luca, and Rothier) — her place as the Queen was taken by Sabanieeva, a remote approach to the level of the former singer, in spite of Galli-Curci's increasing tendency to false intonation.

The season saw similar disparity in other works, such as the Metropolitan had rarely sheltered in the past. Rethberg, as Elsa, was likely to be followed as she was on 1 March, by Marcella Roeseler, a routine singer of no distinction ; when Chaliapine was ill on 27 December, the only Méphistophélès available, apparently, was Rothier, *Faust* being given on that date with Mario (Marguerite *), Chamlee (Faust), Anthony (Siébel *), and Tibbett (Valentin). The illness of Danise, for a performance of *Rigoletto* on 10 November, resulted in the appearance of Picco as the Jester, though his talents were merely sufficient for the minor roles in which he ordinarily appeared. Nor did the appearance of Schützendorf as Mercutio in a performance of *Roméo et Juliette* on 10 December (with Bori, Gigli, Diaz, Didur, and Rothier) seem a predestined union of artist and role. Gone indeed were the days of *Roméo* with the two de Reszkes, Eames, Melba, or Sembrich, Plançon, and Bauermeister ; or *Faust* with Eames, Scalchi, Jean and Edouard de Reszke, Lassalle, and Bauermeister. To the season's revivals was also added *Marta* on 14 December, after a lapse from 21 April 1920. There was new scenery by Urban and a cast that included Alda (Lady Harriet), Gigli, de Luca, Howard (Nancy), Malatesta (Sir Tristan), and D'Angelo (The Sheriff). Papi conducted.

During this season Rethberg appeared on 28 November for the first time as Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* (with Martinelli, Scotti, and Telva), a characterization that added merely another absurdity to the history of opera in New York, despite the lovely vocal art of the singer. She was also heard as Madeleine in *Andrea Chenier* on 7 March, with Lauri-Volpi and Danise. Also in this season Florence Easton was heard for the first time as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser,* on 8 December (with Matzenauer, Laubenthal, Whitehill, and Gustafson) ; and she also added to her list Madeleine in *Chenier* on 14 November, in a performance with Gigli, de Luca, and Howard. In the course of the season Easton embraced roles so various as Marguerite in *Faust* on 15 December — with Chaliapine, Martinelli, and

Tibbett ; Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* on 7 April, with Lauri-Volpi and Scotti ; Isolde on 5 March ; and Kundry on 18 April, in a performance of *Parsifal,* with Taucher, Schorr (Amfortas), Bohnen, and Schützendorf. Her musicianship and intelligence as a singer was constant in all of these. Easton's role in *Così fan tutte* (Fiordiligi) was taken over by Reinhardt when the work was produced on 6 March. Bori, Peralta, Meader, de Luca, and Didur reappeared in the roles associated with them. There was no other opera by Mozart in the repertory during the season.

To honour the twenty-fifth year of consecutive service by Antonio Scotti at the Metropolitan, a gala performance of *Tosca* was presented on 1 January, with Maria Jeritza — the thirteenth Floria Tosca of Scotti's career in the house — in the title role. There was much deserved tribute to the baritone, and a sum of nearly twenty thousand dollars was raised. However, the occasion had other significances. Otto H. Kahn, chairman and majority stockholder of the Metropolitan Opera Company, made an address, and delivered one of his earliest public promises, in this period, of a 'new' opera house. The project was to remain, for almost all of the next decade, very close to the heart of Kahn ; but with his retirement from the company, and later with his death, the likelihood of its consummation has retired into a scarcely discernible future.

There was less glory for the singer who occupied the middle ground of a dispute, in this season, between Max von Schillings and Giulio Gatti-Casazza. The singer, of course, was Barbara Kemp, wife of von Schillings. The subject was introduced in a comparatively inconspicuous manner by an announcement from the Metropolitan, on 27 February, that Mme. Kemp had requested to be released from her contract, owing to illness. She had made but one appearance, in *Mona Lisa,* on 18 February. Gatti granted her request, he said 'with great regret.' Two days later von Schillings concluded that the matter required further elucidation, and informed the press : 'I decided

that Mr. Gatti-Casazza had lost his interest in Mme. Kemp, and later he told me that he was dissatisfied with her because she had not met all the conditions of her contract last season. She admits this freely. When she came she did not realize how heavy the work was or how short the time for rehearsal. So I asked Mr. Gatti to cancel her contract. He agreed only upon the condition that Mme. Kemp would attribute her act to illness. She acquiesced. But we have decided that the truth should be told now. It was wholly a matter of artistic differences rather than illness.' Gatti's rejoinder was brief, sharp, and characteristically Bourbonish. He established the grounds as not actual illness, but what, in his words, 'Mme. Kemp termed nervousness.' He said that she had been retained on the Metropolitan pay-roll despite her inability to fit into certain roles in the preceding season 'because of a regard for a woman and an artist of high reputation in Germany.' A final word of advice was addressed to von Schillings : 'To my dear colleague, I would say that you have lost a splendid chance to remain silent.'

The return of the German Opera Company on Christmas Day found the State Symphony Orchestra associated with the venture, and Josef Stransky directing. There were promises of novelties, of revivals of the less frequently played scores of Wagner, of a Mozart cycle ; and there was the further assurance of a quality surpassing last year's in the fact that a road tour prior to the season at the Manhattan Opera House should have solidified the ensemble. A beginning was made with *Die Meistersinger* — as in the season before — with Fleischer (Eva), Bassth (Magdalena), Hutt (Walther), Zador (Beckmesser), Otto Schwarz (David), and Adolph Schoepflin (Pogner). To replace Schorr as Sachs there was Hermann Weil, who had sung at the Metropolitan during the Hertz-Toscanini period. The production of *Rienzi* on the following evening, the 26th, augured fulfilment of certain of the promises made by the organization, for it was the first production of the work in New York since the period of opera in German. Mörike conducted a cast that

included another Metropolitan veteran, Heinrich Knote (Rienzi), Louise Perard (Irene), Schoepflin (Steffano Colonna), Metzger (Adriano), Ziegler (Paolo Orsini), and Fleischer (Messenger of Peace). The afternoon had been given over to a performance of *Hänsel und Gretel*, with Hannah Rodegg (Gretel), Fleischer (Hänsel), Bassth (Gertrude), Semper (Peter), Paul Schwartz (Witch), and Joan Ruth (Dewman, debut). Weston Gales was the conductor.

The first performance of *Figaro* since 1917–1918 — in this version *Figaros Hochzeit* — was presented by Stransky on 27 December, with Latterman (Figaro), Elsa Gentner-Fischer (Countess), Fleischer (Susanna), Ziegler (Almaviva), and Ruth (Cherubino). It was a performance distinguished by Fleischer's Susanna, but not by much else. Following performances of *Die Jüdin*, *Zigeunerbaron*, and *Die Fledermaus*, the company presented its first novelty on 1 January. This was Wilhelm Kienzl's *Der Evangelimann*, given for the first time in New York, under the direction of Alfred Lorentz, with Schoepflin (Friedrich), Ida Mörike (Martha), Metzger (Magdalena), Zador (Johannes Freudhofer), and Rudolph Ritter (Matthias Freudhofer). The work was scarcely new, for its *première* had occurred in Berlin on 4 May 1895. It won no acclaim in New York, either critical or popular.

Almost since the beginning of the season it had been apparent that the German Opera Company was in financial difficulties ; but the group struggled along, giving *Tristan* under Stransky — with Alsen, Knote, Metzger, Weil, and Schoepflin (Marke) on 2 January — and producing its second novelty, d'Albert's *Die Toten Augen* on the 3rd. The latter work, in one act and a prologue, was conducted by Mörike, and in the long cast were Ritter (A Shepherd), Fleischer (Arsinoe), Metzger (Maria), Gentner-Fischer (Myrtocle), Hutt (Aurelius Galba), Lattermann (Arcesius), and Bassth (Ruth). D'Albert's well-contrived score was cordially received, but after a repetition on 7 January, the enterprise was declared bankrupt and neither the opera nor the company was heard from again. There had been no lack of backing — the Harold F. McCormicks (Ganna Walska) had contributed a sum believed to be in excess of $150,000 — but most of this had been used to pay deficits re-

sulting from the pre-New York tour, and there was little remaining with which to carry on.

Further light on the relationships of the Metropolitan with other operatic organizations was disclosed in a statement to the press by Gatti-Casazza on 20 February. There had been rumours that the Chicago Civic Opera Company was negotiating for the services of certain singers under contract with the Metropolitan, and that the Metropolitan was likewise interested in some of those employed in Chicago. To these rumours Gatti replied : 'It is true that there have been some informal meetings between Mr. Samuel Insull, president of the Chicago Opera Company and myself as head of the Metropolitan Opera Company. We have talked seriously and frankly about various phases of the operatic situation, chiefly about the engagement of artists by both companies.' Neither, he said, was negotiating for stars employed by the other. Whether any agreement was effected at these informal meetings was not made public, but it was not until after the collapse of the Chicago operatic enterprise during the depression, that the Metropolitan acquired any of that company's important singers. This may be an answer to the curiosity of those who have wondered why Chicago should have enjoyed, exclusively, the talents of Lehmann, Olszewska, Leider, Bocklemann, Schipa, Kipnis, Schlusnus, Hans Hermann Nissen, etc., when the Metropolitan had real need for them ; but it does not suggest a reason why they should not have been employed *before* they were engaged to appear in Chicago.

Though Gatti's contract was not scheduled to expire until 1 May 1926, an extension of five years — until May 1929 — was announced on 11 March 1924. This was followed, on the next day, by a statement from Gatti specifying that the contract of Edward Ziegler, assistant to the general director, had been extended by him to match the new length of his own. Following the close of the longest season in its history, on 19 April, the company departed for a tour that carried it to Atlanta, Cleve-

land, and Rochester. With this and the pre-season preparations, which were begun early in October, the salaried employees of the company were assured of work for almost nine months in the year — some of them for the whole year.

How arduous that work had now become, however, may be demonstrated by the Metropolitan's schedule from 4 January 1924 to the 7th : Friday, *Tannhäuser ;* Saturday, *La Bohème* (afternoon), *Aïda* (evening) ; Sunday, two concerts, afternoon and evening ; Monday, *Thaïs* (afternoon), and *Marta* (evening).

1924–1925

THERE was a welcome relief from such operas as *I Compagnacci, Anima Allegra,* and *The Polish Jew* in the Metropolitan's plans for its fortieth season. It is true that a youthful indiscretion of Montemezzi's was unkindly brought to light — *Giovanni Gallurese* — while for Jeritza there was a production of Janacek's *Jenufa,* which was well-regarded by some. However, the credit side of the company's enterprise handsomely overbalanced these matters, for this season saw the first presentation of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Metropolitan ; restorations of *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung,* permitting the first *Ring* cycle in a half-dozen years and initiating the serial presentation of the Wagner dramas at special *matinées,* which has been a distinguishing attribute of each season since ; revivals of *Falstaff* and *Petrouchka ;* and, on a somewhat lower level, additions to the standard repertory — *La Gioconda, Dinorah,* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* — of a larger interest than those of the years immediately preceding.

For the opening night ceremony, on 3 November, there was no new and dazzling singer ; merely *Aïda,* whose direction was entrusted to Tullio Serafin, late of La Scala, and newly engaged to replace the departed Moranzoni. There had been rumours ever since the retirement of Toscanini that Serafin would come to the Metropolitan ; and his final arrival was regarded as the

most auspicious event for the benefit of the Italian repertory in ten years. The Metropolitan was due to have another opening with *Aïda* (the last had been seven years before) ; but remembering the first opening under Gatti, in 1908, and recalling the fond hopes of the Metropolitan for Serafin, the parallelism of the two events suggests a slight trace of the sentimental in the usually unyielding director.[94] Under the baton of Serafin were Rethberg, Martinelli, Matzenauer, Danise, and Mardones, who responded to the conductor's urging with an unusually vital performance. A performance of *La Bohème* conducted by Bamboschek on the following night (a Tuesday, but also Election Day) and a *Boris* conducted by Papi on the 6th, with Chaliapine, adjusted matters to their proper perspective.

Curiously, when *La Gioconda* was restored to the repertory on 8 November — it had not been given at the Metropolitan since the season of 1914–1915 — the singer with which this revival has since been identified was not in the cast. In place of Ponselle, Easton appeared as La Gioconda, with Matzenauer (Laura), Alcock (La Cieca), Mardones (Alvise), Gigli (Enzo), and Danise (Barnaba). Ponselle did not appear in the cast until the second repetition, on 19 December, in which Gordon replaced Matzenauer. This was the first opera prepared personally by Serafin, and the qualities imparted to the ensemble by his conducting continued to characterize the performances of the work during the next decade. The scenic production was by Antonio Rovescalli and Joseph Novak. On 9 January Ruffo appeared for the first time in the Metropolitan as Barnaba.

In addition to the role of Antonia, which Bori had sung in earlier performances of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, she was also heard as Giulietta when the work was revived on 13 November. The cast included Morgana (Olympia), Howard (Nicklausse), Fleta (Hoffmann), de Luca (Coppelius, Dappertutto, and Dr. Miracle), and Tibbett (Schlemil), with Hasselmans conducting. Urban was the scenic designer. Dubious as the quality of this cast was, there was much less to be said for

[94] Like Toscanini and Serafin, Moranzoni also had been introduced in *Aïda*, when he had made his debut on 12 November 1917. Moreover, when Ettore Panizza succeeded Serafin, he too made his debut in *Aïda*, on 23 December 1934.

the performance of 28 March, which offered Ralph Errolle (Hoffmann), Sabanieeva (Olympia), Peralta (Giulietta), Mario (Antonia), and Bourskaya (Nicklausse). Errolle had made his debut as Roméo on 8 November, with Bori and de Luca.

The impression that Lawrence Tibbett was a completely obscure member of the company until after his extraordinary success in the revival of *Falstaff* on 2 January is not wholly borne out by the evidence of his appearances in this season. To be sure, his name was scarcely known to the general public ; but his impersonation of Schlemil in the revival of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* had been cited by Gilman [95] as 'one of the best performances of the evening . . . the most successful thing we have seen him do at the Metropolitan.' In *Falstaff*, when it was presented on 2 January for the first time in the auditorium since 21 February 1910, were Scotti (Falstaff), Bori (Mistress Ford), Alda (Anne), Telva (Dame Quickly), Howard (Mistress Page), Gigli (Fenton), Tibbett (Ford), Bada (Dr. Caius), Didur (Pistol), and Paltrinieri (Bardolph). The scenery was by Urban. Tibbett's impressive delivery of the lines of Ford — during the scene in the Inn — gave rise to one of the most spontaneous demonstrations by an audience in the history of the house. Although Serafin was plainly eager to continue with the performance, the applause did not abate until Tibbett had appeared to take a curtain call by himself. No doubt the demonstration was aggravated by Scotti's misinterpretation of the applause, believing it to be for himself. At the next performance, on 17 January, Tibbett was permitted to take a call by himself after the conclusion of the second act, and though the applause was hearty, there was no such ovation as had been given to him previously. In the meanwhile, however, Tibbett had become a man marked by the management for an unusual career. On 3 January he received a letter of congratulation from the chairman of the board of directors, Otto Kahn, and his progress towards more prominent roles began.

[95] *Tribune*, 14 November.

After two seasons' effort towards gathering a suitable cast, *Götterdämmerung* was finally restored on 31 January, under the direction of Bodanzky. Two of the singers — Nanny Larsen-Todsen (Brünnhilde) and Maria Müller (Gutrune) were recruited during the current season, the former making a delayed debut on this occasion. She had been appointed to appear on 15 January in *Tristan,* but an accident during the rehearsals for *Götterdämmerung* had necessitated a postponement. Grane, that bane of Wagnerian sopranos' lives, had stepped on her foot. Müller had been introduced as Sieglinde in a performance of *Die Walküre,* on 21 January, with Taucher, Bohnen (Wotan), Gustafson, Branzell, and Claussen (Brünnhilde). In *Götterdämmerung* New York made the acquaintance of Bohnen's excellent Hagen, the finely sung Gunther of Schorr ; there were also Branzell's Waltraute, Schützendorf's Alberich, and the Siegfried of Taucher. The score was cut ; but the Norn, Waltraute, and Alberich scenes — all of which had been omitted at times from the Metropolitan's performances of *Götterdämmerung* — were included in various degrees of completeness. Alcock, Wakefield, and Robertson were the Norns ; Robertson, Wells, and Telva the Rhine-maidens. Bloch and Gabor interpolated the lines of the Zwei Männer. At the repetition on 11 February, Laubenthal was the Siegfried.

There was no precedent for the type of Wagner cycle which the Metropolitan initiated at the *matinée* of 18 February. In the past, such observances had embraced merely the Prologue and the Trilogy of *Der Ring des Nibelungen.* To these Gatti added a preliminary *Tannhäuser* on 18 February, with Jeritza, Gordon, Taucher, Schorr, and Bohnen (Landgraf Hermann *), and, on 21 March, a concluding performance of *Die Meistersinger,* sung by Müller (Eva), Howard (Magdalena), Taucher, Bohnen (Sachs), Meader, Schützendorf, and Rothier (Pogner). The custom thus begun has persisted to the present time, to constitute one of the principal adornments of the Metropolitan's schedule, even though the performances are no more carefully prepared than those given for the regular subscribers, aside from the restoration of the sections usually cut.

In *Das Rheingold,* when it returned to the repertory on 26 February, after an absence of eight years, were Bohnen (Wotan), Larsen-Todsen

(Fricka), Branzell (Erda), Müller (Freia), Taucher (Loge), Meader (Mime), Schützendorf (Alberich), Rothier (Fasolt), and Wolfe (Fafner). The sets for both *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung* remained those by Kautsky prepared for the season of 1913. In the succeeding dramas of the *Ring*, on 5th, 11th, and 19th March, Larsen-Todsen was heard as the invariable Brünnhilde — in *Die Walküre*, with Rethberg (Sieglinde), Branzell, Laubenthal, Whitehill (Wotan), and Gustafson ; in *Siegfried*, with Taucher, Meader (Mime), Schützendorf, Schorr (Der Wanderer), Telva (Erda), and Ryan (Voice of the Forest Bird) ; and in *Götterdämmerung*, with the cast of the season's first performance, save for the substitution of Laubenthal (Siegfried) and Telva (Waltraute). The ascent of the fire-girt rock, in *Siegfried*, was more than ordinarily perilous for Curt Taucher at the performance during the cycle. While he was making his way towards the wings after splintering the Wanderer's spear, he stepped through a trap-door, and fell twenty-five feet onto a small platform. Only its fortunate projection saved him from a further drop of ten feet. He finished the performance, but the accident interfered with his further activities during the season.

The season's Germanic novelty was actually German neither in locale or creation, for both Leos Janacek and his opera were Czechish in origin. Obviously the production was motivated by a search for material in which to display Jeritza, for she had participated in the Vienna production of *Jenufa*# in 1918. The conscientious musicianship of the score earned more critical respect than do most of the new works which the Metropolitan presents, but there was little in the opera to impress the audience. Max Brod's German version of the Czech libretto by Gabrielle Preiss was used, and the scenery was the work of Joseph Novak, the Metropolitan's house painter, after designs by Hans Puehringer of Vienna. In the cast with Jeritza (Jenufa) when the work was given its American *première* on 6 December were Carl Martin Oehmann (Laca Klemen, debut), Laubenthal (Stewa Buryja), Matzenauer (The Sexton's Widow), and Schützendorf (The Mill Foreman). There were five performances during this season, none since. Though Oehmann had a reputation in Germany in the more lyric works of the Wagnerian repertory, his abilities in that direction were not sounded by the Metropolitan, save for the Sunday evening concert of 28 Decem-

ber, in which he sang the quintette and the last scene out of *Meistersinger,* with Roeseler, Telva, Meader, and Tibbett. He was heard on 20 December in *Samson,* with Gordon, Whitehill, and Rothier, but vanished thereafter. In a later performance of *Jenufa,* on 5 January, Meader assumed Oehmann's role (Laca Klemen), with Branzell (The Widow) and Bourskaya (The Grandmother), also new to the cast.

It had long been the contention of the Metropolitan management that the size of their auditorium forbade the production of *Pelléas et Mélisande.* However, the results achieved in the first performance on 21 March were of considerable artistic quality — a better level, indeed, than the average in the Metropolitan for certain works which are ideally served by the auditorium. The success was due largely to the excellent balance of the cast, in which were Bori (Mélisande), Johnson (Pelléas), Whitehill (Golaud), Rothier (Ärkel), Howard (Genevieve), Hunter (Yniold), and Ananian (A Physician). For the first time in their experience, New York's Debussyists were privileged to hear and see a Mélisande other than Garden. This startling fact, however, is no more remarkable than the subsequent one — that no singer other than Bori has sung the role at the Metropolitan. Johnson was at first not regarded as the equal of either Perier or Dalmorès, but he has improved consistently as Pelléas. Both Whitehill and Rothier were excellent. Less satisfactory was Hasselmans' conducting, which was not distinguished for its style.

In his production Urban employed an inner stage in the manner introduced in *Così fan tutte,* but its use was rather more masked. These settings are among the most successful, atmospherically, that he ever made for this house. It is scarcely necessary to add that the finished product represents his designs more faithfully than do those of most of his conceptions. Costumes for the production were designed by Grete Urban-Thurlow. *Pelléas* has not assumed a place beside *Aïda* in the conventional repertory, nor is it conceivable that it ever will.

Its seasonal recurrence, however, has reflected considerable credit on the management, imparting to it a valuable prestige. With this as a precedent, it is at least curious that other works whose production would similarly enhance the repertory of the institution — *Otello, Le Nozze di Figaro, Orfeo,* an opera or two by Händel — are not presented with equal persistence.

To his record of having given Montemezzi's *Giovanni Gallurese* its world *première* at Turin in 1905, Serafin added the first performance of the work in America, on 19 February. Though the conductor may have had a deep and abiding affection for *Giovanni Gallurese,* it was not an enthusiasm that he could communicate to the public. The opera disappeared after three repetitions. Not even a cast offering Müller (Maria), Lauri-Volpi (Giovanni Gallurese), Danise (Rivegas), and Didur (Jose) could disguise the mediocrity of the score ; nor was it ameliorated by the presence of the composer. He received the plaudits of the audience as gravely as if the work had been *L'Amore,* and not, as Gilman termed it, 'a saddening revelation of his musical past.' The scenery was by Giovanni Grandi, of La Scala. Serafin also prepared this season's presentation of *Petrouchka,* for which there was a new *décor* by Serge Soudeikine. It replaced the previous production by John Wenger, which had been prepared for the presentation on 6 February 1919, used five times in that season, and then discarded. In the revival conducted by Serafin — for which Strawinsky was present — the cast was almost identical with that of the performances under Monteux. Galli (The Ballerina), Bolm (Petrouchka), Bonfiglio (The Moor), Bartik (The Magician), Agnini (The Merchant), Florence Rudolph (Street Dancer), Lillian Ogden, and Jessie Rogge (Gypsies) had all appeared previously in these roles. Only Florence Glover (A Gypsy) was new. *Petrouchka* was followed by *Pagliacci,* with Bori, Johnson, and Danise. For this, as well as for *Cavalleria Rusticana* — when the double bill was given on 15 December — there were newly painted settings by Joseph Novak. During his first season, in addition to *Giovanni Gallurese, Aïda, La Gioconda, Falstaff,* and *Petrouchka,* Serafin also conducted *Mefistofele, Andrea Chenier, Tosca, Madama Butterfly, La Traviata, Rigoletto,* and *L'Africaine,* the last taken over from Bodanzky.

For Galli-Curci there was a revival, on 22 January, of *Dinorah,* which had not been heard at the Metropolitan since 29 January 1892, when Van Zandt and Lasalle were in the cast. The revival by Gatti, for which there was a new production by Antonio Rovescalli, did not prosper. Its history, indeed, is matched by few other works in the recent years of the Metropolitan — *Dinorah* was abandoned after but one repetition. With Galli-Curci were Tokatyan (Corentino), de Luca

(Hoël), D'Angelo (The Huntsman), Altglass (The Harvester), Ryan and Alcock (Goatherds). The conductor was Papi. On 12 December the Metropolitan returned to *La Juive* for the first time since the last performance with Caruso, on 24 December 1920, to present Martinelli as Eleazar, Easton (Rachel), Ryan (Eudoxia), Rothier (Cardinal Brogni), and Errolle (Leopold), under the direction of Hasselmans. The opera proved unfortunate for Martinelli also, for he was stricken thereafter with typhoid fever, and obliged to remain idle until 5 March. A later performance of *La Juive* on 25 March had Larsen-Todsen as Rachel * and Mardones as Cardinal Brogni.

Much was anticipated from Toti dal Monte, an Italian soprano, who was expected to arouse as great excitement in New York as Galli-Curci had, and possibly qualify as a rival to that singer. She made her debut on 5 December in *Lucia,* with Chamlee and de Luca ; and she sang later in *Rigoletto,* on 23 February, with Lauri-Volpi and de Luca. Her success in Italy and South America was not, however, duplicated in New York. Two singers whose careers began in the early years of Gatti's directorship returned to the company for brief engagements during this season. Neither of them remained long, however. Elvira de Hidalgo, a Spanish coloratura soprano, was heard as Rosina in *Il Barbiere* on 27 November, with Chamlee, de Luca, and Didur ; and as Gilda in a performance of *Rigoletto* on 6 March with Lauri-Volpi and de Luca. Berta Morena, whose Metropolitan introduction occurred in 1908, returned on 3 April to sing Brünnhilde in a performance of *Götterdämmerung,* with Laubenthal, Bohnen, Schlegel (Gunther), Ryan (Gutrune), and Schützendorf. In smaller roles were Mary Bonetti, who sang a significant role for the first time in the Metropolitan on 14 November, in *Mefistofele* (Pantalis), with Chaliapine, Alda, and Gigli ; and Joan Ruth — previously with the German Opera Company — whose Metropolitan debut was on 26 November in *Carmen* (Frasquita), with Easton, Martinelli, Mardones, and Mario (Micaëla).

Bohnen moved further into the class of Chaliapine — outwardly, at least — by essaying his first role in French on 1 April. He appeared as Méphistophélès in *Faust,* with Sunde-

lius, Johnson, de Luca, and Dalossy. He attained the distinction of being 'like no other Méphistophélès that had ever been seen.'[96] Earlier, however, he had undertaken to edit Wagner in a performance of *Tristan* on 14 February — in which appeared Larsen-Todsen, Taucher, Branzell, and Schorr — by wandering off the stage during the 'Liebestod,' omitting the final benediction of Marke on the expired lovers.[97] Curiously,

[96] Gilman, *Herald-Tribune*, 2 April.

[97] Concerning this and similar eccentricities on the part of Metropolitan singers during the last decade it is pertinent to note the comment of Ernest Newman, distinguished critic of the London *Times*, who spent the winter of 1924–1925 as guest on the staff of the New York *Post*. In the issue of that paper for 6 December 1924, Newman declared : 'Never, until I sat in the Metropolitan have I seen a tenor who is supposed to be pouring his ardent sentiments into the ear of his lady-love, push himself as far in front of her as possible and shout his raptures into the face of the audience. Nowhere else have I seen a tenor step so unblushingly out of his part a full half-minute before the top-note is to come, turn his back on the other *dramatis personæ*, come a pace or two downstage, hurl the big phrase at the hearer's head . . . and then stretch out his arms for applause like a picturesque beggar confidently appealing for alms.' This brought a reply, on 20 December, from W. J. Guard, then press agent for the Metropolitan, who said that he spoke 'frankly — but understand me, not officially.' It is understood that no official action by the Metropolitan was represented in the letter, which was sent by Guard without the knowledge or consent of Gatti. In his letter Guard stated : 'I think you have been hardly fair to the opera management in its serious and honest endeavor to provide our very exigent public with the best that physical conditions and available human elements can in these days furnish.' Guard went on to detail the disadvantages of the Metropolitan's auditorium, the hardships it imposed upon present-day production of opera and characterized Newman's criticisms as 'things which I am sure you would easily pass over if you knew the difficulties latter days have brought (even in America) to the production of opera to meet the present demand in New York.' [This reference to the Metropolitan's needs seems somewhat curious in the light of later revelations concerning its huge surplus, then steadily growing.] He further enumerated the difficulties involved in 'the organizing of a season of twenty-four weeks in which we are compelled to give seven, eight and nine performances a week. . . I am sure you would be less caustic in your comments on our evening entertainments if you could spare the time to drop into my office and see "how the wheels go round."'

However, from what source, other than a desire to preserve a balanced budget, the 'compulsion' referred to by Guard emanated is not apparent ; nor was Newman disturbed by this reasoning. His reply to Guard, in the same issue of *The Post* — 20 December — is a masterpiece of dialectical statement : 'My argument was, that with its human material and its financial resources, the Metropolitan could easily be very much better than it is. You ask me to take into account your internal difficulties and troubles. With all possible sympathy, we cannot. Neither the press nor the public has anything to do with the private difficulties of an artist or an artistic institution. The press and the public are concerned solely with results. . . If you were asked to buy a pair of shoes the soles of which were badly fitted to the uppers, you would reject them even though you were assured that the trouble came from the shoemaker's having injured his hands at baseball. If you were viewing an exhibition of pictures, you would not regard it as any excuse for a piece of bad coloring

he took no liberties with the character of Gurnemanz, that most static of operatic figures. His impersonation, in the Good Friday *Parsifal* on 10 April, was, as ever, magnificent. Larsen-Todsen, Taucher, Whitehill, and Didur were the other principal singers. Possibly as a rebuke to Chaliapine, as a warning to Bohnen, or as a caution to the public, the programmes of this season, for the first time bore the admonition : 'Positively no encores allowed.'

Other variations in the customary casting at the Metropolitan included an appearance of Maria Müller in *La Bohème* on 30 March ; Rethberg as Selika in *L'Africaine* for the first time on 12 February, with Gigli, Danise, Mario, Didur, and Rothier ; and Gordon as Carmen * on 4 April, with Tokatyan, de Luca, and Dalossy. For Puccini, Müller's instincts were somewhat too musicianly, her tendency to observe the nuances of the score not being respected by the orchestra, under Papi, which frequently engulfed her. Rethberg was a pleasure to hear as Selika, though her dramatic contributions were hardly irresistible.

The announcement, on 7 April, of Arturo Toscanini's engagement by the Philharmonic Orchestra for eleven appearances in 1925–1926, ended permanently any likelihood of his return to the Metropolitan. It indicated that Toscanini's interests had definitely turned towards symphonic music as his major concern. With his return to New York in the following winter, there were the usual rumours — representing, largely, the wishes of those who initiated them — that he would again be associated with the Metropolitan, in this or that extraordinary capacity. However much he may have been influenced by personal antipathies, the changed character of the Metropolitan in

that the artist's wife had left him. If at a recital a pianist pedalled badly, you would not, on being told that he suffered from ingrowing toenails, declare that his pedalling was ideal. So do not blame the community if it tells you, in all politeness, that it has no concern whatsoever with your internal difficulties. It is your business to face the difficulties and overcome them. If you will not face them, or having faced them, fail to overcome them, and the artistic results are bad, you must not blame the critics and the public for noticing that they are bad. It is not a matter of ill-will on their part ; it is merely a matter of good eyesight. There was once a Scotch parson who said in a sermon : "And now, my brethren, we have come to a varry deefficult passage ; and having looked it bowldly in the face, we will pass on." His talents were wasted in the church. He should have gone in for operatic management.'

the decade since he last conducted there made any such affiliation unlikely. His advancing age, too, ill-disposed him towards the gruelling routine of repertory opera.

1925–1926

FOR the privilege of participating in the season of 1925–1926 the opera-goers of New York were again asked to accept a rise in the level of prices. From the seven dollar top price which had been in effect since the season of 1920 — which, with the tax included, brought the price to $7.70 for single orchestra chairs — the alteration was to $7.50. With the tax included, the total was $8.25 ; or, more than eight dollars for the first time in the Metropolitan's history. For subscribers, there was a parallel increase, season privileges now costing them at a rate of $7.70 for each performance, instead of $7.15 as before. There was an advance in the price of dress circle tickets also, from $4.40 to $4.95 for single tickets (inclusive of tax), and from $4.18 to $4.40 when purchased by subscription. The prices in the lower brackets remained unaltered, with $1.65 (tax included) the price of the cheapest seat in the family circle. This, however, did not mark the upward limit for the price of opera-tickets in New York. Another increase was decreed for the season of 1929–1930 before the movement commenced in the opposite direction.

There were not a few events of artistic importance in the season of 1925–1926 — among which, as far as the immediate future of opera in New York was concerned, the debut of Lauritz Melchior was the most important. But the season takes its place in history through the ceremonies attendant upon the first appearance of Marion Talley. This event did not occur until the evening of 17 February, but its coming had been heralded long before the season's opening. Included in the case history was the fact that Miss Talley, then of Kansas City, had appeared first at the Metropolitan in 1922, for an audition

at the advanced age of fifteen. Her promise had been pronounced extraordinary, and she had been advised to study diligently in preparation for a Metropolitan career. Now, at eighteen, she was ready to intitiate that career, on the impetus of a publicity campaign never before known to the generally sedate Metropolitan. Indeed, the management had no active part in this preliminary propaganda.

Her first appearance, in *Rigoletto,* was the signal for an outpouring of two hundred Kansas Cityans, who came eastward *en masse* to support the native daughter. Although the Metropolitan cannot be held responsible for this demonstration — more becoming to a football team than to an opera-singer — Otto Kahn had gone to the lengths of inviting Mayor Walker to share his box. Moreover, the management had permitted the Associated Press to install a direct wire back-stage, over which Talley senior — a telegrapher by trade — tapped out to the world his impressions of his daughter's debut! It was the majority opinion of the professional listeners present that Talley possessed vocal material which, with culture, might have developed to reasonable usefulness ; [98] but the account, on the front page of the nation's newspapers, of the 4200 persons within the auditorium and of the added hundreds without, established the true character of the event, and of the singer. Talley was valuable to the Metropolitan as long as she possessed front-page potentialities ; when she passed from that class, her career at the Metropolitan also declined. In the first performance with her were Lauri-Volpi, de Luca, Mardones, and Alcock. The conductor was Serafin.

In her next appearance, in *Lucia,* on 22 February — again with Lauri-Volpi and de Luca, under the direction of Serafin — Talley showed no greater progress towards artistry than in her previous roles, setting

[98] Previous to her debut, Talley was sent to Marcella Sembrich for preparatory work. After the teacher had heard the prospective pupil and formulated her opinion of the groundwork that had to be done, she outlined a program of vocal exercises, scales, technical studies, etc. Talley informed the great artist that all she wanted was 'coaching' in certain operatic roles, whereupon Sembrich declared that the interview was over, and dismissed her.

herself carefully for the top notes, and otherwise imposing her curiously personal views upon the music. There was, however, an enormous audience present. It paid an unheard of sum — at *matinée* prices — to the box-office, slightly less than $14,000. Aside from repetitions of these roles, she was heard during this season on 7 March in *Le Rossignol* (see page 336), and on the 12th as Olympia in *Contes d'Hoffmann.*

There was evidence, in other debuts during this and later seasons, that the projection in leading roles of a singer so ill-equipped as Talley was not merely an isolated phenomenon. On 28 January Mary Lewis, also a soprano, made her first appearance at the Metropolitan as Mimi in *La Bohème,* with Johnson, Scotti, Picco, Rothier, and Kandt (Musetta). To Miss Lewis there was also attached a 'success story,' for she had made her way to the Metropolitan from, among other things, Ziegfeld's 'Follies.' Thus she brought with her a Broadway background which was not exactly everyday equipment for a Metropolitan singer, and provided her with the materials for a journalistic, if not an artistic, success.[99] She was later heard as Nedda on 19 February, in a performance of *Pagliacci* with Vittorio Fullin, Scotti, and Tibbett (Silvio) ; and as Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* on 12 March, with Talley, Bori, Howard, Errolle, and de Luca.

Another American singer made a debut assisted by a demonstrative 'home-town' cheering squad — though on a more modest scale — when Dorothea Flexer was heard as The Old Mother in *Andrea Chenier* on 5 March, with Peralta, Gigli, Bourskaya (Countess Olga), and Tibbett (Fleville), Serafin conducting. Flexer displayed a good mezzo-soprano voice, but her career at the Metropolitan was confined to minor roles.

The year's revivals and novelties were not of a quality with those of the season immediately preceding, for *Falstaff, Götterdämmerung,* and *Pelléas* can scarcely be duplicated at will. But the presentations were certainly diversified, and occasionally worthy. Most commendable was the first production in the Metropolitan of Spontini's *La Vestale,* given on 12 November under the direction of Serafin. The work was excellently cast,

[99] The progression was usually in the opposite direction — such as the later success, in non-operatic circles, of Fritzi Scheff, Mary Ellis, Queenie Smith, Gladys Axman, Louise Hunter, etc., whose careers began at the Metropolitan.

with Ponselle (Giulia), Johnson (Licinio), de Luca (Cinna), Mardones (Pontifex Maximus), Matzenauer (The High Priestess, and Ananian (A Consul) in the leading roles ; and it was equipped with spectacular scenery from the *atelier* Urban. However, its appeal was largely for those with an interest in musical history, and it disappeared after five performances in this season, and three in the next. Even less enduring were Gatti's revivals of Peter Cornelius' *Der Barbier von Bagdad* and Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole,* as a double bill on 7 November, for neither of these works was presented in a subsequent season. Both of them had been given on earlier occasions in New York — Cornelius' work during the period of opera in German, Ravel's by the Chicago Opera Association on 28 January 1920. In the Metropolitan revival of *Der Barbier* were Schützendorf (The Caliph), Meader (Mustapha), Rethberg (Margiana), Bender (The Barber), Laubenthal (Nureddin), and Bourskaya (Bostana). Both Meader and Bender were excellent, as was Bodanzky's treatment of the score. Scenery for the Cornelius comedy was provided by Urban. Hasselmans was again the conductor for *L'Heure,* as he had been for the presentation by the Chicago company. The work was sung by a cast including Bori (Concepcion), Errolle (Gonzalve), Bada (Torquemada), Tibbett (Ramiro), and Didur (Don Inigo Gomez). The scenery was designed by Novak.

Also nominally contemporary in their origin were the Italian novelties of the season, which included the first Metropolitan production of Wolf-Ferrari's *I Giojelli della Madonna* — previous performances in that house had been by the Chicago company — and Giordano's *La Cena delle Beffe.* As exercise for Jeritza, the Wolf-Ferrari score had its value, but in other senses it offered little to the Metropolitan public. With her when the work was first given on 13 December were Martinelli (Gennaro), Telva (Carmela), and Danise (Rafaele). The scenery was by Antonio Rovescalli. Jeritza dominated the performance, introducing more of the eccentricities of behaviour on the stage that characterized her later career. Her reward, however, was twenty curtain calls. Knowledge of the excellent dramatic opportunities in Sem Benelli's play — it had been a vehicle for the Barrymores, as 'The Jest' —

aroused considerable anticipation before the first production of *La Cena delle Beffe* # on 2 January. The score was dull and in no sense worthy of the play, however ; nor was the performance improved by the exaggerations of Ruffo's Neri Chiaramantesi. His principal associates were Gigli (Giannetto Malespini), Alda (Ginevra), Dalossy (Lisabetta), and Didur (The Doctor), with Serafin conducting. The settings were by Urban, the costumes by Gretl Urban-Thurlow. This opera provided Lawrence Tibbett with his second prominent role, for he succeeded to Ruffo's part on 21 January, when the latter finished his season's engagement. His performance was competent if in no manner uncommonly distinguished. Giuseppe de Luca resumed the role of Gianni Schicchi when Puccini's one act comedy was restored to the repertory on 6 February. There was a new scenic production by Novak, and a cast that offered Easton (Lauretta), Lauri-Volpi (Rinuccio), Didur (Simone), and Rothier (Ser Amantio di Nicolao). Papi conducted.

One of the most worth-while of all the novelties undertaken by Gatti was his production of Manuel de Falla's *La Vida Breve*, which was heard for the first time in America on 7 March.[100] Despite the ability of the cast, in which were Bori (Salud), Howard (The Grandmother), Alcock (Carmela), Tokatyan (Paco), D'Angelo (Uncle Sarvaor), Gabor (Manuel), and Picco (A Singer), the work was dropped after three repetitions. Florence Rudolph and Giuseppe Bonfiglio appeared as the solo dancers, and there were scenery and costumes by the two Urbans. The other portion of the double-bill fared somewhat better, for in Strawinsky's *Le Rossignol* was Marion Talley (Le Rossignol). To the momentary interest of the public in this singer may be attributed the perpetuation of the work in the repertory for a second season, as neither her performance nor that of the ensemble was flattering to Strawinsky. Soudeikine's settings, however, were among the best he has ever done for the Metropolitan. The conductor for both works was Serafin. The use of a French text for *Le Rossignol* lent an almost League of Nations internationalism to this production — the settings were by Serge Soudeikine, a Russian ; the conductor was Italian ;

[100] The language used for *La Vida Breve* was Spanish, which had a precedent at the Metropolitan only in *Goyescas* (p. 223).

the leading singer an American ; and the Oriental background originated in a story by Hans Christian Andersen ! In the cast, also, were Didur (The Emperor of China), Schützendorf (The Chamberlain), Bourskaya (The Cook), Errolle (The Fisherman), Wakefield (Death), and Wolfe (The Bonze). Three Japanese Ambassadors were impersonated by Altglass, Picco, and Paltrinieri.

A new era of interest in works by Americans was initiated by the Metropolitan in this season. Curiously, the period in which one would have thought that pride in native effort should have been at its height — that immediately following the war — was marked by no production of an American work. When, after a lapse of six years, such enterprise was resumed with John Alden Carpenter's *Skyscrapers*, the work chosen was a ballet, not a full-length opera. Cognizance had apparently been taken of the impression created by his *Birthday of the Infanta*. There was much acclaim following the *première* of *Skyscrapers* on 19 February, attention being directed to the modernity of the music, the excitement in the production, the impressiveness of Robert Edmond Jones' scenery. However, both the modernity in the music and its jazziness were second-hand experiences, only the novelty of their presence in the auditorium of the Metropolitan lending a superficial curiosity to the presentation. A Broadway choreographer, Sammy Lee, was imported to collaborate in the preparation of the ballet, which was danced by Albert Troy (The Strutter), Rita de Leporte (Herself), and Roger Dodge (White Wings). The conductor was Hasselmans. *Skyscrapers* proved to be the most successful American work presented up to that time by the Metropolitan, its total of eleven performances in two seasons being but one less than the total for *Così fan tutte* in the five seasons of its occurrence.

One of the most excellent casts assembled by the Metropolitan for any production in its post-war history was present for the revival of *Die Verkaufte Braut*, on 28 January. With Bohnen as Kezal, were Müller (Marie), Meader (Wenzel), Hunter

(Esmeralda), Bloch (Springer), Telva (Kathinka), and Gabor (Muff), all of superior suitability to their roles. In the character of Hans, Laubenthal found a part nearer to his essential qualifications than any among the Wagnerian personalities he was customarily called upon to depict. Schlegel (Kruschina), Schützendorf (Micha), and Wells (Agnes) also sang. The excellence of the cast almost enabled *Die Verkaufte Braut* to match its previous record of performances in four consecutive seasons — from 1908 to 1911–1912 — for it was given ten times in this and the next two seasons. Bodanzky conducted this revival, for which there was scenery by Novak.

For Feodor Chaliapine there was the first presentation by the Metropolitan Opera Company of Massenet's *Don Quichotte* on 3 April. (A previous production in the house, on 3 February 1914, had been given by the Chicago Grand Opera Company.) Chaliapine's Don Quichotte was a strikingly pictorial character, but the emptiness of the music was a burden too heavy even for him. In the cast were Easton (Dulcinée), de Luca (Sancho Panza), and Meader (Rodriguez), with Hasselmans conducting. The production was by Urban.

The second annual series of *matinée* presentations of Wagner provided the opportunity for the season's important artistic event, the debut of Lauritz Melchior in *Tannhäuser* on 17 February. That this chanced to be the afternoon of the day on which Talley made her widely advertised first appearance did not aid the tenor in gaining an immediate celebrity. Though his stage deportment was barely more than awkward — it has improved immensely since — and the baritonal background of his tenor voice was frequently apparent, it was also plain that there was more of promise in his equipment than in that possessed by any other Wagnerian tenor of the day. Merely the beautifully produced head-tone on Tannhäuser's ecstatic 'Elisabeth,' at the close of the first act, was of a quality that the younger generation of operagoers had never heard from the throat of a *Heldentenor*. Melchior has utilized his equipment most admirably in his recent development. In that performance of *Tannhäuser* — the first of

the cycle — were Jeritza (Elisabeth), Branzell (Venus), Schorr (Wolfram), and Bohnen (Landgraf Hermann).[101] Melchior was also heard in *Siegfried* on 10 March, only the third performance of the role in his career. (He had sung it previously in Magdeburg and Berlin.) So widely has Melchior been acclaimed as a Wagnerian interpreter — particularly since there has been no contemporary tenor of his quality — that he sang the role for the hundredth time only nine years later, on 22 February 1935, also at the Metropolitan. On the occasion of his first *Siegfried* in America, his collaborators were Larsen-Todsen (Brünnhilde), Schumann-Heink (Erda), Schorr (Der Wanderer), Schützendorf, Bloch (Mime), Gustafson (Fafner), and Kandt (The Voice of the Forest Bird). Melchior further established his superiority in the performance of *Parsifal* on Good Friday, 2 April, in which were also Bohnen (Gurnemanz), Schorr (Amfortas), Larsen-Todsen (Kundry), and Schützendorf (Klingsor).

This year's cycle of the *Ring* encompassed a curiously limited number of singers, with Larsen-Todsen appearing in all the performances. She was heard as Fricka in *Das Rheingold* on 25 February, with Bohnen (Wotan), Meader (Loge), Müller (Freia), Bloch (Mime), and Schumann-Heink (Erda) ; as Brünnhilde in each of the three remaining dramas of the *Ring*, on 4th, 10th, and 19th March ; and as Isolde on the 26th. The performance of *Die Walküre* was the occasion for the first performance of Bohnen as Hunding ; and to the barbaric magnificence of his singing and acting he added the first of his experiments with *coiffeurs*. Finding cause to remove his helmet, Bohnen disclosed a half-bald head, and, alas ! the cloth meant to fabricate his skull did not match the colour of his skin ! His associates in this performance were Laubenthal (Siegmund), Schorr, Easton (Sieglinde), and Branzell (Fricka). Almost the identical singers appeared also in *Götterdämmerung* and *Tristan* — Laubenthal (Siegfried, Tristan), Schorr (Gunther, Kurwenal), Bohnen (Hagen, Marke), and Branzell (Waltraute, Brangaene). Also in *Götterdämmerung* were Schützendorf (Alberich), and Müller (Gutrune).

[101] The variability of the Metropolitan's performances is graphically illustrated by comparison with a *Tannhäuser* of but a fortnight before, on 23 January, in which Jeritza was surrounded by Peralta (Venus), Taucher, Schützendorf (Wolfram), in place of Whitehill, who was ill, and Gustafson (Landgraf Hermann).

Though the casting for this year's cycle was definitely superior to that for the previous performances given in the post-war period, the playing of the orchestra retained its customary indifference — in some aspects, its mediocrity. The brass instruments and the solo strings were especially poor. Nor did the repetition of protests from the musical press seriously modify the situation, which remained, for an institution of the Metropolitan's pretensions, persistently disgraceful. Typical of these comments was that of Gilman, following the performance of *Siegfried* on 11 March : 'It is a pity that a conductor with so fine an ear, so true a musicianship [as Bodanzky's] should be hampered in great and exacting works by so many inferior players as the Metropolitan orchestra possesses.' [102]

During the season's subscription performances of Wagner, Lawrence Tibbett made another venture into roles of this type, appearing as the Herald in *Lohengrin*, on 30 November, with Jeritza, Matzenauer, Taucher, Whitehill (Telramund), and Bender. On 2 January Rethberg's excellent conception of Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* was heard for the first time, with Taucher, Whitehill (Wolfram), Peralta (Venus), and Gustafson ; and on the 7th Jeritza returned to the role of Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* for the first time since 1922–1923, the cast including Matzenauer (Brünnhilde), Telva (Fricka), Taucher, Whitehill, and Bender (Hunding). Also a first appearance was Laubenthal's Tristan on the 16th with Larsen-Todsen, Branzell, Whitehill, and Gustafson (Marke). His handsome appearance and a willingness to sing Tristan's third act music rather than merely to declaim the lines — in the manner of most German tenors — were virtues to be treasured in Laubenthal's performance, but he never possessed the vocal control to manage the love-duet on pitch.

The season's opening, on 2 November, was distinguished by two unusual occurrences, of which, to the audience, the most noticeable no doubt was the vacancy of both the Vanderbilt box (No. 31) and the Morgan box (No. 35). Each family was observing a period of mourning, owing to the death of Reginald C. Vanderbilt and that of Mrs. Morgan. On the stage, the performance of *La Gioconda* found the scheduled cast altered by the substitution of Telva (La Cieca), for Alcock, who was ill ; and

[102] *Herald-Tribune*, 12 March.

Matzenauer (Laura) in place of Gordon. The last change had been effected only by recourse to Matzenauer's extraordinary musicianship, for Gordon had not been afflicted with her difficulty — a sore throat — until six thirty on the evening of the performance. A call was put in for Matzenauer, and though she had not sung the role in two years, she performed admirably after studying the score until curtain time. Ponselle (La Gioconda), Gigli, Mardones (Alvise), and Danise (Barnaba) were the additional singers, under the direction of Serafin.

Among the other singers introduced to the Metropolitan's public in this season were Mario Basiola, formerly of the San Carlo Opera Company, who made his debut on 11 November in *Aïda* (Amonasro), with Rethberg, Martinelli, Telva (Amneris), and Rothier ; Vittorio Fullin, another tenor aspiring to Caruso's place whose first appearance was on the 19th, also in *Aïda* (Rhadames), with Rethberg, Matzenauer, Danise, and Mardones ; and the other singing member of the Ponselle family, Carmela, whose debut was as Amneris, in the apparently inevitable *Aïda* on 5 December. Titta Ruffo rejoined the company on 11 November, as Barnaba in a performance of *La Gioconda,* conducted by Giulio Setti, the Metropolitan's able chorusmaster, who replaced Serafin. The latter had been injured by an automobile, and was not able to resume his post until 24 December, when he returned to conduct a repetition of *Gioconda.*

To the German section of the company also was added Elizabeth Kandt, on 22 January, her first appearance being in a performance of *Der Freischütz* (Ännchen), with Müller, Bohnen, Laubenthal, Wolfe (Zamiel), and Rothier (The Hermit). Efforts to accustom the prominent German singers to the Italian repertory continued in this season with Müller's first appearance as Aïda, on 12 February, with Lauri-Volpi, Telva, Danise, and Mardones ; and, in the same opera, on 5 April, Schorr sang his first Italian role, being cast as Amonasro, with Müller, Branzell, Lauri-Volpi, and Mardones. In the final performance of the Metropolitan season, on 17 April, Larsen-Todsen was heard as La Gioconda *, with Lauri-Volpi (Enzo *), Branzell, Telva (La Cieca), and Mardones. Easton made her first appearance in *Tosca* on 13 March, assuming rank as the fourteenth Tosca at whose hands Scotti (Scarpia) met his death. Lauri-Volpi was Cavaradossi. The company's production of *Boris* progressed to still another plane removed from the original production under Toscanini when Bamboschek assumed the baton for the first time on 10 April. Chaliapine was again the dominating figure as Boris, assisted by Fullin (Dmitri), Claussen (Marina), Anthony (Xenia), and Tibbett.

Gatti's ability to manipulate a large repertory within the limits of a twenty-four weeks' season rose to a new virtuosity during this year, for between 2 November and 17 April, forty-eight works were presented in the Metropolitan Opera House. One other — *Samson et Dalila* — was included among performances given in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and Cleveland.[103] There had been much talk during this season of plans for a new opera house (see page 363 ff) and to avoid any impression that the change of locale would involve a change of direction also, the further extension of Gatti's contract was announced on 27 May. His obligation to the Metropolitan now extended to 31 May 1931.

In an editorial in *The Herald Tribune* on 28 May, it was suggested that the tenure of Mr. Gatti's services be changed to apply for the length of his life ; and, the writer also pointed out, if the the financial well-being of the Metropolitan was as impressive as the current reports held it to be, certain existing deficiencies of the institution could and should be remedied. It was declared further that the increasing emphasis on the number of performances given, rather than upon their quality, indicated that the essential concern of Gatti — in deference to the wishes of his employers — was the preservation of a balanced budget.

A most interesting reply was made by the Metropolitan, through the assistant manager Edward Ziegler, in a letter dated 24 June 1926. There was, initially, a deprecation of the criticism against the opera ; and the following account of the Metropolitan's balance sheet for the year : 'The difference between the amount paid out for producing opera and the amount taken in from the sale of tickets shows, and always has shown since Mr. Gatti-Casazza assumed control, a very considerable deficit, the precise figure of the deficit for the last season being $226,991.

[103] This total, though amazing for a company functioning on the plan of the Metropolitan, has been exceeded by much in operatic enterprises elsewhere. In Dresden, for example, during the season of 1932–1933, there were seventy-two works in the active repertory of the opera. The season there, however, is virtually all year.

It is only through the skilful utilization of *sources of revenue other than those which the opera-going public supplies* [italics mine — Ed.] that this deficit has been diminished or covered, or at times somewhat more than covered.' In answer to the contention of the editorial — that those who campaign vigorously for a betterment of opera at the Metropolitan are the 'truest friends' of the institution — the letter stated : 'Between these "friends" and the great opera-going public, the management of the Metropolitan unhesitatingly chooses the latter and is proud of its unmistakable approval and steadily growing support.'

At the time, this letter aroused scarcely more than a cursory interest, for the Metropolitan was in a secure position, its subscription list was growing constantly larger, and its affairs were in good order. But in the light of the request for public support from 1933 onward, its significance is tremendous. For, in 1933, it was the contention of the management that the lack of public patronage owing to the depression was the primary reason for the deficit reported.[104] There was mention then of the $1,100,000 surplus built by Gatti in his years of incumbency, ostensibly through the production of opera and the public support thereof.

But, it is apparent, that even at the peak of its public success the operations of the Metropolitan left a deficit, and that 'sources of revenue other than those which the opera-going public supplies' were necessary to keep the books balanced. But when these declined — rentals of the auditorium when it was not used for opera, revenue from royalties on phonograph records, etc. — leaving only the deficit visible, the crisis in the affairs of

[104] In a letter to the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company from Paul Cravath, chairman of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera Association, it was stated on 10 January 1933 : 'The board of directors at a meeting yesterday came to the conclusion that conditions do not warrant us in asking for a renewal of the existing lease beyond the present season. The production of opera at the Metropolitan Opera House, under the sound direction of . . . Mr. Giulio Gatti-Casazza was conducted without loss for twenty years.' Also, in an interview that appeared in *The Herald Tribune* on 12 October 1934, may be found these words: 'The deficits which wiped out this reserve and called for two guaranty funds were caused, Mr. Cravath said, by reduced patronage in adverse times.'

the Metropolitan was attributed to lack of patronage by the public, in an attempt to arouse sympathy for the institution. In other words, a deficit from the production of opera at the Metropolitan was (as it is in every major opera institution in the world) a constant factor ; but it was made to appear an *extraordinary* factor when the means to adjust that deficit were no longer available in the ordinary ways, and it was desired to transfer the obligation to the public.

1926–1927

To its other distinctions the Metropolitan added in this season the discovery of a genius ; or perhaps it would be more accurate to say merely a composer possessed of genius. The revelation was not a result of public acclaim. It came from the announcement by Otto Kahn that Deems Taylor, composer of *The King's Henchman*, had been commissioned by the Metropolitan to prepare a new work for its exclusive use. In conveying the news to the public on 20 February 1927 Mr. Kahn declared : '*The King's Henchman* is such a remarkable product that we must ask him [Taylor] to do another. His genius alone can decide what the nature of his next opera shall be.'

The designation of 'genius' for Mr. Taylor may be regarded as fitting to an era in which inflated values were a commonplace ; but *The King's Henchman*# was in several senses remarkable enough. Its production, on 17 February, was the first by the Metropolitan of a full length work by an American since de Koven's *Canterbury Pilgrims* was given on 8 March 1917. To this there were further parallels in the circumstances that de Koven and Taylor had both been musical critics for the *New York World*, and the collaborators with each had been literary celebrities of their day — the earlier one Percy Mackaye, the latter one Edna St. Vincent Millay. There is little doubt that Taylor's was the most expert score bearing the qualification of 'American' to be heard at the Metropolitan, but it

presented few further elements of distinction. In it Pitts Sanborn [105] found 'passages . . . whose lilt recall Puccini . . . evanescent adumbrations of Debussy . . . an allusion to Massenet, a passing compliment to Moussorgsky.' As further influences Mr. Sanborn listed *Louise*, *Scheherazade*, and *Peer Gynt* before declaring 'for the most part *The King's Henchman* is based firmly upon Wagner.' Other comments were of a similar emphasis, if less encyclopædic. As Eadgar, Tibbett contributed the first of the impressive creations that he was to put to his credit in the next several years ; also uncommonly good were Johnson's Aethelwold and the Aelfrida of Florence Easton. There was very much applause, and at the conclusion of the opera, wreaths for the librettist and composer. The conductor was Serafin and the production was by Urban.

Also entrusted to Serafin and Urban was the production of the season's other spectacular *première*, the first performance in America of Puccini's last opera *Turandot*. The work was presented on 16 November, in the approved Ricordi edition with the portion uncompleted at the composer's death supplied by Franco Alfano.[106] With the impetus given by the knowledge that it was the last work from the brain of Puccini, plus the performance of the Princess Turandot by Jeritza, the opera seemed destined for an extended career at the Metropolitan. So favourable were the early impressions of *Turandot* that a lengthy editorial in *The Sun* of 9 December pronounced the production 'an almost sensational success.' With eight performances in this season, six in each of the next two, and one in 1930–1931, *Turandot* accumulated a record of twenty-one performances in its first four seasons. It has not been revived since the departure of Jeritza, however. Perhaps what Gilman termed the 'bloated futility' of the score [107] finally made itself apparent.

[105] In his criticism in *The Telegram* of 18 February 1927.
[106] Celebrated in his own right as the composer of *Risurrezione*, *Ombra di Don Giovanni*, and *Madonna Imperia*.
[107] In *The Herald Tribune* of 17 November 1926.

In the first performance of *Turandot* were Pavel Ludikar (Timur, debut), Lauri-Volpi (The Unknown Prince Calaf), Martha Attwood (Liu, debut), de Luca (Ping), Bada (Pang), Cehanovsky (A Mandarin), Altglass (The Emperor Altoum), with Lerch and Flexer as the two maids. Following the performance of 24 November under Serafin, Vincenzo Bellezza assumed the conductorship, on 6 December. Bellezza had been engaged to replace Papi, and made his debut as an operatic conductor at the Metropolitan on 4 November, directing a performance of *I Giojelli della Madonna* in which were Jeritza, Telva, Martinelli, and Danise. His actual debut in the house, however, had occurred on 17 March 1918 when he directed a 'Sicilian Suite' by Gino Marinuzzi. Bellezza was then noted as 'the musician whom Mr. Caruso brought with him from South America as his accompanist.' He also conducted the entire second half of another Sunday evening concert on 31 March 1918. During his first season as an operatic conductor at the Metropolitan he included *Madama Butterfly, La Bohème, Lucia di Lammermoor, Gianni Schicchi, Rigoletto,* and *Il Trovatore* among his labours ; and finally, on 25 March, restored some measure of vigour and meaning to the score of *Boris* when he conducted a performance in which were Chaliapine, Telva (Marina), Tokatyan (Dmitri), Pinza (Brother Pimenn), Howard (The Nurse), Bourskaya (The Innkeeper), Hunter, and Dalossy.

In the manner Gatti had, at this time, of choosing a spectacular novelty of one year for the following season's opening, the year 1926–1927 commenced with Spontini's *La Vestale,* preserved in its essentials as it had been given before. One alteration in a principal role was a most important one, however ; for with Ponselle (Giulia), Lauri-Volpi (Licinio), Matzenauer (The High Priestess), and de Luca (Cinna), was Ezio Pinza (Pontifex Maximus). At his debut Pinza sang with the intelligence and fine vocal art which have been constant in his appearances since, but his advent totalled to more than merely the acquisition of a good Italian basso. To the presence of Pinza may be attributed the revival of *Don Giovanni* in 1929 — the first performance during the directorship of Gatti — after a generation of New York operagoers had grown up *Giovanni*-less.

During his first season Pinza was heard as Ramfis in a performance of *Aïda* on 10 November, with Rethberg, Gordon, Martinelli, Basiola, and Serafin ; as Barnaba in *La Gioconda* on 20 November ; in *Rigoletto* with Talley, Lauri-Volpi, and Basiola on the 26th ; as the Abbot in a

restoration of *La Forza del Destino* — one of its numerous revivals — on 11 December, with Ponselle, Telva, Martinelli, Tibbett (Melitone), and Danise (Don Carlos), under the direction of Bellezza ; as Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere* on 10 January ; in *Lucia* (Raimondo) on 19 February, with Talley, Tokatyan, and Danise ; and as Pimenn in the performance of *Boris* previously mentioned.

Though *Don Giovanni* was still several years off, Mozart was represented in the repertory by a revival of *Die Zauberflöte*, which had not been heard at the Metropolitan since 1916–1917. Whether there was the fulfilment of an obligation to the music-lovers of New York expressed in this production or whether the search for material for Talley led to its choice is difficult to determine. However, Talley's unfitness for the music of the Queen of the Night was almost ludicrous, if the tragedy to Mozart could be ignored. So pronounced was the bad equalization of her scale that the 'Vengeance' aria, issuing from the darkness, seemed actually the product of two different voices, neither of them highly distinguished. At the revival on 6 November, as in later performances, Rethberg's Pamina and the Monostatos of Meader were the joys of this production ; Laubenthal's Tamino, Schützendorf's Papageno, Hunter's Papagena, and Bender's Sarastro were variously less so. Editha Fleischer began her valuable services to the Metropolitan as the First Lady, with Wells and Telva as her associates. Ryan, Anthony, and Flexer were cast as the three boys. In the other roles were Whitehill (The Speaker), Gabor and Burgstaller (The Two Priests), and Bloch and Gustafson (Two Voices). Serge Soudeikine's settings were exciting and picturesque, if scarcely Mozartian. The conductor was Bodanzky.

At the performance of *Die Zauberflöte* on 2 December, Lerch was heard as the First Boy, and Ludikar replaced Bender ; and on 18 December Fleischer was heard as both Pamina and the First Lady, with Meader as Tamino. Bloch undertook the latter's former role of Monostatos. To the German repertory, on 22 January, was restored *Fidelio*, in honour of the Beethoven centenary. It was the first production of the score at the Metropolitan since 19 January 1917, and differed from that version to the extent of recitatives composed by Bodanzky for all the

dialogue, save in the dungeon scene. Otherwise the production followed the Mahler arrangement, with his sequence of the *Fidelio* overture, the Prisoner's March, and the *Leonore No. 3* overture. The work was cast with Larsen-Todsen (Leonore), Laubenthal (Florestan), Schorr (Pizarro), Bohnen (Rocco), Fleischer (Marzelline), Schützendorf (Don Fernando), and Meader (Jacquino). Urban's original designs for the opera were not without merit, but the production when finally mounted resembled nothing so much as the exotic tea-room interiors prevalent in New York at this time.

The temporary prominence of the ballet in the Metropolitan's seasonal plans — previously demonstrated by the revival of *Petrouchka* and by the production of *Skyscrapers* — was perpetuated in this season by the presentation of Casella's *La Giara*, given for the first time in America as a stage work on 19 March. As an orchestral suite the music had been heard for the first time in America at a Philharmonic concert directed by Mengelberg in Carnegie Hall on 29 October 1925. Casella's 'choreographic comedy,' based on a story by Luigi Pirandello, was staged by Rosina Galli, who was seen as Nela ; and in the cast were August Berger (Don Lollo), Bonfiglio (Paolino), and Michael Angelo (A Pitcher-mender), with Alfio Tedesco the off-stage singer. Serafin conducted the performance, the scenery being the work of Novak. There were no further performances after the four of this season. Among the forty-eight scores presented in this season at the Metropolitan *Petrouchka* was not included, but *Skyscrapers* was again in the repertory, with Mollie Friedenthal as the Strutter when the work was performed on 29 December. Ruth Page made her debut as a solo dancer in the ballets incidental to *Die Verkaufte Braut* on 7 February, appearing in the Polka and Furiante with Bonfiglio.

To the performance of *L'Amore dei Tre Re* on 29 December — it had last been given at the Metropolitan in January 1924 — was attached the special significance of Serafin's conducting, for he had directed the world *première* of the score in Milan on 10 April 1913. By the standards of Toscanini and Moranzoni it was hardly an inflammatory performance, recalling that the early impressions of *L'Amore* in Italy had not been of an unusually vital score. On this occasion Ponselle was heard for the first time as Fiora. Despite the opulence of voice she possessed,

Ponselle did not challenge the accomplishments of Bori and Easton in this role. Others in the cast were Gigli (Avito), Didur (Archibaldo), and Danise (Manfredo). At the performance of 29 January Bori was heard as Fiora, with Tibbett (Manfredo) and Ludikar (Archibaldo) both in these roles for the first time. Bori was also the featured singer in the presentation of Thomas' *Mignon* on 10 March, the first at the Metropolitan under the auspices of Gatti. In contrast to Conried's production of 6 March 1908 which had been given in Italian, this revival was offered in French with Talley (Philine), Gigli (Wilhelm Meister), Whitehill (Lothario), Bada (Laertes), Ananian (Giarno), Dalossy (Frédéric), and D'Angelo (Antonio). Ruth Page was the solo dancer, Soudeikine the designer, and Hasselmans the conductor. As a vehicle for Bori, in association with Talley, and then with Lily Pons, the work enjoyed a considerable revival of life in the next eight years, there being a total of twenty-four performances at the Metropolitan in that period.

To the constant auditors and spectators of Wagner at the Metropolitan, this season remains memorable for the products of Michael Bohnen's 'archeological' researches. That, at least, was the official designation for the latest manifestations of Bohnen's individuality. Largely they were confined to the role of Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*. On 14 January Bohnen arrayed himself with a shaven skull from which protruded a single knot of black hair, introducing an Oriental *motif* into the Nibelungen drama. His associates in this performance were Larsen-Todsen (Brünnhilde), Laubenthal, Schorr, Branzell, and Fleischer (Woglinde *and* Gutrune). This, however, was as nothing beside the researches of Bohnen as exemplified in the performance of *Götterdämmerung* on the 26th, in which he dressed Hagen in a flaming red wig and beard. Nor was this permanent, either, for in the cycle performance on 18 March, Bohnen eschewed both shaven skull and red wig, reverting to something nearer the normal conception of Hagen. He still left the stage prematurely, however, in both this work and *Tristan*. So pronounced a lack of discipline for one singer could not fail to affect the other members of the company.

Previous to the commencement of this season's Wagner cycle there was the unusual event of an evening performance of *Das Rheingold* on 28 January. The purpose of this was to intro-

duce the Metropolitan's latest German tenor, Walther Kirchhoff. For the younger generation of opera-goers Kirchhoff was a revealing Loge ; to the older generation, merely one reminiscent of Vogl and Van Dyck. The singer's definite artistry and fine musicianship, as well as his skilfully used voice, disguised, in this character, the frayed condition of his vocal material ; but it was sadly apparent when he undertook other roles. For this there was plentiful reason, for Kirchhoff's European career had antedated the war. Save for the presence of Schorr as Wotan, the cast of this performance was identical with that of the performance of *Das Rheingold* in the cycle, with Larsen-Todsen (Fricka), Branzell (Erda), Schützendorf (Alberich), Meader (Mime), and Didur and Rothier as the Giants. In the later performance Bohnen replaced Schorr. During this season Kirchhoff was also heard as Siegmund, both Siegfrieds, Walther von Stolzing, and Tristan, the latter on 4 April with Easton, Branzell, Whitehill, and Ludikar (Marke). Kirchhoff was the first bearded Tristan to be seen at the Metropolitan in many years. This was the single subscription performance of *Tristan* during the year, a record not paralleled in any other season during which *Tristan* was included in the repertory. The only other performance of the score was as part of the Wagner cycle, on 25 March, with Laubenthal, Larsen-Todsen, Branzell, Whitehill, and Bohnen (Marke).

This year's cycle was introduced by *Lohengrin*, on 16 February, sung by Jeritza, Branzell, Laubenthal, Schorr, and Bohnen (Heinrich). Following the performance of *Das Rheingold* noted above, the Trilogy was presented on March 4th, 11th, and 18th. Larsen-Todsen continued to be the Metropolitan's sole Brünnhilde, her associates in *Die Walküre* being Kirchhoff, Schorr (Wotan), Ludikar (Hunding), Branzell, and Müller (Sieglinde) ; in *Siegfried*, Laubenthal, Branzell (Erda), Fleischer (The Voice of the Forest Bird), Schorr (Der Wanderer), Bloch (Mime), and Schützendorf ; and in *Götterdämmerung*, Laubenthal, Schorr (Gunther), Bohnen, Schützendorf, Branzell, and Müller (Gutrune). The cycle was completed by the performance of *Tristan* previously detailed, and the appearance of Kirchhoff in *Die Meistersinger* on 30 March, in which were also Müller (Eva), Howard (Magdalena),

Bohnen (Sachs), Rothier (Pogner), Schützendorf, and Meader. Bodanzky was the conductor for all of these.

One of the season's earlier performances of *Die Meistersinger*, on 3 November, allowed for a further exploration of the Wagnerian repertory by Lawrence Tibbett, whose Kothner on this occasion was undoubtedly one of the most preposterous misconceptions ever seen at the Metropolitan. In addition to contriving a disguise in which he resembled more the familiar portrait of a man from Mars than an inhabitant of sixteenth century Nuremberg, Tibbett burlesqued the salient lines of the character and fared badly with the florid passages. His performance prompted Gilman to declare : 'Mr. Tibbett's acting was amateurish, his singing the worst we have ever heard from him, and his makeup beyond belief. May the ghost of Richard Wagner forgive him !' [108] Kothner did not become a favourite role with Tibbett ; and, indeed, its abuse at the Metropolitan seems wholly disproportionate with the difficulties of the part. It has not been even adequately performed in the house for a decade. In this performance were also Laubenthal, Howard (Magdalena), Schützendorf, Meader, Rothier, and Easton. The latter added another impersonation to her extensive Metropolitan list on 8 December when she was heard for the first time as Brünnhilde in a performance of *Die Walküre* with Taucher, Whitehill, Gustafson (Hunding), Jeritza (Sieglinde), and Matzenauer. This performance was further marked by the appearance of a door which did, in truth, 'spring open' — in the first act — replacing the makeshift tapestry at the rear of Hunding's hut for the first time in the memory of even New York's more venerable operagoers. This desirable alteration has been retained to the credit of the Metropolitan. Though Lauritz Melchior did not appear in this season's Wagner cycle, he rejoined the company on 18 February to sing Siegmund in a performance of *Die Walküre*, later appearing as Parsifal on 15 April, with Larsen-Todsen, Bohnen, Whitehill, and Schützen-

[108] The New York *Herald-Tribune*, 4 November.

dorf. As in the past, Bodanzky was the sole conductor for the German repertory, relinquishing his baton only for a performance of *Lohengrin* on 22 December — in which were Rethberg and Laubenthal — to Bamboschek. The increased number of German singers permitted a number of interesting alterations in the casting for *Der Rosenkavalier,* when it was presented on 16 March, but the major change, Bohnen's substitution for Bender, as Ochs, was a disappointment. Expectations of a genuinely amusing performance had been aroused by Bohnen's Kezal and Caspar, but his Ochs was dramatically heavy and over-stressed, vocally undistinguished. Also new were the charming Octavian of Maria Müller, and Fleischer's Sophie. Easton (Feldmarschallin) and Schützendorf (Faninal) were of their familiar quality.

The promise of the season's new singers — aside from Pinza, Kirchhoff, and Fleischer — was not extraordinary. Among them vocalists of native origin were again prominent, including Elda Vettori, soprano, who first appeared as Santuzza in a performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana* on 19 November (with Tokatyan and Picco). In the remainder of the double bill Tibbett sang Tonio *, with Mario and Martinelli. During this season Vettori was heard in *Aïda* on 19 March, with Matzenauer, Fullin, Basiola, and Pinza ; as a replacement for Easton in *La Gioconda* on 11 December, with Gordon, Alcock, Tokatyan, de Luca, and Rothier ; and as Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* on 28 February. Louise Lerch joined the company on 7 November, singing arias from *Louise* and *Zauberflöte* at a Sunday night concert. Her first operatic role was as the Countess in *Rigoletto* on the 10th, at a special *matinée* with Talley, de Luca, and Lauri-Volpi. To the male singers were added Joseph Macpherson, American basso, whose debut occurred in *Aïda* (The King) on 30 December, with Rethberg, Gordon, Martinelli, Basiola, and Pinza ; George Cehanovsky, who made his debut as Kothner in *Die Meistersinger,* on 13 November; and Alfio Tedesco, who was first heard as Ruggiero in *La Juive,* on 12 November. The level of absurdity presented by the spectacle of the plump, flaxen-haired Rethberg as Cio-Cio-San was raised another notch on 27 November through her first appearance as Mimi in *La Bohème.* Had Mimi been bed-ridden with any affliction but consumption, this would have been a creditable impersonation, for it was admirably sung ; but the dramatic illusion was scarcely ideal. In a performance of *Roméo et Juliette* on 30 January, with Bori, Johnson, Didur, and Rothier, Tibbett was heard as Mercutio for the first time ; and to his

numerous other Metropolitan roles Edward Johnson added Rhadames on 8 March, in a special performance of *Aïda* with Müller, Branzell, de Luca (Amonasro), Pinza, and Gustafson. The attention of those who venerated Galli-Curci being transferred to Marion Talley, there was no particular excitement about the return of the Italian singer for her sixth season with the company on 5 January. The opera was *La Traviata*, with Gigli and de Luca. Her season embraced only a month, for she sang her farewell on 5 February in a performance of *Rigoletto* with Chamlee and de Luca. Within that period there were also performances of *Lucia* and *Il Barbiere*, of which none was suggestive of her legendary brilliance.

When the season and the tour to Baltimore, Washington, Atlanta, Cleveland, and Rochester had been completed, Gatti informed the press on 9 May : 'Never has the Metropolitan had its performances so largely attended. We have broken the record again.' There was no question of the disposition of the public to spend money on opera. Even if the season did contain but two performances of *Tristan* and nine of *Aïda*, the attractiveness of the Metropolitan's productions for those who had money to spend — and there were many in 1926 who did have — was not diminished. A performance of *La Gioconda* on 8 January for the benefit of the Italian Hospital — given with Ponselle, Gigli, and Danise — drew $32,000, netting the hospital $21,000. In the press, 'the usual large audience' was the customary descriptive phrase for the attendance during the subscription season.[109]

Nevertheless, when an interviewer brought the question of the Metropolitan's settings for the *Ring* to an issue on 11 April, Gatti declared, 'Kautsky's settings are almost new, owing to the marvellous quality of pre-war German materials. The material used now is greatly inferior, and the color falls off. The sets

[109] There was operatic competition for the Metropolitan in this season, for the first time since the visits of the German Opera Company. It came from the Rochester American Opera Company which appeared, for the first time in New York, at the Guild Theatre on 4 April. Its activities scarcely challenged those of the Metropolitan, however, except to demonstrate the possibilities of more intelligent dramatic action and a subtler co-ordination of the ensemble for the presentation of opera. Its introductory offering was Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail*, given in English as *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. The conductor was Eugene Goossens, the production being supervised by Vladimir Rosing.

for *Meistersinger* and *Tristan*, made eight to ten years later, seem older than those for the *Ring*.' The imminence of a new auditorium was further advanced as a reason for not replacing the *Ring* production.

There can be little question that the sets for *Tristan* — for *Die Meistersinger*, too — are comparable in shabbiness only to those for *Das Rheingold*, *Götterdämmerung*, etc. But the designation of the latter as 'almost new' is of a callousness fairly incredible. If settings made for the present stage would be unusable in a 'new' Metropolitan, what of the investment in *Turandot*, *The King's Henchman*, and *Mignon*, in merely the one season of 1926–1927 ? Perhaps it was realized that there would be no problem of transferring these works to a new house ; or perhaps it was understood that the Wagner-loving public, given no other choice, could not but patronize the Metropolitan.

1927–1928

THE general prosperity which had carried the Metropolitan to a new level in popularity during the several previous years, continued unabated in this season. New records were presaged even before the season began ; a week prior to the opening, a newspaper advertisement — placed by a ticket-holder with an eye to quick profits — offered seats for the first night, in the seventh row of the orchestra, for fifty dollars apiece. There had been much talk of ticket-gouging and exorbitant prices for theatre tickets as the result of an investigation by District Attorney Tuttle, and the agencies were wary of buying tickets for resale, compelling the owners to advertise directly. When the matter was brought to the attention of Tuttle, on 25 October, he declared that there was no action open to him. The only criterion for charges of 'speculation' was the increase asked over the face value of a ticket ; the Metropolitan, however, sold tickets by the season, at $175 per chair for the twenty-four weeks. No charge was specified for the opening night. The only basis of

comparison was the price charged by the Metropolitan for the unsubscribed seats on the orchestra floor. These were regularly priced at $8.25. On opening nights, eleven dollars a piece was asked for them.

Even apart from these considerations, this year's was one of the most widely remarked openings in the Metropolitan's history. The audience was unsurpassably resplendent — unsurpassably, that is, until the next opening night — and the settings for *Turandot* matched the audience, glitter for glitter. The gathering of the audience in the Thirty-ninth Street lobby, which seems ever to be staged for the benefit of the Sunday rotogravure sections, this year brought a new confusion. So many were the newspaper photographers present and so diligent were they in the pursuance of duty that the smoke from countless discharges of flashlight powder inspired a passer-by to turn in a fire alarm. Engines actually came, but were dismissed, a little reluctantly. Of the performance itself on 31 October, Jeritza was again the central figure ; and save for the replacement of Attwood by Nanette Guilford (Liu), the cast was as it had been before.

To the days immediately succeeding the primary interest was contributed by the German repertory. The second night's performance of Wagner was this year *Die Meistersinger*, on 2 November, in which Grete Stückgold (Eva) and Richard Mayr (Pogner) made debuts, in a cast including Howard, Laubenthal, Whitehill, Schützendorf, and Meader. Both were artists of distinguished abilities, though Stückgold never rose to quite the position in the Metropolitan's organization that her qualities warranted. Her excellent Eva and Sieglinde were particularly admirable. Mayr was no longer possessed of the vocal strength that had once been his, but his first performance of Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*, on 17 November, amply justified the European celebrity of this impersonation. In the cast with him were Stückgold (Octavian *), Easton, Fleischer (Sophie), and Schützendorf.

During the season Mayr was also heard as Heinrich in *Lohengrin* on 12 November, with Stückgold (Elsa), Laubenthal, Matzenauer, Schützendorf, and Everett Marshall (debut, Herald) ; as Landgraf Hermann in *Tannhäuser* on the 30th, with Jeritza, Telva, Laubenthal, and Whitehill ; and on 13 December as Hunding in *Die Walküre*, with Jeritza. Matzenauer (Fricka), Easton, Laubenthal, and Whitehill (Wotan).

The season's German novelty, Korngold's *Violanta*, was presented before the first week was concluded, on 6 November. It was a one-act opera, written when the composer was seventeen, and antedating *Die Tote Stadt* by four years. As with the latter, the production of *Violanta* was inspired by the presence of Jeritza, who was heard in the title role. Its life at the Metropolitan, however, was not even as long as that of *Die Tote Stadt*, the four performances in this season completing its career in New York. In the first American presentation were Whitehill (Simone Trovai), Kirchhoff (Alfonso), Mildred Parisette (debut, Bice), and Bada (Giovanni Bracca). More enduring was the remainder of the afternoon's oddly mixed bill, a revival of Humperdinck's innocent *Hänsel und Gretel*, which had been banished from the Metropolitan when the war invaded the opera house. The restoration gave Queena Mario an opportunity to introduce her excellent Gretel, and Editha Fleischer her fetchingly acted and beautifully sung Hänsel. Dorothee Manski made her debut as the Witch, the rest of the cast including Wakefield (Gertrude), Schützendorf (Peter), Alcock (The Sandman), and Parisette (The Dewman). Save for the latter two characters, the cast remained largely the same for the next seven seasons, one of the best of the Metropolitan's repertory productions. The scenery for both *Violanta* and *Hänsel und Gretel* was by Urban, and Bodanzky was the conductor for the two productions. Urban's setting of the Wald which is so integral a part of *Hänsel und Gretel* actually established the desired illusion, and remains a highly atmospheric creation.

The most important revival of this year, from a musical standpoint, was that of *Norma*, on 16 November. A half-dozen years had passed since the Chicago company's perform-

ances in New York with Raisa ; and more than thirty-five since the last previous production at the Metropolitan, on 3 February 1892.[110] Gatti's revival was one of the most valuable innovations of his last years as director. There were nineteen performances in five years before the contraction of the repertory for the shortened season of 1932–1933 resulted in its elimination. Ponselle was a plausible Norma, if not yet a great one ; her associates at the first performance included Lauri-Volpi (Pollione), Pinza (Oroveso), Telva (Adalgisa), Egener (Clotilda), and Paltrinieri (Flavio). Serafin was the conductor, and the production was by Urban. At the performance of 14 January Frederick Jagel replaced Lauri-Volpi.

Jagel's debut had occurred on 8 November, in a performance of *Aïda* (Rhadames) with Stückgold (Aïda), Matzenauer, Basiola, Didur, and Macpherson. He was also heard in *Madama Butterfly* on the 26th with Easton and Scotti ; in *Lucia di Lammermoor* on 10 December with Lerch, de Luca, and Pinza ; in the *première* of Alfano's *Madonna Imperia* on 8 February ; and as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* on 31 March with Vettori, and Scotti.

The first performance of *Madonna Imperia*, on 8 February, aroused more than ordinary curiosity because of the composer's *Risurrezione* — which had provided Mary Garden with a spectacular role — and of his completion of *Turandot*. However, the score of *Madonna Imperia* was empty of merit. In the cast of the first performance were Müller (Madonna Imperia), Falco (Balda), Jagel (Filippo Mala), Pinza (Chancellor of Ragusa), and D'Angelo (Count of the Embassy), with Serafin conducting. This was another one-season novelty, with four performances and no revival. Contemplating the scenery by Joseph Novak, Lawrence Gilman was moved to declare :[111] 'It looks like a parlormaid's dream of the haunts of opulent debauchery.' As a pendant to the Alfano novelty there was a restoration of *Coq d'Or*, in which Talley was added to those who had sung the music of the Queen (again danced by Galli), with

[110] The second of two performances in that season.
[111] *Herald-Tribune*, 9 February.

Pinza (Dodon), Diaz (The Astrologer), Alcock (Amelfa), and Guilford (The Voice of the Cock). Bonfiglio, de Leporte, Bartik, and Kosloff were the principal dancers, with Bamboschek conducting. Also new to the Metropolitan was Puccini's *La Rondine* — the *première* had occurred at Monte Carlo in 1917 — which was given on 10 March. In accordance with what Gatti declared was the revised opinion of Puccini, the role of Prunier, originally composed for a baritone, was sung by Tokatyan, a tenor. Also in the cast were Bori (Magda), Gigli (Ruggero), Fleischer (Lisette), and Ludikar (Rambaldo), with Bellezza conducting. Urban's scenery included an elaborate ballroom setting which has done useful service to the Metropolitan on numerous occasions beside that for which it was designed. The work had a moderate success at the Metropolitan, with performances in the next two seasons. A revival is scheduled for 1935–1936.

To the standard repertory there were also restorations of familiar works by Meyerbeer, Puccini, and Bizet, two of the productions newly designed. It was a far cry from the Jean de Leyden of Jean de Reszke or Caruso to that of Martinelli, who had the principal role when *Le Prophète* was presented on 31 December ; and, indeed, of the entire cast, only Matzenauer (Fides), and Pinza (Zacharias) could compare with those heard in Metropolitan productions of the past.[112] In the cast were Leonora Corona (Bertha), Tedesco (Jonas), Schützendorf (Matthisen), Rothier (Oberthal), and Ananian (An Anabaptist). At the performance of 28 January, Branzell replaced Matzenauer. Bodanzky was the conductor, and Urban the scenic designer. There was also an Urban production for *Carmen* when it was presented on 13 January, after a lapse extending from the season of 1924–1925. Jeritza was seen as the cigarette girl, with Johnson (Don José), Tibbett (Escamillo), Fleischer (Micaëla), Ryan (Frasquita), and Alcock (Mercédès). The conductor was Hasselmans. At a benefit performance of *Carmen* on 27 January — which realized $26,000 for the Babies Hospital — Bori sang Micaëla ; on 4 February she was replaced by Morgana, with Martinelli as José. On 9 March Jeritza made her last appearance of the season, with Johnson (José), Basiola (Escamillo), and Mario (Micaëla). *Manon Lescaut,* absent since 1921–1922, was brought back on 10 December, with Alda (Manon), Gigli (des Grieux), Scotti (Lescaut), Didur (Geronte), Bada (Ballet Master), and Alcock (A Musi-

[112] The last previous performances of the opera had been in 1919–1920.

cian). Serafin conducted the opera for the first time at the Metropolitan, but there was no new scenery. Also returned in its previous production was *Così fan tutte*, which had not been heard since 1924–1925. To the recurring group of Bori (Despina), Easton (Fiordiligi), Meader (Ferrando), and de Luca (Guglielmo), were added Fleischer (Dorabella) and Ludikar (Don Alfonso). A performance had been scheduled for 24 March and postponed because of the illness of Easton and Ludikar. When the work finally was given on 1 April, Bodanzky was indisposed, and Paul Eisler conducted in his stead. There was no other performance in this season, nor has there been a revival since.

Some revision upward in the quality of the Metropolitan's performances of *Tristan* was accomplished through the presence of Gertrude Kappel, an importation from Munich. She made her debut as Isolde, on 16 January, and established the impression of a Wagnerian soprano whose musicianship and artistry had not been equalled at the Metropolitan since the war. Her subsequent impersonations were likewise to be respected, though they did not challenge the high level of her Isolde. Her associates in this *Tristan* included Laubenthal, Bohnen, and Schorr. Within a month Kappel sang all the Brünnhildes at the Metropolitan ; on the 20th, in *Die Walküre*, with Kirchhoff, Schorr (Wotan), Bohnen, Müller, and Matzenauer (Fricka) ; on the 26th, in *Götterdämmerung*, with Kirchhoff, Schorr, Bohnen, Schützendorf, Müller (Gutrune), and Branzell (Waltraute) ; and on 18 February in *Siegfried*, with Laubenthal, Schorr (Der Wanderer), Bloch (Mime), Schützendorf, Branzell (Erda), and Fleischer (Voice of the Forest Bird). This performance marked the debut of Tullio Serafin as a conductor of Wagner at the Metropolitan, and was distinguished by a greater carefulness of preparation than was shown in most performances under Bodanzky. Serafin conducted *Parsifal* in a later season, but the experiment was short-lived. Kappel sang in all five performances of *Tristan* in this season, as well as in the single *Parsifal*, on 6 April, with Whitehill, Laubenthal, Bohnen (Gurnemanz), Schützendorf, and Gustafson (Titurel), Bodanzky conducting. For this performance, a set for the Magic Garden used in the original Conried produc-

tion of 1903 was brought out of its hard-won resting place in the storeroom, for a purpose that remained obscure. With Melchior a lamented and Taucher an unlamented, absentee, the German tenor roles in this season were all sung by either Laubenthal or Kirchhoff. Melchior, it is said, was engaged in perfecting his knowledge of the heroic Wagner roles.

A performance of *Tannhäuser* on 15 February, sung by Jeritza, Telva, Kirchhoff, Schorr, and Bohnen initiated this year's Wagner cycle, which also included *Die Meistersinger* and *Tristan* in addition to *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. A large audience heard all of the performances, again establishing the soundness of the plan, and the appetite for Wagner in New York. In *Das Rheingold* on 24 February Kappel was heard as Fricka *, with Schorr (Wotan), Kirchhoff (Loge), Branzell, Müller (Freia), Schützendorf, Meader (Mime), Fred Patton (Donner, debut), Rothier (Fasolt), and Wolfe (Fafner). The cycle performance of *Siegfried* was conducted by Serafin, with his wife, Elena Rakowska, as Brünnhilde. The other performances did not differ materially from those of the subscription season, save that Kirchhoff sang both Walther and Tristan, the latter with Kappel, Branzell, Whitehill, and Bohnen, on 29 March. In addition to her Wagnerian roles, Kappel was also heard as Leonore in *Fidelio*, on 14 March. In a repetition of the opera on the 31st, Whitehill was heard as Pizarro in place of Schorr. Otherwise the casting was as in the season previous. Save for the *Siegfried* performances mentioned, Bodanzky was the conductor for the season's Wagner, Beethoven, and Smetana.

Not to be outdone by Kansas City, Chattanooga — and Tennessee in general — was liberally represented at the debut of Grace Moore in the Metropolitan on 7 February. This singer, somewhat in the manner of Mary Lewis, had made her way to the Metropolitan from the musical comedy theatres slightly to the north, particularly from the Music Box Theatre and the *Music Box Revues*, after two years of study in Europe. Not only the lay citizenry were numbered among the delegation of one hundred at that performance of *La Bohème ;* there were present also the two Senators from that state, the Honourable Messrs. Tyson and MacKellar. In the cast with Miss Moore were Johnson, Scotti, and Fleischer (Musetta) — and before the verdict of the professional listeners was returned, Chairman Kahn placed

his personal approval upon the debutante by saying that her singing of the third act music was the best he had ever heard. The judgment of others was somewhat more reserved. They recognized the prettiness of Miss Moore's voice, but they also remarked her tentativeness, her lack of artistic maturity. She was heard again in the same opera on 3 March, with Gigli in place of Johnson. On 21 March Moore was heard as Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, with de Luca, Howard, Tokatyan, and Pinza (Simone). Less spectacular was the entrance, on 24 November, of Leonora Corona — also a soprano of American, and Southern, origin — in *Il Trovatore* (Leonora), with Martinelli, Matzenauer, and Danise. Though she did not match the usual standards for principal singers at the Metropolitan, either vocally or dramatically, she was favoured with persistent and extraordinary opportunities. Thus, during her first season, she was heard as Bertha, in *Le Prophète*, on 31 November ; as Scotti's fifteenth Metropolitan Tosca on 13 March, with Gigli as Cavaradossi ; and in the title role of *La Gioconda*, on the 24th, with Gigli, Branzell, Basiola, and Pinza. Jeritza, Vettori, and Corona were the various Toscas to be seen during this season, with Jeritza embellishing her performance, on 9 November, with a large picture hat and blond hair. Formerly, she had been both dark and hatless. On 30 December, Jeritza scuffled so vigorously with Scarpia-Scotti in the second act that she wore a bandage in the third act ; and on 30 January she rounded off her vagaries for the year, before an astonished audience, by *not* falling prostrate to sing 'Vissi d'arte,' but by merely crouching decorously.

One of Lawrence Tibbett's more fortunate essays in Wagner marked his return to the company on 17 December, when he was heard for the first time as Wolfram in a performance of *Tannhäuser*, with Jeritza, Telva, Kirchhoff (Tannhäuser), and Mayr (Landgraf Hermann). The lovely quality of his voice has been heard to advantage in the role occasionally since, though the infrequency of his appearances in Wagner has prevented the singer from attaining a genuine ease in the style. He was heard again as Wolfram on 17 March, with Müller, Peralta (Venus),

Laubenthal, and Ludikar (Landgraf Hermann). Bohnen displayed his ability as a gymnast as well as a vocalist with a number of unscored handsprings when he appeared as Tonio in *Pagliacci* for the first time, on 13 February, with Lewis (Nedda), Martinelli, and Tibbett (Silvio). His German colleague, Rethberg, investigated the other half of the double bill for the first time on 26 December, when she was heard as Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Louise Homer, who had not sung at the Metropolitan since 27 March 1919, returned to the company as Amneris, in a special benefit performance of *Aïda* on 13 December, with Stückgold, Martinelli, Ruffo (Amonasro), and Pinza. This was the role of her debut, on 22 December 1900, nine days short of twenty-eight years before. Of her associates in that performance, only Scotti remained at the Metropolitan.

Though *Faust* retained its honoured place in the repertory with six performances, it was scarcely the kind of Gounod which had earned the sub-title for the institution thirty years previously. Its performances during the season included the efforts of such casts as Alda, Lauri-Volpi, Rothier, and Basiola, on 3 December ; Alda, Martinelli, Chaliapine, and Basiola on 20 January ; Alda, Martinelli, Bohnen, and de Luca on 23 February, the most nearly well-balanced of the season ; Lewis, Chamlee, Chaliapine, and de Luca on 20 March ; and Mario, Chamlee, Chaliapine, and de Luca on 4 April. Nor could such a cast as Morgana (Olympia), Manski (Giulietta), Mario (Antonia), Tokatyan (Hoffmann), Didur, de Luca, and Rothier for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, on 24 December, be deemed an exemplary illustration of the art of song.

The close of the season found Otto Kahn finally rebuffed on his cherished project of a 'new' Metropolitan on West Fifty-seventh Street ; for on 19 February he announced formally his intention to dispose of the site. Two other events in the musical world, seemingly unrelated, were also to assume importance in the history of the Metropolitan Opera. On 22 February it was announced that Dr. John Erskine had been granted an indefinite leave of absence from Columbia University to become head of the Juilliard School of Music. Its supporters, the Juilliard Foundation, were later to become affiliated in the

maintenance of the Metropolitan Opera Association. On 27 March the Philharmonic Orchestra and the New York Symphony Society made known their plan to 'merge.' Initially this concentrated the resident orchestral activity of New York in the hands of a single group — a control analogous to the domination of the operatic situation by the Metropolitan. It also opened the way for the seeming solution to the difficulties of both groups a half-dozen years later when the futile representations for a merger of orchestra and opera were made.

The 'New' Metropolitan Opera House

No more illusive mirage has loomed before the musical public of New York during the last score of years than the promise of a 'new' Metropolitan Opera House. That the auditorium was unsatisfactory from the point of view of the middle class public since the opening night in 1883 cannot be questioned. The deficiencies in sightlines and seating arrangements are familiar to every one who has sat in the family circle, balcony, or dress circle.[113] There are in each of these areas a number of desirable seats ; but the long sections at right angles to the stage — necessitated by the planning of the house for an inordinate number of boxes — require a constant strain to see the stage from even the front row of each. From the seats behind, the only direct view is of the opposite side of the house.

[113] In *The Times* of 23 April 1884, Italo Campanini, who sang at the Metropolitan during the first season, was quoted as saying : 'The reason why the performances failed largely of their proper effect is that the house is unfit for music as it stands. The architect does not seem to understand building theatres and should have followed some house recognized as beautiful and found to be well-adapted for the purpose. When Mr. Fabbri first spoke to me about plans for the new opera house I suggested that he should examine the new Costanzi Theatre at Rome. It cost about $600,000 to build but it is incomparably finer in every respect than your Metropolitan. I should advise the directors of the Metropolitan to tear out the inside of their building and rebuild ; they may protest that they have spent two million dollars when they ought only to have spent one, but they have spent too much not to spend more and get a house *from every seat of which the stage can be seen and the music heard.* [Italics mine — Ed.] No half measures, such as have already been tried, will do any good. Sfondrini, architect of the Constanzi, would come here and make a good house of it in a year.' 'Half measures,' however, were the only ones applied to renovate the building, even after the fire of 1892.

Though these conditions involved hardship, they were borne with amiability while the opera remained primarily a place in which one saw the leading socialites of the day, joined in conversation, observed the latest mode in clothing, and incidentally listened to extraordinary voices. But the decline of the opera as a showplace for society — in the late years of Conried and the early ones of Gatti — and then in the number of extraordinary voices forced a greater concentration upon the happenings on the stage itself, and emphasized the failings of the auditorium. Moreover, the great advances in stage construction, mechanism, and convenience between 1910 and 1920 — when the Metropolitan's stage was already antiquated — only widened the gap between the productions there and those in the legitimate theatre. The detriment was not only artistic ; it was economic as well. As the costs of unionized stage hands and scenery movers mounted — an excessive number of them are required to work the Metropolitan's primitive appliances, and the union's ruling demands a stage crew based on the size of the drops — the expenses of giving opera increased out of any proportion to the visible returns to the public.

It is not generally known that the Metropolitan stage will accommodate the set pieces for but two productions at a time, owing to the limitations of the stage, and a fire department ruling. There was a time when such pieces were stored under the stage, but the practice was discontinued. By 1903 a warehouse had been purchased on Fortieth Street, across Seventh Avenue from the rear of the Opera House, where all the set pieces not in use for the day's presentations are stored. (The space for flying drops, above the stage, is fairly commodious.) If a *matinée* and evening performance are scheduled for the same day, it is necessary to keep the scenery for the next day's opera outside the house, on the pavement, resting on wooden trestles. It is protected only by a tarpaulin covering and a little shed-like roof projecting from the wall. When the afternoon performance is completed, the scenery is hauled out of the theatre and trucked

back to the warehouse, to be stored until it is again needed. Not only is the wear and tear to which scenery is normally subjected increased a hundredfold ; there is the expense of *three* separate crews of workmen, all of whom are paid union wages. Even for such a short season as has been given in the last three years, the expense in this department alone is said by a member of the Metropolitan staff to be close to thirty thousand dollars. The damage to the scenery by rain and snow can hardly be estimated.

All these factors contributed to a feeling that a 'new' Metropolitan Opera House would inevitably be constructed before the present building had reached its golden jubilee. Gatti-Casazza records in his memoirs [114] that upon his arrival in 1908 he was promised, by Otto Kahn, a new house in two or three years. And during the period of his separation from the Metropolitan, Artur Bodanzky related [115] that his first impression of the house — gained during an exploratory walk with Otto Weil — occurred when they passed a large building and his companion asked Bodanzky what he thought it might be. The guileless conductor said that it seemed to him a large stable. Nevertheless, Kahn promised Bodanzky too a new opera house within a short time.

There were rumours during all the period of the Metropolitan Opera Company's existence — from 1908 onward — that the construction of a new house was imminent. But they could hardly be regarded as credible prior to 13 August 1924, when Kahn returned from a European trip and informed the press of his conviction that a new house was a 'necessity.' Earlier reports had generally concentrated upon the desirability of a new building, how much pleasanter the production of opera, and its enjoyment, also, would be in more modern surroundings. There had rarely been a confession that it was a 'necessity.' This view Kahn affirmed in a pamphlet distributed to the Metro-

[114] *Saturday Evening Post*, 25 November 1933.
[115] *Saturday Evening Post*, 24 October 1929.

politan's subscribers on 28 October 1925 in which, besides expressing his views regarding opera in translation and singers of American origin, he again expressed a hope that a new opera house would be available for the Metropolitan in the near future.

On 7 November it was reported that the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, offered seven million dollars for its property, had set its price at ten million. Plots at Fifth Avenue and Seventy-second Street, Central Park West and Seventy-second Street, and another on Fifty-seventh Street were reported to be under consideration for the new building. The last supposition proved to be the one most nearly accurate, for it coincided with rumours that Otto Kahn had quietly been acquiring a block of property on that street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. On 5 December Kahn denied that the Opera and Real Estate Company was interested in or about to acquire the Fifty-seventh Street plot — now occupied by the apartment building called the Parc Vendome — for which it was said that he had paid three million dollars. The actual method by which he hoped to convert this property into a new home for Metropolitan Opera was not revealed until 15 January 1926.

Coincident with an announcement from Kahn that he had obtained a loan of $1,900,000 from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company with which to begin construction of the new house, came a statement from the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company. It acknowledged receiving a proposal from Kahn that his property be utilized for a new building — but cited no intention of the Opera and Real Estate Company to participate in the project as an unit. It bore the signature of Fulton Cutting, chairman of that company's board of directors, and declared, in part : —

> If the music lovers of New York want a new opera house they are entitled to have one and the trustees of the present property will certainly not oppose any obstacle or competition to such a project. *They are not, however, of the opinion that the present house is antiquated or that its site is undesirable. It is producing opera more superbly than anywhere else in the world. The acoustic properties of its au-*

ditorium are unsurpassed. . . No doubt several of its characteristics could be improved and its superiority to other similar institutions still further enhanced. If it is desirable that the building should be replaced by one larger and more scientifically equipped, *I presume the company of which Mr. Kahn is the chairman will undertake the project.* [Italics mine — Ed.]

The Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company perhaps did not interpose 'any obstacles' of a physical nature — such as buying another site or announcing their own plans for a new opera house ; but its members effectively washed their hands of the responsibility for giving the people of New York a new and comfortable opera house, preferring to remain in their traditional citadel till the walls crumbled about them. A denial, forty-two years after its construction, that the house was 'antiquated' was credible in but one detail : — the boxes of the Diamond Horseshoe were as prominent as they ever had been. Since the statement above represented the majority opinion of the box-holders, their lack of interest in a new building was clearly demonstrated.

Despite this rebuff, Kahn informed the newspapers of the same day that 'everything was harmonious' ; and indicated that if the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company would not participate in his plan as a group, he expected the younger element among the stockholders to co-operate with him. At the same time, he outlined the specifications of his plan that made it revolutionary, so far as opera in New York was concerned. Instead of two tiers of boxes — one of which represented vast social prestige (being owned) ; and the other scarcely any (being merely hired for a season) — there would be but one row in the new house, with none of the boxes owned outright. It was planned instead, to have a list composed of one hundred and fifty persons to whom privileges, as lessees, would be granted for various nights of the week. Kahn proposed that the ownership company choose a committee to confer with a group of his own associates on the composition of this list ; but it is not unlikely that this was the crux of the difficulty. The

question of eligibility, since it involved considerably more than merely the capacity to subscribe the price of the box, would have tested the judiciousness of a Solon — and there was no mutually satisfactory Solon to be found.

Since Kahn was the majority stockholder of the Metropolitan Opera Company, it signified little that on 21 January he was 'authorized' by that group to have plans drawn for the new building. More impressive was the announcement, made at the same time, that Vincent Astor, Edward S. Harkness, Robert L. Gerry, E. Roland Harriman, and Frederic Potts Moore — the Astor, Gerry, Harkness, and Harriman families were included in the Diamond Horseshoe — had 'joined the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company.' A representative of the Vanderbilt family had preceded them in that action by several days. It was hoped that the new building would be ready for occupancy by 1 January 1928.

More than a year elapsed before any further progress was publicly reported. The nature of that progress, however, indicated that its consummation might well have required so long a period. On 10 February 1927 Kahn stated that the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company had accepted the substance of his proposal, including the details of its financing. But these details represented a vast alteration from his original plan. There would still be a single row of parterre boxes, thirty-two in number ; but they would be *sold* — presumably to the stockholders of the ownership company — for $145,000 each. The purchaser would thus have a one thirty-second share in the property, subject to mortgage.[116] This payment would entitle the holder to the use of the box for Monday nights, and either Thursday evenings or Saturday *matinées*. For the other performances, the boxes would be available on rental to a list of persons subject to the approval of a 'box committee.'

[116] The total investment would thus be $4,640,000 — or about two and a half times the cost of the present building ($1,732,428.17).

Thus, the essentially democratic feature of the original proposal by Kahn — the equality implied in the renting of all the boxes — had been eliminated in the year of progress. Superficially, the new approach to the problem suggests a compromise, inasmuch as the owners of the boxes would have their use for only two performances a week, instead of five or six, as before. But, if it is understood that very few of them *wanted* the use of the boxes more often, and that the choice Monday nights were still reserved for a particular group, it can be seen that the box-holders of the present company retained as much as they desired, and sacrificed nothing. It was promised, however, that the new house would seat nearly five thousand persons, and that the abundant number of cheap seats would all command a good view of the stage — a feature in which, to quote the statement itself, 'the present auditorium is sadly deficient.' The proposed date of completion was set forward to the fall of 1929. On 27 February Kahn announced that Benjamin Wister Morris and Joseph Urban had been commissioned to draw plans for the new building. Morris was designated as 'architect,' and Urban as 'associate architect.' [117] There was further cause for congratulation in a report on 12 April — following a meeting of the Opera House Committee of the Real Estate Company's board of directors in the Guaranty Trust Company, at 40 Broadway — that a majority of the Metropolitan's box-holders had agreed to turn in their stock and permit the committee to proceed with the Kahn project.

What appeared to be merely the 'beat' of a musical journal over its competitors brought the entire matter to a crisis before the beginning of the next opera season. Deems Taylor, then editor of *Musical America,* visiting the studio of Urban, found him in possession of a draught of his plans for the new house.

[117] Urban, of course, had been in the employ of the Metropolitan Opera Company for almost ten years, while Morris had been retained by the Morgan family — powerful in the affairs of the ownership company — on a number of projects, including the Morgan Memorial in Hartford, and an annex to the J. Pierpont Morgan library. He was also the architect for the new building of the Bank of New York and Trust Company at 48 Wall Street.

Taylor obtained Urban's permission to make a sketch of the plans and reproduce them in his issue of 8 October. Though Taylor specified that the sketch merely represented Urban's personal views on the matter and were in no sense 'official,' the impression was nevertheless created that the auditorium would resemble the pictured one very closely. On the following day, however, it was declared by a representative of the Metropolitan that Urban's ideas conflicted sharply with those of Morris, who visualized an interior definitely more severe than the cathedral-like auditorium depicted in the published reproduction. 'The situation is distinctly confusing,' said the spokesman for the Metropolitan. Further confusion was contributed by Morris himself, who said, 'There are no plans yet for the new opera house. The site has not yet been selected and until it is there can be no plans.' Though this statement was at variance with the general impression — that the Kahn plot had been deemed satisfactory — it was confirmed by the announcement on 10 October that the Opera and Real Estate Company had named J. P. Morgan, Fulton Cutting, Cornelius N. Bliss, Jr., Robert S. Brewster, and De Lancey Kountze as a committee to find a *suitable* site for a new house. Furthermore, if one could be discovered, the Fifty-seventh Street location would be abandoned.[118] From Kahn came a statement also : 'Mr. Urban's plans have not received the approval of, and their publication has not been authorized, by either Mr. Morris or the two organizations concerned.'

The opening of the new season gave rise to further rumours. On 10 November it was reported that the site of the Century Theatre — Central Park West and Sixty-second Street — was being considered. It was also said that Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt and Robert Goelet (her nephew) had expressed open opposition to Kahn's project. Both were box-holders. On the

[118] The objection expressed by the box-holders to the plot on Fifty-seventh Street generally centred on the nearness of the Ninth Avenue Elevated Railway and the general untidiness of the immediate neighborhood.

following day, the unofficial selectors proposed the utilization of the New York Athletic Club site — then about to be abandoned — at Central Park South (Fifty-ninth Street) and Sixth Avenue ; also a location on 110th Street facing Central Park. Kahn declared that a site would definitely be selected within a month, and that he had no bias in favour of any particular locality. Before the time had elapsed, he announced, on 27 November, that he would defer any further word on the subject for another two months, but elaborated — perhaps fatally — on the difficulties involved in his own project. He stated that the Fifty-seventh Street site, the plan for the distribution of the boxes, the scheme for financing the undertaking 'were approved last February by the unanimous vote of [both] the boards.' But the architect's estimate of costs — submitted in July — showed that the plan as conceived in February was not feasible within the financial structure outlined. When the two months were but a week short of completion, on 19 January, the Kahn bubble vanished finally and for ever ; for he issued a formal statement which declared that his 'brokers have been directed to entertain proposals for the disposal of the Fifty-seventh Street site.' [119]

From Frank Dodd, secretary to the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, came the word [120] that the ownership group had objected to the 'commercial features of Mr. Kahn's scheme.' This embraced their opposition to his plan for supporting the opera out of the rentals accruing from an office-building to tower over the opera house itself. There may have been some question as to whether an office-building in that locality might be financially secure ; but it is difficult to believe that this objection was the fundamental reason for the collapse

[119] When the deal for the property was consummated, Kahn was the holder of a second mortgage of $1,600,000 on the building. This was a complete loss in a subsequent reorganization. However, in the early stages of the deal he was relieved of the $1,900,000 ground mortgage held by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

[120] New York *Herald Tribune*, 20 January 1928.

of the project. There is also to be considered the fact that endorsement of this approach would mean the sacrifice of the prestige, for the box-holders, associated with being 'patrons of opera'. On these nebulous grounds, then, were the actual site and plan for a 'new' Metropolitan Opera House rejected.

The loss did not seem irreparable at the time, for the season had barely concluded when a report on 22 May [121] disclosed the interest of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company in a location bounded by Fifth and Sixth Avenues, Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Streets — in a word, the earliest form of what was eventually to be known as Radio City. To this rumour Kahn declared, 'The story is incorrect. I know nothing about it.' On 10 August it was learned that John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was the leading figure in the new plans for a 'new' Metropolitan Opera House, and that he had secured an option on the property, which was owned by Columbia University. A vast sum of money — as much as eighty million dollars was mentioned — would be involved in the lease for a long period of years.

Official confirmation of the transaction was not forthcoming until 22 January 1929. It was then learned that the lease had been obtained for a period of twenty-four years at an annual rental of $3,750,000, with the option of renewal for three periods of twenty-one years each. Purchase outright by Rockefeller — if he had any such intention — was prohibited by the specifications of the deed by which Columbia University had received the property. 'The deal was consummated primarily to provide a location for a new Metropolitan Opera House,' the press announced. From Cutting came the declaration, 'Everything looks very promising.' Rockefeller's interest in the site, it was said, had been aroused by John L. Tonnele, vice-president of W. A. White, real estate brokers. In enticing diagrams in the newspapers the opera house was depicted as occupying a site between Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Streets, backing on Sixth Avenue and facing across an open square to Sak's Fifth-

[121] New York *Herald Tribune.*

Avenue and Saint Patrick's Cathedral. Other portions of the property would be leased for independent construction, but would have to conform to the design of the opera house. A company known as the Metropolitan Square Corporation had been organized to handle the details of the transaction for Rockefeller. On the following day it was reported that an offer of thirteen million dollars was being considered for the Thirty-ninth Street and Broadway property of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company. There was doubt, however, that this amount could be realized in an outright sale. Discussing the situation, a spokesman for the Opera and Real Estate Company declared : [122]

> The directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company have contributed more than $5,000,000 in thirty-five years to keep the opera going. Opera is not a paying business.[123] It is a donation to the public. Every year an assessment has to be made to continue to give opera in New York. The directors are reluctant to take a step which would increase this assessment.

Aside from the revelation of this statement that 'opera is not a paying business,' the mention of five million dollars as the 'contribution' of the directors of the ownership company is most striking. Over the period indicated — thirty-five years — it diminishes to $142,857 a year, and divided among the thirty-five box-holders, a sum of $4,081.62 each, per year. For 'this assessment,' each had the use of a box ; and, reduced to the terms of its yield to the box-holders — with seventy-eight as the average number of subscription performances a year during this period — gives the figure of $52.32 for the six seats in each box ; or $8.72 a piece for seats in the parterre tier, which could not be *purchased*, literally, for any price.[124] This, then,

[122] *Herald Tribune*, 24 January.

[123] The Metropolitan Opera Company at that time was approaching the crest of its $1,100,000 surplus.

[124] However, the box-holders occasionally honoured their friends by sub-leasing their privileges. The case of the government vs. Miss Georgine Iselin, referred to earlier (p. 260), may be cited again. During the season of 1920–1921, Miss Iselin sublet her box for forty-seven performances, for which she received the sum of $9525. Her assessment was $4500, the net profit to her, thus, $5025. As reported

was the 'contribution' of the directors to the opera public which became, by the manner of stating it above, a sum of five million dollars. This payment, however, was really dissociated from the question of opera-giving, as it would cost practically as much in taxes and upkeep were *no* opera presented during a particular season.

In the further progress of the plans, little consolation was contributed to the Metropolitan by the statement of other real estate operators that 'Rockefeller has purchased a thousand speakeasies.' It was also asserted that considerably less than thirteen million dollars could be realized on the Metropolitan's property ; eight million dollars was regarded as the limit it would bring. The addition of Ivy Lee, public relations counsel for the Rockefeller interests, to the board of the Metropolitan Opera Company on 29 September 1929 made it appear that the influence of Rockefeller in the affairs of the institution was flourishing, but the season was not long in progress when an announcement of 5 December stated that the removal to Rockefeller Center had been abandoned. It was said merely that the two years' delay necessary to recapture the leases on the property would be fatal to the plans of the Metropolitan. No elaborate reasons were offered ; but in retrospect, the prospect of a

in *The Times* of 3 March 1926, Miss Iselin received $550 for the use of her box on the opening night, $3025 for eleven other Monday night performances, at $275 each ; $2200 for an additional eleven Monday night performances ; and $3450 for twenty-three Friday night performances at $150 each. She also sold her box privileges for the Prince of Wales 'gala' for $300. For the forty-seven performances Miss Iselin received an average of $33.77 *per chair* for her box, a privilege enjoyed by the owners of the box — as has been shown above — at an average cost of $8.72. To be sure, not often is such a favourable transaction arranged by a box-holder, but the difference of over $5000 for forty-seven performances in the 1920–1921 season indicates the value, in reasonably prosperous times, of a parterre box in the open market. That few of the box-holders took advantage of such an opportunity, or that the number of such opportunities was small, does not alter the fact that, so long as they were willing to pay the assessment, they were able, at a price on the average comparable to that of orchestra seats, to bask in the great glory of a parterre box. And though the value of the property has depreciated sharply from its highest worth, there is little question that the original investment, plus interest at six per cent, is still in the land today.

decline in the value of the Metropolitan's own property over that period — before they could abandon the present auditorium, and complete a sale — was perhaps a potent factor. It was also a failing of the Rockefeller Center project that no provision for the use of the theatre on an exchange-rental basis, such as that on which the present Metropolitan Opera House is occupied, could be arranged. Adding the payment of rent to the other burdens of opera in New York would have more seriously embarrassed the Metropolitan than it has been even during the last few years.

Though the bursting of the second bubble of a 'new' opera house came at the end of 1929 — to the accompaniment of numerous other breaking bubbles — it by no means meant that the possibility of a 'new' opera house before the present one should be fifty years old had finally vanished. During the next year Metropolitan Square became Rockefeller Center and then Radio City ; and a model of the completed development — displayed on 6 March 1931 — showed a place still being held for an opera house. During the period of financial difficulties for the Metropolitan beginning in the fall of 1931 there were occasional rumours that the company would disband and re-establish itself in Radio City, though a building for its activities was lacking. There was some opinion that either the large theatre known as the Music Hall, or the smaller theatre — now the Center Theatre — would serve the purposes of the Metropolitan admirably ; though the latter is plausible, it lacks the boxes yet essential for opera of the Metropolitan's character in New York.

On 8 April 1932 plans for an opera house in the Radio City development, between Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Streets, were filed, but it was explained that this was but a routine gesture to complete the original project. A building of fifteen stories was indicated, containing an opera house which would seat 4042, and costing approximately $4,500,000 to erect. There was no definite relationship to any plans of the Metropolitan in this

design.[125] The last authoritative statement concerning the Metropolitan and its 'new' opera house came from Paul Cravath on 6 September 1932. Declaring that no 'feasible' plan for removal to Radio City had yet been arrived at, he said further: 'I should not feel very disappointed if we had to stay on in the old house. It has associations and traditions which attach audiences to it.'

This attitude of making the best of a bad thing was further exemplified in the alterations and repairs to the old building during the summers of 1934 and 1935. Desirable as the repairs are for temporary comfort and convenience, they only remove further the day when New York will have a new opera house. It is obvious that if the stockholders could not bring themselves, in 1928 and 1929, to part with a building forty-five years old — whose valuation now, for wreckers, is but $50,000 — they will not be more enthusiastic about removal after investing six hundred thousand dollars in alterations.

Moreover, the problem of selling the old building and investing in a new one yearly grows more difficult for a reason inherent in the organization of the company — the owned boxes represent a proportional share in the enterprise. As the original stockholders have died, their interests have passed into estates, whose executors have the power to *sell* the holdings, but not to *buy* shares in a new enterprise. In the last listing of box-holders — 1935–1936 — no fewer than twelve boxes are held in whole or part by various estates. Thus, were the property of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company to be liquidated for seven million dollars, giving two hundred thousand dollars to each holder of a thirty-fifth share in the enterprise with the understanding that *half* the sum be reinvested in a new house, nearly a million dollars would be taken out of

[125] On 17 April 1932 Mr. Cravath said, 'So far as a new opera house in Rockefeller Center is concerned, our experts have cooperated with Mr. Rockefeller's architects on plans for an auditorium which would be satisfactory for opera and symphony concerts. We believe that the opera house provided for in the plans recently filed by the Rockefeller Center will be an admirable home for the opera.'

the enterprise immediately, through the inability of the estate-owned shares to reinvest. To the other difficulties of such a project would thus be added the necessity of finding a dozen socially eligible persons, each with a hundred thousand dollars to invest in a new opera house. Those who have the money are, for the most part, not acceptable ; and those who are acceptable lack the funds. That is the labyrinth out of which the path to a new opera house in New York would have to be found ; but the Ariadne to accomplish that solution is nowhere visible.

1928–1929

THE planless and arbitrary way in which the repertory of the Metropolitan was enlarged during the post-war years of Gatti's direction is illustrated completely by the productions of this season, which began the third decade of his regime. Having produced nothing new by Richard Strauss since the *première* of *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1913, he gave *Die Aegyptische Helena ;* having tried no work by Respighi, he presented *La Campana Sommersa ;* and, similarly, never having honoured either Pizzetti or Krenek, he introduced the former's *Fra Gherardo,* and the latter's *Jonny Spielt Auf.* Of all these works, the only one that seemed an inevitable choice for this season was *Jonny.* Haste was necessary to capitalize on its contemporary success in Europe, where it had been performed four hundred times since its *première* two years before. But the reason for crowding three other contemporary works into the same season was not apparent then, nor has it become clearer now. This would have been solid fare for an opera public even so disposed to novelty as that of Berlin or Dresden ; for the public of New York, it was nothing less than forcible feeding.

Whether through this over-zealousness, or the poor quality of the works chosen, but *one* of them — *La Campana Sommersa* — was repeated in a subsequent season. It had two performances in 1929–1930. What the bill for staging each of these might

have been can only be imagined. It is difficult to believe that the four performances of *Fra Gherardo*, the five each of *Die Aegyptische Helena* or *La Campana Sommersa*, or even the seven of *Jonny Spielt Auf* returned the cost of production.

That this was to be a season in which the emphasis was modern was indicated by the choice of *L'Amore dei Tre Re* for the opening on 29 October. If the score might have caused the audience perturbation, there was comfort in the cast, which included Ponselle, Martinelli, Pinza, and Didur, under the direction of Serafin. The week was empty of any further excitement in the opera house, save for the debuts of Grace Divine (A Musician) and Marek Windheim (The Lamplighter) in a performance of *Manon Lescaut* on 1 November, with Alda, Gigli, and Scotti. On the 2nd, Aida Doninelli was heard for the first time in the Metropolitan, as The Priestess in a performance of *Aïda* with Rethberg, Matzenauer, Jagel, Basiola (Amonasro), and Pinza.

There was more interest for opera-goers, however, in a newspaper announcement of the same date — 2 November — which stated that Artur Bodanzky, for the fourteenth year the director of the Metropolitan's German repertory, would retire from the opera house at the conclusion of the season just begun. That he would be succeeded by a conductor of at least equal eminence seemed a conclusion too obvious to doubt ; but the further disclosures of the announcement were not reassuring. Not Bruno Walter, nor Klemperer, nor Blech, nor Furtwängler, nor Fritz Busch, nor Erich Kleiber, nor Sir Thomas Beecham, nor Albert Coates, apparently had claim to the chair so long occupied by Bodanzky. The Metropolitan had turned to Wiesbaden, and from the modest theatre there plucked Josef Rosenstock, whose name was not known even to the professional opera-goers of New York, and very much less to the trusting public. A year was to pass, however, before the true meaning of this announcement became apparent.

As the most eminent of the composers to be noticed by the

Metropolitan in this season, it was fitting that Strauss should be honoured with the first position. His *Aegyptische Helena* was brought out on 6 November, under the direction of Bodanzky, with settings by Urban and costumes by Lillian Gaertner. As Helena there was Jeritza, with Laubenthal (Menelas), Whitehill (Altair), Fleischer (Aithra), Telva (The Omniscient Shell), Jane Carroll (Da-ud, debut), and Helen Eisler (Hermione). Falco and Bourskaya (Slaves), and Lerch, Ryan, Bourskaya, and Flexer (Elves) completed the cast. There were devoted Straussians who saw merit in the score, and equally devoted Straussians who held it to be merely another step lower in Strauss's recent decline from the high level of *Salome, Elektra,* and *Der Rosenkavalier.* The opinion of the latter seems to have been shared by the public, for the work disappeared after the four repetitions of the subscription season. At the first of these, on 19 November, the part of Hermione — which had been badly botched at the *première,* making the final curtain even less effective than it is in von Hofmannsthal's libretto — was deleted. Kirchhoff replaced Laubenthal at the next performance, on 29 November, and was heard as Menelas in the remaining presentation.

That so typically Teutonic a creation as Gerhardt Hauptmann's *Die Versunkene Glocke* should find its way to the operatic stage through the intervention of an Italian composer is somewhat less startling when Gounod's *Faust* or Verdi's *Falstaff* is recalled. It is scarcely possible to say, however, that Respighi matched the sublimated commonplaces of the first, or the immortal wit of the second. His was the task for a Weber, or a youthful Wagner, of which he was neither. The principal singers of the American *première* on 24 November were Rethberg (Rautendelein), Martinelli (Heinrich), de Luca (The Nickelmann), Pinza (The Pastor), Claussen (The Witch), Falco (The Neighbor), and Guilford (Magda). Also in the cast were Tedesco (The Faun), D'Angelo (The Schoolmaster), Paltrinieri (The Barber), and Doninelli, Dalossy, and Alcock (Elves). Of

the performance under Serafin, Respighi was present to exclaim, 'In Heaven itself I could not wish for such a production.' Before the first repetition on 30 November (in which Manski replaced Guilford) the composer shortened his score by cuts amounting to about fifteen minutes. Urban designed the scenery.

The expectations that had been aroused for *Jonny Spielt Auf* through the success of the work abroad and the promising youthfulness of the composer were sadly deflated when Krenek's opera was given for the first time in America on 19 January. There was a lack of the requisite madness in the Metropolitan production — the work of Urban — but the shoddiness of the score was far too apparent, for American ears, to have been greatly aided by a more imaginative presentation. What to a German audience might have suggested the gay revels of far-off 'Amerika' were, at the Metropolitan, not even faintly illusive echoes of the Times Square that is but three blocks distant. Bohnen offered one of his characteristically vivid performances as Jonny, and Fleischer was well cast as Yvonne ; but Schorr (Daniello) was ill at ease, and Easton (Anita) was not much happier. Others in the cast were Kirchhoff (Max), Gabor (Anita's Impresario), Meader (The Hotel Manager), Bloch (The Railway Guard), and Windheim, Cehanovsky, and Gustafson (Policeman). Prior to its presentation at the Metropolitan, the book and libretto had been tempered somewhat for what was conceived to be the more vulnerable American taste. Bodanzky was the conductor. At the performance of 28 January Laubenthal replaced Kirchhoff ; on 15 February Manski replaced Easton, and Kirchhoff resumed the role of Max. Lawrence Tibbett made two appearances as Jonny, for the first time on 27 February ; and again on 4 April with Easton, Laubenthal, and Schützendorf (Daniello). At the performance of 9 March, the work was given with Bohnen, Easton, and Laubenthal.

Of the season's novelties, *Fra Gherardo*# most nearly suggested a genuine artistic creation, but it was an achievement to be

respected in the study rather than experienced in the theatre. A lack of dramatic fibre in the libretto was not disguised by the musical treatment of Pizzetti, who had written his own libretto. Though the work was moderately a *succès d'estime*, it could not match the standard of the only three works of this century which have been lastingly successful at the Metropolitan — *Der Rosenkavalier*, *L'Amore*, and *Pelléas*. In the first American performance on 2 March were Johnson (Gherardo), Müller (Mariola), Pinza (An Old Man *and* The Podesta), Ludikar (Frate Guido Putagio), Basiola (The Bishop), Claussen (A Mother), and Doninelli (A Fairwoman). Serafin was the conductor, and the production was again by Urban.

To replenish the repertory, Gatti restored to active service three well-tried scores, none of which had been out of hand for more than a half dozen seasons. For one of these — Massenet's *Manon*, which had last been given on 14 April 1923, with Chamlee, Sabanieeva, and Scotti — there was a new scenic production, the work of the inexhaustible Urban. In the cast were Bori, Gigli, de Luca (Lescaut), Cehanovsky, and Rothier (Comte des Grieux), with Hasselmans conducting. Both of the other revivals — *Ernani* on 17 December and *Der Freischütz* on 23 February — were seen in productions by Urban, preserved from their previous appearances in the repertory. In the Verdi opera — which had not been heard at the Metropolitan since 2 February 1924 — were Ponselle (Elvira), Martinelli (Ernani), Ruffo (Don Carlos), and Pinza (Don Ruy de Gomez *). At the performance of 17 January Bamboschek relieved Bellezza of the baton, and Jagel (Ernani *) replaced Martinelli, who was indisposed. There were numerous familiar features in the presentation of *Der Freischütz* in addition to Bohnen's classic Caspar, for Laubenthal (Max), Müller (Agathe), Rothier (The Hermit), Schützendorf (Killian), and Wolfe (Zamiel) had all appeared in these roles when the work was given in the season of 1925–1926. Fleischer, as Ännchen, was a new and commendable addition to the cast. On 1 April Stückgold sang her excellent Agathe for the first time at the Metropolitan.

Events in the German repertory pursued a fairly uneventful course until two performances late in the season's Wagner cycle, on March 14th and 20th. In the first of these Lauritz Melchior, who had returned to the company after a year's absence, sang the elder Siegfried for the first time in New York.

His associates in this performance of *Götterdämmerung* were Kappel, Branzell (Waltraute), Bohnen, Schorr, Müller (Gutrune), and Schützendorf. A week later he sang the first of his numerous performances of *Tristan*. Though not physically a prepossessing Siegfried or Tristan, Melchior brought to both of these roles — particularly to Tristan — qualities immeasurably superior to those of his contemporaries at the Metropolitan. As Tristan he was permitted the largest opportunity for sheer singing that had yet been his lot at the Metropolitan, with results that held auspicious promise for the future. His experiences at Bayreuth and at other European theatres have greatly developed his command of posture and gesture, also intensifying his knowledge of the scores, and the expressive qualities of his voice. In the cast of Melchior's first performance of *Tristan* were also Kappel, Whitehill, Bohnen (Marke), and Claussen, a replacement for Branzell, as Brangaene. In addition to this performance, Melchior was scheduled to make an appearance as Tristan on 13 April, the last Saturday *matinée* of the season, and the occasion of Bodanzky's 'farewell' to the Metropolitan — but he was indisposed, and Laubenthal replaced him.

The *matinée* cycle of Wagner began on 13 February with a performance of *Lohengrin* sung by Jeritza, Laubenthal, Branzell, Schorr, and Bohnen. It continued on the 21st, with *Das Rheingold*, in which Schumann-Heink again appeared in the Metropolitan as Erda, with Kappel, Kirchhoff (Loge), Schorr (Wotan), Müller (Freia), Meader, Schützendorf, Rothier, and Wolfe. Kappel also appeared in the three dramas of the Trilogy, being the Brünnhilde of each, on 28 February, March 7th and 14th. In *Die Walküre* her associates were Stückgold (Sieglinde), Branzell, Melchior, Schorr, and Gustafson (Hunding); and in *Siegfried*, Laubenthal, Kappel, Branzell (Erda) — a replacement for Schumann-Heink, who was indisposed — Fleischer (Voice of the Forest Bird), and Schorr, with Serafin conducting. The cycle performance of *Götterdämmerung* has been described in the preceding paragraph. Serafin also conducted a performance of *Siegfried* on 5 April, in which were Rakowska (Brünnhilde), Melchior (Siegfried), Whitehill, Branzell, Fleischer, Bloch (Mime), and Schützendorf. This season's Wagner cycle ended on 27 March with a performance of *Die Meistersinger* sung by Stückgold (Eva), Laubenthal, Telva, Whitehill (Sachs), Schützendorf, Meader (David), and Rothier (Pogner). A

plan for offering *Der Rosenkavalier* with Stückgold as Octavian, on 27 December, was not completed because she became ill. When the opera was finally given on 4 January — with Easton (Feldmarschallin), Mario (Sophie), Mayr (Ochs), and Schützendorf (Faninal) — Jeritza had been persuaded to reappear as Octavian, a role which she had not sung since 1924. The same cast, with Bohnen replacing Mayr and Fleischer as Sophie, was heard on the 24th. Both performances were conducted by Bodanzky.

The season which Bodanzky had intended to be his final one at the Metropolitan contained several performances which could hardly enable him to leave the brightest memory of his abilities or emphasize his regret at departing. Such was a performance of *Lohengrin*, on 10 November, in which Max Altglass, a minor singer at the Metropolitan, was called upon to replace Kirchhoff, who was indisposed, in the leading role. The cast included Rethberg, Claussen, Schützendorf (Telramund), and Mayr. Bohnen fastened another of his eccentric disguises upon Hagen for his performance in *Götterdämmerung* on 12 January, which, Gilman said,[126] made him appear a 'barbaric Amfortas.' Two days later Kappel suddenly became ill before a performance of *Die Walküre*, and Claussen appeared as Brünnhilde in her place. The cast included Müller, Branzell, Kirchhoff, Bohnen (Wotan), and Gustafson. Earlier in the month, on 2 January, Stückgold's indisposition had affected a performance of *Die Walküre*, in which she was replaced as Sieglinde by Easton. On this occasion Claussen was heard as Fricka, with Matzenauer as Brünnhilde, and Laubenthal, Schorr (Wotan), and Mayr (Hunding), in the other principal roles. To complete the circle, Matzenauer also sang Fricka in this season, on 15 December, in a performance of *Die Walküre* with Jeritza (Sieglinde), Easton (Brünnhilde), Laubenthal, Whitehill, and Gustafson. Later Kappel displayed her ability in a role usually avoided by Isoldes and Brünnhildes, appearing as Ortrud * in *Lohengrin* on 16 March, with Stückgold, Laubenthal, Whitehill, and Bohnen (Heinrich). It was rather characteristic of Bodanzky's

[126] *Herald Tribune*, 13 January.

career at the Metropolitan that what was planned as a brilliant farewell for him on 13 April — Melchior's second *Tristan* — was incompletely realized, that tenor being ill. Laubenthal appeared instead, singing with Kappel, Branzell, Whitehill, and Bohnen. In anticipation of his new career, with the Friends of Music, and as guest conductor elsewhere, Bodanzky had prepared a statement which said, in part : 'I shall not say I am sorry to give up opera ; my work in the future lies elsewhere. In leaving the Metropolitan I am leaving the greatest opera in the world.' It is perhaps fortunate that the statement was not written *after* this performance of *Tristan.*

Though there were Chaliapine, Galli-Curci, Ruffo, Gigli, Pinza, Lauri-Volpi, Bori, and Tibbett to defend a characterization of the Metropolitan as 'the greatest opera in the world,' there were also such performances as *Faust* on 1 December, with Easton, Lauri-Volpi, Rothier, Danise (Valentin), and Pearl Besuner (Siébel, debut) ; *Carmen* with Bourskaya, Martinelli, Pinza, and Morgana on 16 February ; *Tosca,* on 2 March, with Corona, Tokatyan, and Danise — the first replacement for Scotti (Scarpia) in many years ; *Rigoletto,* on the 9th, with Mario, Gigli, and Basiola ; or *Les Contes d'Hoffmann,* with Mario, Corona, Sabanieeva, and Jagel on 4 April, to characterize the Metropolitan as something considerably less exalted. Occasional performances at the Metropolitan were vocally the equivalent of the best to be heard elsewhere ; but it was far removed, at this period, from being 'the greatest opera in the world.' For that praise implies a concern for staging, lighting, ensemble, and orchestral excellence which has rarely been a part of the Metropolitan's intention. Even if the house had maintained its own standards in these matters — the orchestral playing was definitely inferior to its level of fifteen years before — the results would scarcely have been valuable ; for, in the meantime, staging, lighting, and conceptions of ensemble had moved *ahead* in operatic theatres of other countries at a pace which left the Metropolitan hopelessly outdistanced.

The depletions of the company's strength during this season were more cause for notice than the additions ; for, beyond the departure of Bodanzky, both Titta Ruffo and Marion Talley announced their retirement from opera. The first made his decision public on 22 March, citing, as the reason, a highly advantageous contract with producers of sound films. Talley, on 11 April, let it be known that her performance in Cleveland on 9 May would be her last for ever in opera ; that she would scorn celebrity thereafter, in favour of a pastoral life. George Engles, director of her musical affairs, declared that Talley would not accept the renewal offered by the Metropolitan ; but he did not add that the contract was rather different from those to which Talley had become accustomed. Her earnings from concert tours since joining the Metropolitan — a period of less than three years, extending from the spring of 1926 to the fall of 1928 — were quoted as amounting to $334,892. This was exclusive of her earnings from opera, or royalties from the sale of phonograph records.[127] At the time of her announcement she was twenty-two years old. She prepared the way for her recent revival of activity, however, by the characteristic statement of a *prima donna :* 'My retirement will be permanent.'

Besides the several singers of minor roles whose addition to the company has already been chronicled, the season introduced Clara Jacobo, a soprano whose appearances since have been curiously sporadic. She joined the company on 8 November, singing Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, with Martinelli, Matzenauer, and Danise. On 17 November she was heard in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Santuzza), with the assistance of Tokatyan and Basiola, the balance of that double-bill offering Dalossy as Nedda *, in a performance of *Pagliacci* with Lauri-Volpi and de Luca. On both 29 December and 3 January Jacobo was heard in *Aïda* — another example of the rare occurrence of an opera twice in one week — the first with Matzenauer, Jagel, Didur, and Danise (Amonasro) ; and the second, a substitution for a performance of *Norma* that had been cancelled because Ponselle was indisposed, with Lauri-Volpi, Telva, Pinza, and Basiola (Amonasro). Louise Homer was again a guest

[127] Other singers, as well as pianists and violinists, of world-wide celebrity who followed Talley in the cities of her tours reported that the provincial budget for concert-going had been completely exhausted by her appearances.

artist with the company, appearing as Azucena in a benefit performance of *Il Trovatore* on 6 December with Ponselle, Lauri-Volpi, Danise, and Pinza ; and in the same opera on 6 April with Dreda Aves (debut, Leonora), Lauri-Volpi, and Basiola. Aves had appeared as Aïda in a concert version of the opera on Sunday night, 8 January 1928, but this Leonora was her debut in a regular performance. Grace Moore returned on 4 February to sing Micaëla in a performance of *Carmen* with Jeritza, Martinelli, and Pinza ; and was later heard in *Roméo* on 13 February, with Johnson, Whitehill (Capulet), de Luca, and Rothier, also in the same role on the 22nd. On 8 February Tibbett sang for the first time as Marcello in *La Bohème,* with Müller, Martinelli, Pinza (Colline), Picco, and Guilford (Musetta). To the various other distinctions of Taylor's *The King's Henchman,* was added, by its production on 16 February, the especial celebrity of being the first work by an American to persist for a third season's performances at the Metropolitan. The principal singers remained those of the *première* — Easton, Tibbett, Johnson, and Gustafson, with Serafin conducting. For the season's last performance, on 28 March, the director was Wilfred Pelletier. Late in the season — on 16 March — Easton offered her impersonation of Turandot for the first time in New York, with Lauri-Volpi, Vettori (Liu), Picco (Ping), and Ludikar. This year's version of *Boris,* on 4 March, presented Chaliapine (Boris), Telva (Marina), Tokatyan (Dmitri), Pinza (Brother Pimenn), Sabanieeva (Theodore), Dalossy (Xenia), and Flexer (The Nurse). Bellezza continued to be the conductor, and *Boris* largely a vehicle for Chaliapine. Though this production had remained constantly in use at the Metropolitan since 1913, and had seen service previously with Diaghileff since 1908, there was no disposition to replace the settings — excellent as they were, but now a score of years old — or to restudy the work. One who was close to Gatti in his recent years at the Metropolitan says that the director examined the *Ur-Boris* with an eye to possible production. The director planned a new production, possibly with Pinza as Boris — Chaliapine, he felt, was too immersed in his own conception of the role to adapt himself to a fresh approach — but doubted the effectiveness of Moussorgsky's orchestral scoring. This doubt was enforced by the reception of Stokowski's concert version of the score in 1932. There is no reason, however, why the work could not have been given in the composite version recently proposed by Ernest Newman. In this, the valuable qualities of each edition are preserved.

The musical season saw another attempt to interest the operagoers of New York in non-Metropolitan productions of the Wagner dramas, at the Manhattan Opera House beginning on 14 January. A poor performance of *Das Rheingold* at the *matinée*

preceded the evening's performance of *Tristan*, in which Johanna Gadski reappeared in New York for the first time since 1917. Gadski's career in America alone had by now covered a span of over three decades, which was hardly a boon to the singing of Isolde's music. Her artistry, however, was of interest to a younger generation of Wagnerites. The cast offered another favourite of a previous day's Metropolitan in Carl Braun's King Marke. The other principals were Willy Zilken (Tristan), Werner Kius (Kurwenal), and Sonia Sharnova (Brangaene). The conductor was Ernest Knoch. An uncut performance of *Die Walküre* on 16 January — the first since those under Paur in 1899 — was a feature of the series, which ended abruptly shortly afterwards.

Following a final performance of *Manon* on 13 April, with Bori, Gigli, and de Luca — which brought the season's activities, since 29 October, to a total of 177 performances of forty-seven works — the company departed for its usual tour to Baltimore, Washington, Atlanta, Cleveland, and Rochester. Commenting on the season, *The Herald Tribune* editorially paid tribute to the breadth and inclusiveness of the Metropolitan's repertory, but remarked, of the performances : 'Great matters have been turned off without adequate preparation.' It also complained of 'a lack of co-ordination, of authoritative direction,' and of 'over-frequent appearances of fourth-rate singers in important roles.' Returning from Europe on 20 July, Geraldine Farrar characterized the Metropolitan, in its present organization, as a 'well-regulated stock company' giving 'the same limited repertoire year after year in the same way.' Miss Farrar added her belief that it was a good company, however ; and declared that New York and Paris were still the principal musical centres of the world.[128]

[128] The manner in which New York was superior to Berlin, London, or Vienna Miss Farrar did not illuminate. Perhaps she was mindful of a benefit performance of *La Traviata* on 27 November 1928, which provided, for the City University of Madrid, the sum of $56,000.

1929–1930

THERE could hardly have been a premonition on 29 September, when the Metropolitan announced a further advance in subscription prices for orchestra seats from $8.02 to $8.25, that this would be the high level for all the history of the Metropolitan. For, exactly a month later, America's decline from the apex of its financial ascent began. It is perhaps fortunate that the opening of the Metropolitan was scheduled for 28 October — for had it been delayed a day, the performance of *Manon Lescaut* would doubtless have been played to a half-empty house. But the evening was auspicious, for both the attendance and the receipts set a new record for an opening night. In the cast were Bori — who returned to the role of her debut, which had also been on an opening night seventeen years before — Gigli, and de Luca. Somewhat obscured in the general festivities were Eleanor La Mance (A Musician) and Alfredo Gandolfi (The Sergeant), both of whom sang at the Metropolitan for the first time.

The actual stock market crash on 29 October had its echo in musical circles a day later when a performance of *Die Meistersinger* introduced to America the Metropolitan's successor to Seidl, Damrosch, Schalk, Paur, Mottl, Mahler, Hertz, Toscanini, and Bodanzky as the conductor of the Wagnerian repertory. It was the initial misfortune of Joseph Rosenstock to be a small man ; it was his further handicap to arrive in New York when there had been a renewal of the agitation for a *Generalmusikdirektor* to oversee all the aspects of the German repertory, or for the engagement, at least, of a conductor of international celebrity.[129] Though Rosenstock was palpably

[129] Bruno Walter was said to have set fifty thousand dollars as the price of his services to the Metropolitan for a single season — a figure rejected as prohibitive. It was not prohibitive, however, for the talents of Serafin, as will be discussed later (page 453). However, according to the management, Walter was not available, and thus did not set a price on his services. Furthermore, this official source declares that no first-rank German conductor was at liberty, and that when Leo Blech was approached his contract was immediately extended by the house he was then serving.

neither of these things, the traditional cordiality of the Metropolitan's audience — plus, perhaps, a generous admixture of hired enthusiasm — provided a warming enough reception for the new conductor to justify a solo curtain call after the second act. The cast of the performance included Stückgold, Wakefield, Laubenthal, Whitehill (Sachs), Mayr (Pogner), Schützendorf, and Meader. But the reports brought in by the press of the following day were far from warming. Rosenstock's next essay, a performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* on 4 November — in which Stückgold appeared as the Feldmarschallin for the first time, with Jeritza, Mayr (Ochs), Fleischer, and Schützendorf — was scarcely more auspicious. *Die Walküre* on 9 November, with Kirchhoff, Whitehill, Mayr (Hunding), Rethberg, Claussen (Brünnhilde), and Matzenauer, was exactly in the mould of its predecessors — a performance which did not actually break down at any point, but which possessed nothing that could be called an individual contribution by Rosenstock. *Die Meistersinger* followed on 14 November, with Fleischer's excellent Eva heard for the first time ; and *Der Rosenkavalier*, on the 15th, with Mario as Sophie. And these concluded Rosenstock's career at the Metropolitan. For on the 18th came word that the conductor, in imminent danger of a nervous collapse from overwork and the excitement attendant upon his American debut, had dictated a request from his sick-bed that he be released from his contract. With the usual official 'regrets' it was granted.

There were hopes inspired by these circumstances that the long-awaited advent of a new and interesting conductor for the German repertory was imminent ; but they were brief. The same communication from the Metropolitan announced that Artur Bodanzky had accepted a position as 'guest conductor' for the remainder of the season. Any illusion that a change was probable thereafter was dispelled by the words : 'Mr.

Klemperer was ruled out as being unreasonable in his requirements for producing opera.

Bodanzky will remain for a number of years.' Thus ended the single short interlude in the directorship of Bodanzky at the Metropolitan, which has now extended over twenty seasons. The qualities of this conductor as a musician, and occasionally, as an interpreter, cannot be gainsaid ; but it is seriously to be doubted whether a score of years in one post — especially in a post as arduous and exacting as Bodanzky's at the Metropolitan — is conducive to artistic growth. He is, moreover, possessed of a temperament which does not fit him to accept placidly the shortcomings of his orchestra ; yet, during all of this period to the end of Gatti's tenure, he effected no essential improvement in its quality. The result was a complete unpredictability of performance which varied from the superfine — in occasional *Tristans*, recently, and *Meistersingers* — to indefensible haste and unbecoming carelessness in other *Tristans* and *Meistersingers*. As a result of the circumstances through which he accepted a Metropolitan re-engagement, Bodanzky was permitted to set the annual Wagner cycle somewhat apart from the routine subscription performances by presenting the Tetralogy in its integrity, without cuts. There has never been any explanation — satisfactory or otherwise — of the failure to give the other scores of the cycle without cuts. Here again is distinguishable the Metropolitan's bias for compromise. Bodanzky also resumed the direction of *Siegfried*, which had been for two seasons the property of Serafin, resigning to that conductor *Parsifal* instead. This variation was soon discontinued.

Between the exit of Rosenstock and the reappearance of Bodanzky, another conductor rose to brief celebrity in the performances in German at the Metropolitan. This was Karl Riedel, for six years an assistant conductor, who directed a performance of *Lohengrin* on 20 November, with Stückgold, Laubenthal, Matzenauer, Whitehill, and Mayr ; and one of *Die Walküre*, on 23 November, in which Dorothee Manski was heard as Brünnhilde for the first time, with Rethberg, Claussen (Fricka), Laubenthal, Whitehill, and Gustafson. He has since officiated on various occasions when Bodanzky has been unable to appear, and has recently assumed complete charge of *Hänsel und Gretel*. Whether he possesses qualities beyond musicianly competence is a question unan-

swered by his record at the Metropolitan. Lack of rehearsals for these appearances, and the necessity for his conforming to the emphases of an interpretation established by some one else makes a complete judgment of his abilities impossible.

Rosenstock's condition improved sufficiently between the 18th and the 23rd for him to take his departure for Europe ; and he left with the balm of a letter from the manager of the Metropolitan's orchestra, on behalf of the musicians, wishing him success elsewhere. Bodanzky returned to the Metropolitan for the *matinée* on Saturday 30 November, a performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* in which were Stückgold, Jeritza, Mayr, Mario, and Schützendorf. The conductor was greeted by hearty applause, which compelled him to bow three times in acknowledgment before he could begin the performance. Ceremony disposed of, the day's music, and the remainder of the season in the German repertory, returned to familiar lines. The preparations for the uncut *Ring* and a restoration of *Fidelio* occupied Bodanzky's efforts through the season, and no German novelty was presented. *Fidelio* had been out of the repertory for a year when it was given on 29 January with Elisabeth Ohms (Leonore *), Laubenthal, Schorr, Bohnen, and Fleischer. The production remained that of Urban, and the performances themselves were barely altered from those of the past. At the performance of 8 February Mario was heard as Marzelline ; and, on the 24th, Kappel was Leonore.

In another season the restoration of the complete *Ring* would have dominated all other activities from a musical standpoint ; but the revival of *Don Giovanni*, on 29 November, was of an importance at least equal to that event. There had been no previous presentation during the directorship of Gatti, the last occurrence of *Giovanni* at the Metropolitan having been on 3 April 1908, with Eames (Donna Anna), Bonci (Ottavio), Scotti (Don Giovanni), Farrar (Zerlina), Fornia (Elvira), Blass (Leporello), and Mühlmann (Il Commendatore). The conductor was Mahler. When the unrivalled score sounded again

through the Metropolitan, after a silence of almost twenty-one years, Serafin was the conductor, with Rethberg (Elvira), Fleischer (Zerlina), Gigli (Ottavio), Pinza (Don Giovanni), Ludikar (Leporello), D'Angelo (Masetto), and Rothier (Il Commendatore). Ponselle had been scheduled to add Donna Anna to her Metropolitan roles on this occasion, but a continuing illness compelled the substitution of Corona. Of the cast, only Fleischer possessed an authentic Mozart style. Rethberg offered her admirable voice and musicianship, but not the essence of her part ; and Pinza, attempting the most difficult role in the basso's repertory, was not yet equal to its great demands. His improvement in the succeeding five years has been highly impressive, however, especially in the delivery of *recitativo*. Gigli was the Gigli of *Elisir*, of *Sonnambula ;* and Serafin communicated well the surface of Mozart's score, but little of its magnificent depth. The production by Urban was tasteful and undistinguished, with an inner curtain which was drawn to permit changes of scene, and before which the principal arias were sung. Elvira's 'Mi tradi' was included in the first act, and her 'Ah ! fuggi il traditore,' which is sometimes omitted, was included in this presentation. At the fourth presentation, on 2 January, Ponselle was heard as Donna Anna for the first time. She also appeared at another performance on the 6th. Though she has frequently sung 'Non mi dir' very beautifully, the 'Honour' aria, and a definite conception of Donna Anna's character, have consistently evaded her.

The extensive experiment of the Metropolitan with contemporary novelties in the preceding year was not repeated in 1929–1930. There were, instead, the production of Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Sadko* and Verdi's *Luisa Miller ;* and restorations to the repertory of *La Fanciulla del West*, *Louise*, and *Elisir d'Amore*. Puccini's score was performed on 2 November — before a newly painted production by Novak — for the first time since the season of 1913–1914. It was conducted by Bellezza, with the principal roles sung by Jeritza (Minnie), Mar-

tinelli (Dick Johnson), Tibbett (Jack Rance), Pasero (Ashby), and Marshall (Sonora). The dramatic qualities which Belasco's supervision had lent to the early performances of the work were not present in this restoration ; nor was there an approximation of Toscanini's influence. The result was to concentrate the attention of the listener on the sheerly musical virtues of the score, which was scarcely to its advantage. Ernst Lert, new stage director for the Metropolitan, had his first opportunity in this work. The opera remained in the repertory for the next two seasons. At the performance of 10 January Edward Johnson was heard as Dick Johnson for the first time at the Metropolitan ; and on 8 March Corona (Minnie *), Jagel (Johnson), and Danise (Rance) were variations in the cast.

There was little historical support for the choice of *Luisa Miller* as a revival on 21 December. The opera had not been heard in New York since 1886, and never before in the Metropolitan. Nor did the popular response contradict the evidence of musical history, as it did in the somewhat later revival of *Simon Boccanegra*. There were two performances of *Luisa Miller* in this season, and one in the next ; thereafter, silence. Its sole value was to add somewhat to the knowledge of New York's professional opera-goers — if the Metropolitan can be thought of as permitting itself a production for a purpose so unproductive commercially. As Luisa Miller, Ponselle made her first appearance of the season ; with her were Lauri-Volpi (Rodolfo), de Luca (Miller), Pasero (Count Walter), Ludikar (Wurm), Telva (Federica), Doninelli (Laura), and Paltrinieri (A Peasant). The conductor was Serafin. At the first repetition on 30 December, Gladys Swarthout replaced Telva. In this version of the opera the second scene of the first act was omitted ; Walter and Wurm did not appear at the end of the work, nor did Rodolfo kill Wurm. The revival of *Louise*, on 1 March, scarcely had greater success, with four performances in this season, and none afterwards. Believing that Bori (Louise) could assure a success for the work, despite Farrar's failure, the management lavished on the work a new production by Urban. The scenery of the Metropolitan's original *Louise* was newer by a half-dozen years than the settings for the *Ring*, and had seen scarcely a sixth of the service of those then in use for *Die Walküre*. With Bori, as Louise, were Antonin Trantoul (Julien), Telva (The Mother), and Rothier (The Father). Hasselmans was the conductor. There was the customary Bori charm and vocal niceties in her performance, but none of the characterizations were distinguished enough to recapture the flavour of *Louise* as it had been in the Manhattan-Chicago

days. On 10 March Whitehill appeared as the Father, the rest of the cast being unchanged.

In *Sadko,* however, Gatti made one of the more fortunate choices of his later years. Aside from the 'Chanson Indoue' and the 'Song of the Viking Guest,' the music of *Sadko* was little known when the work had its American *première* on 25 January, in French, under the direction of Serafin, although Kurt Schindler had given much of it in a concert version. It was not a masterpiece to rank with *Coq d'Or,* but it had musical interest and the virtue of novelty to commend it to the public ; and there were elaborate, if wholly conventional, ballets staged by Rosina Galli and August Berger. The attractive settings were provided by Serge Soudeikine. Edward Johnson was heard as Sadko, with Fleischer (Volkhova), Bourskaya (Lioubova Bousslaevna), Swarthout (Niejata), Ludikar (The Ocean King), Gustafson (A Norseman), Diaz (A Hindu), Basiola (A Venetian), Cehanovsky (The Apparition), D'Angelo (Douda), Altglass (Nazaritch), and Macpherson (Zinovitch). Sixteen performances in this and the next two seasons were a tribute to the attractiveness of the production. On 17 February Jagel (Sadko) and Tedesco (A Hindu) appeared in the cast.

Reminiscent of Caruso and his first illness in the Brooklyn Academy of Music on 11 December 1920 was the production of *L'Elisir d'Amore* on 21 March. The opera had not been given by the Metropolitan since that fateful occasion in Brooklyn.[130] For this production Novak had prepared new scenery ; and Gigli added to his impersonations that of the bumpkin Nemorino, one of the few roles for which his dramatic capacities were well-suited. Illness prevented the appearance of Fleischer as Adina, her replacement — until the performance of 7 April — being Morgana. Pinza was an excellent Dr. Dulcamara, with de Luca as Belcore. The opera was in and out of the repertory, with various alterations of cast, during the next five seasons.

There was anticipation that the stock market decline — it had not yet been dignified as the 'depression' — would be reflected

[130] The last performance in the Metropolitan auditorium was on 19 November 1920.

in the subscriptions for the Wagner cycle ; [131] but the results were altogether unexpected. The total subscription was larger by fourteen per cent than that for the previous season, and established a new record for the series. To this showing, the promise of the first uncut performances of the *Ring* dramas at the Metropolitan since 1899 was no doubt a potent contribution. Following an introductory performance of *Die Meistersinger* on 7 February, with Müller, Laubenthal, Schorr, Telva, Rothier (Pogner), Schützendorf, and Meader, and of *Lohengrin* on the 13th, with Jeritza, Kirchhoff, Branzell, Schorr, and Bohnen, *Das Rheingold* was presented on the 21st. With no intermission, the opera was in progress from two-thirty until nearly five o'clock. The principal singers were Bohnen (Wotan), Kappel (Fricka), Branzell (Erda), Manski (Freia *), Meader, and Schützendorf. In the uncut performance of *Die Walküre* on 27 February were Kirchhoff, Schorr, Gustafson (Hunding), Kappel (Sieglinde), Branzell, and Ohms (Brünnhilde). The music occupied three hours and a half, in addition to which there were intermissions of ten and twenty minutes. On 7 March Bodanzky returned to the direction of *Siegfried* for the first time in two seasons, the cast for the uncut performance including Ohms, Laubenthal, Branzell (Erda), Schorr, Bloch (Mime), Schützendorf, Gustafson (Fafner), and Fleischer. Bohnen's early departure for Europe reduced the quality of this season's *Götterdämmerung*, on 14 March. His replacement, Siegfried Tappolet, though more obedient than Bohnen to the wishes of Wagner, had neither the voice nor the dramatic talent with which to embody Hagen. The cast further included Melchior, Kappel, Branzell, Manski (Gutrune *), Schorr, and Schützendorf. A performance of *Tristan* on 28 March ended the cycle, and presented Melchior's third appearance in this role at the Metropolitan — the second had occurred on 5 March — with Kappel,

[131] The subscriptions for the regular season had been taken, of course, before the crash ; but seats for the Wagner cycle were not put on sale until after the first of the year.

Whitehill, Branzell, and Tappolet (Marke). In each of the succeeding five seasons, an uncut performance of the *Ring* under the direction of Bodanzky has been a welcome adornment of the Metropolitan's schedule.

Beyond the addition of Tappolet, who came to fill an emergency, the important acquisition for the German division in this season was Elisabeth Ohms. Her debut occurred on 17 January in a performance of *Götterdämmerung* (Brünnhilde), with Laubenthal, Bohnen, Schorr, Branzell, Fleischer, and Schützendorf. Possessed of a solid German reputation, palpably both an excellent actress and a fine singer, she was nevertheless not wholly successful at the Metropolitan. During this season she was heard also in the Brünnhildes of *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* — in the first on 23 January, with Kappel (Sieglinde *), Branzell, Laubenthal, Bohnen (Wotan), and Gustafson ; and in the second, during the cycle, as mentioned above. Her large repertory permitted her to make appearances at the Metropolitan as Leonore in *Fidelio* on the 29th (see page 391) ; as Venus in *Tannhäuser* on 1 February, with Stückgold (Elisabeth), Kirchhoff, Schorr, and Bohnen (Landgraf Hermann) ; as Isolde, in *Tristan* on the 3rd, with Kirchhoff, Branzell, Schorr, and Bohnen ; as Ortrud, in *Lohengrin*, on 11 April, with Müller, Melchior (Lohengrin *), Whitehill, and Tappolet ; and as Kundry in *Parsifal*, on 16 April, with Laubenthal, Schützendorf (Amfortas *), Tappolet (Gurnemanz *), and Didur (Klingsor), with Serafin conducting this work for the first time. This was the first evening performance of *Parsifal* since 19 March 1920. Serafin also directed the performance of *Parsifal* on Good Friday, 18 April, in which the same cast participated, save for the substitution of Kappel (Kundry), Whitehill (Amfortas), and Schützendorf (Klingsor). After his idiomatic Siegfried, the *Parsifal* of Serafin was a disappointment, being over-stressed, and lacking in repose. Other events in the German repertory included appearances by Tibbett as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* on December 13th and 23rd, both with Jeritza, Matzenauer, and Mayr (Hermann), with Laubenthal in the first, and Kirchhoff in the second. Riedel conducted his first performance of *Hänsel und Gretel* on 27 February. He also conducted the performances of February 1st and 3rd — Ohms' first appearances in *Tannhäuser* and *Tristan* — Bodanzky being ill.

Of the numerous new singers, both American and foreign, added to the company in this season the most valuable service has been contributed by Gladys Swarthout, whose debut was in *La Gioconda* (La Cieca), on 15 November, with Corona, Claus-

sen (Laura), Gigli, Basiola, and Pinza. In addition to appearances in *Sadko* and *Luisa Miller*, Swarthout was heard in *Roméo* (Stephano) on 9 December, with Bori, Gigli, de Luca, Rothier, and Whitehill ; and in *Faust* (Siébel), on 13 February, with Fleischer (Marguerite), Danise, Rothier, and Antonin Trantoul (Faust, debut). Swarthout is one of the few American singers added to the Metropolitan in the last decade to follow a reasonable progress in her development, rarely undertaking roles for which she is not qualified. Her attractive presence and solid ability have been equally an enhancement to the Metropolitan stage.

The advent of Trantoul was preceded by the information that he was the first genuine French tenor to be heard at the Metropolitan since Rousselière, of the Conried epoch, though Clément had sung there later, but neither his Faust, Julien, Hoffmann, Don José, nor Rodolfo (in *La Bohème*) were indispensable to the future of the organization. He was not re-engaged. Also appearing in this season and not thereafter was Augusta Oltrabella, whose debut as Musetta occurred on 18 November, with Alda, Lauri-Volpi, Basiola, Picco, and Pasero, in *La Bohème*. She was heard as Liu in the season's only performance of *Turandot* on 8 January. Somewhat more extensive was the career of Tancredi Pasero, who joined the company to sing Alvise in *La Gioconda* on 1 November, with Corona, Claussen, Lauri-Volpi, Telva (Laura), and Basiola (Barnaba). He remained a useful member of the Italian group at the Metropolitan for several seasons. Of American origin were Santa Biondo, who made her debut as Nedda in *Pagliacci*, on 6 December, with Lauri-Volpi, and Tibbett ; and Edward Ransome, first heard in *Il Trovatore* (Manrico) on 14 December, with Rethberg, Claussen, Danise, and Pasero. This was Rethberg's second appearance as Leonora ; the first had occurred on 11 November, with Claussen, Lauri-Volpi, and Basiola. Ransome was heard as Rhadames * on 21 February, in *Aïda*, with Müller, Claussen, Danise (Amonasro), and Pinza. He has appeared infrequently in subsequent seasons, without achieving an integral place in the company. Grace Moore returned to the Metropolitan on 21 December in *Manon* (Manon *), with Gigli and Basiola (Comte des Grieux). On 7 March Moore added Marguerite in *Faust* to her roles, appearing with Trantoul, Pinza, Basiola (Valentin), Swarthout, and Wakefield. Mary Lewis and Dreda Aves, of recent American additions, were again present. On 19 April Tibbett was heard for the first time as Germont in *Traviata*, a part that has become one of his finest. Bori and Gigli (Alfredo) were his principal associates, with Bellezza conducting.

Fundamental changes in the personnel of the Metropolitan as it had been during the 20's — begun in the previous season with the retirement of Ruffo and Talley — continued in this year with the decision of both Alda and Galli-Curci to turn to other outlets for their abilities.[132] The former, who had been divorced from Gatti-Casazza a year before, announced on 11 November that her future career would be in radio. Her final appearance was in *Manon Lescaut* on 28 December, with Gigli, de Luca, and D'Angelo (Geronte), after a Metropolitan career that had begun with Gatti's in the season of 1908–1909. On 17 January the Metropolitan management announced that it had agreed to cancel the contract of Galli-Curci — it had another year to run — to permit her to engage exclusively in concert work. However, the steady decline of the singer during the nine years of her Metropolitan activity had foreshadowed that event. She sang for the last time at the Metropolitan on 24 January in *Il Barbiere*, with Tokatyan, de Luca, Pinza (Don Basilio), and Malatesta (Dr. Bartolo). Her choices for the Lesson Scene were 'Ombra leggiera' from *Dinorah* (the opera of her New York debut) and 'Home Sweet Home.' A large audience, much applause, and many flowers led to a small speech from the *prima donna* in which she thanked the members of the audience for their kindness and invited them to attend her concerts. Others who sang for the last time at the Metropolitan during this season were Matzenauer, Martha Attwood, Mary Lewis, and Frances Peralta.

With the close of the season imminent, on 12 April, the Metropolitan announced a further extension of Gatti's contract — by two years — to 1 May 1935. There was the customary praise by Kahn, added to which was the remark : 'The attendance of the public at the Metropolitan this season was but slightly diminished' despite the changing conditions in the non-operatic world. There was no mention in this, however, of such per-

[132] Florence Easton did not sing in New York during 1929–1930, having obtained a leave of absence. She is announced to rejoin the company for 1935–1936.

formances as that of *Faust* on 22 March, with Nanette Guilford (Marguerite *), Trantoul, Pinza, Basiola, Wakefield (Marthe), and Swarthout ; or that of *Tristan* on 11 January, with Laubenthal, Kappel, Schorr, Bohnen, and Branzell, of which *The Herald Tribune* remarked, 'Mr. Laubenthal sang with a tonal raucousness which even for him was something of an achievement.'

The season's usual tour was this year varied by the inclusion for the first time of Richmond, which divided a week's opera with Atlanta.

1930–1931

THERE was no portent in the beginning of this season that the ensuing twenty-four weeks — from 27 October — would see the end of the Metropolitan's career as a self-supporting institution under Gatti. The company possessed over a million dollars in cash resources, a reserve built up over a period of twenty years, during which the 'sources of revenue other than those which the opera-going public supplies' [133] had averaged fifty thousand dollars annually in excess of the cost of producing opera.[134] Furthermore, there was cause for congratulation in the opening night attendance, which numbered 4210, the utmost capacity of the auditorium, and brought in fifteen dollars more than the previous high total recorded at the opening performance of the 1920 season, when *La Juive* had been given with Ponselle and Caruso. Neither of these singers was present on 27 October 1930 ; but the opera was again *Aïda* — the fifth such opening in the years of Gatti — with Müller, Martinelli, Branzell, de Luca, and Pinza. Serafin was the conductor, as he had been for each opening since his arrival in 1924.

[133] From the letter of 24 June 1926, from the assistant manager of the Metropolitan to *The Herald Tribune*. See p. 342.

[134] The Metropolitan's first appeal for funds, on 10 January 1933, contained these words from Paul Cravath — successor to Otto Kahn as chairman of the Metropolitan Opera Company's board of directors — to Fulton Cutting, president of the Real Estate Company's board : 'The production of opera at the Metropolitan under the sound direction of . . . Mr. Giulio Gatti-Casazza, was conducted without loss for more than 20 years. . . . At the beginning of the season of 1930–1931, the company had on hand cash resources of about $1,100,000.'

Though the season contained the first performance of *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Metropolitan since 1908, and the American *première* of Moussorgsky's *Fair at Sorochintzy*, neither was so important — either journalistically or to the immediate future of the Metropolitan — as the debut of a wholly unknown soprano on 3 January. Not merely was the name of Lily Pons an unfamiliar one in America to the time of her performance on that day ; she came also with no background of extraordinary Continental success, nor had her arrival been heralded in hysterical terms. It was said merely that Maria Gay, once a singer at the Metropolitan (see p. 144), and her husband, Giovanni Zenatello, had come upon Pons in a provincial opera house in France. A more authentic version of the emergence of Pons also attributes her discovery to Gay and Zenatello, but in the studio of her teacher, Alberti di Gorostiaga, in Paris. It is said that they were seeking singers for an opera season on the Riviera. In any event, they had brought her to the attention of Gatti, who had given her a chance — at $450 a week — for fame and fortune in America. The opera was *Lucia*, with Gigli, Pinza, and de Luca ; and even before Lucia's showpiece had arrived, Pons was enjoying the tribulations of a Metropolitan success, with an ovation after the first act. When the afternoon was completed, another name had been written into the Metropolitan's history of fine singing. A score of years ago, Pons would have been merely one among a dozen capable female singers ; but the year was 1930, and her position at the Metropolitan unique. Nor, despite her considerable vocal fluctuation in the five seasons since, has the Metropolitan produced her successor.

To her *Lucia* were added, on 7 January, Gilda in *Rigoletto* with Tokatyan, Danise, D'Angelo, and Pinza ; another *Rigoletto* on the 18th, and another *Lucia* on the 23rd, before a variation was scheduled, with *Mignon* on the 30th. For this, however, Pons was ill, and an announcement that was to become almost a formula communicated, instead, the presence of Sabanieeva as Philene. Pons returned for *Il Barbiere* on 4 February, with Tokatyan, de Luca, Pinza, and Malatesta. In the Les-

son Scene, she interpolated Proch's 'Theme and Variations,' and Bishop's 'Lo! Here the Gentle Lark.' On 15 February Pons was heard in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (The Doll) ; and finally, on 6 April, in *Mignon* (Philene) with Bori, Gigli, and Swarthout. At each of her appearances the audience was noticeably larger than those for the usual repertory offerings. Her success was immediate and lasting, through the graciousness of her presence and the quality of her musicianship — which was much superior to the recent coloraturas the Metropolitan had offered — as well as her vocal ability. Moreover, lack of previous acclaim for the singer gave each listener the impression of participating in the discovery of a new phenomenon, rather than of sitting at the feet of an accepted idol.

The revival of *Der Fliegende Holländer* on 1 November [135] provided also for the debuts of Ivar Andresen (Daland), the excellent basso, and of Hans Clemens (The Steersman). Schorr's Dutchman was one of his most imposing creations at the Metropolitan ; but Jeritza's Senta, Laubenthal's Erik, and Telva's Mary were not of comparable quality. On 10 November Kirchhoff was heard as Erik. Thus the result was again one of the characteristically unbalanced performances of the Metropolitan, with excellence in two or three aspects, and indifference elsewhere. Soudeikine's scenery was neither realistic enough nor fantastic enough to be highly regarded in the one direction or the other. The production was prepared and directed by Bodanzky. In this first full season of his return, Bodanzky also presented Franz von Suppé's *Boccaccio* #, the first offering in this genre at the Metropolitan since Conried's interest in Johann Strauss. Gatti, however, had no Sembrich, Alten, or Edyth Walker for his production ; Jeritza alone had the authentic light opera manner. Among the principal singers were Kirchhoff (Pietro), Meader (Scalza), Morgana (Beatrice), Manski (Isabella), Fleischer (Fiammetta), and Schützendorf (Lambertuccio), of whom Fleischer and Meader were the most able. Urban's production was unnecessarily lavish ; and pomposity rather than lightness was the mood of the entire piece. There

[135] The last previous performance had occurred in 1907–1908, under Conried, with Gadski, Knote, Van Rooy, and Blass.

were eight performances in this season, following which the work disappeared from the stage. In addition to conducting the opera, Bodanzky supplied it with recitatives, and arranged a waltz which was inserted in the third act.

Though a restudied *Boris* or a production of *Khovanshchina* would have seemed a more plausible expenditure of the Metropolitan's energies on Moussorgsky, there was chosen instead, for 29 November, *The Fair at Sorochintzy*, which had not been heard before in America. The language used was Italian ; and the score was presented in the version completed and orchestrated by N. Tcherepnine. Only infrequently was the light of Moussorgsky's genius visible ; the score was for the largest part unsubstantial, definitely disappointing. The interpolated *Night on the Bare Mountain* — used for a ballet in the second act — was very nearly the best music in the score. In the cast were Pinza (Tcherevik), Jagel (Gritzko), Windheim (The Pastor's Son), Danise (The Old Crony), Cehanovsky (A Gypsy), Müller (Parassia), and Bourskaya (Khivria), with Bada, Altglass, and Malatesta (Guests). The second act ballet was staged by Galli, and danced by Bonfiglio (The Red Jacket Devil), Rita de Leporte (The Adulterous Woman and The Queen of the Dawn), and Cesare Del Grande (The Ox). The third act *Hopak* was staged by August Berger. Serafin conducted, and the production was the work of Soudeikine. At the performance of 19 December, Tedesco appeared as Gritzko, and on 29 December Olga Didur was Parassia.

Following the *première, The Fair at Sorochintzy* was presented as part of a double bill with Felice Lattuada's *Le Preziose Ridicole.* The Lattuada work was presented for the first time on 10 December, under the direction of Bellezza, with a cast that included Bori (Madelon), Swarthout (Cathos), Tokatyan (Mascarille), Basiola (Jodelet), Besuner (Marotte), Ludikar (Gorgibus), Bada (La Grange), and Picco (Croissy). The set was by Robert Edmond Jones. Staging of rather distinctive quality — for the Metropolitan — had been devised by Ernst Lert. This double bill had four performances following which both works passed into the Metropolitan's limbo.

The first bounty of the Juilliard Foundation to the Metropolitan Opera made itself known in this season through the production of Taylor's *Peter Ibbetson* #. On 2 February 1928, a few days short of a year after the *première* of *The King's Henchman*, the Juilliard Foundation announced a grant of five thousand dollars to Taylor 'in honor of his work as a composer and his efforts toward encouraging American music.' It was understood that the money would aid Taylor in completing his new opera, which was promised for the season of 1928–1929. Actual production was deferred until 7 February 1931. Taylor had meanwhile considered and abandoned several other subjects before settling upon the du Maurier novel. He made use of Constance Collier's dramatization, with the addition of certain ideas of his own devising. In the cast were both Johnson and Tibbett, who had contributed to the success of *The King's Henchman* ; in this opera they appeared as Peter Ibbetson and Colonel Ibbetson, with Bori (The Duchess of Towers), Telva (Mrs. Deane), Bourskaya (Mrs. Glyn), and Rothier (Major Duquesnois). The people of the dream were Claudio Frigerio (Pasquier de la Marière), Biondo (Marie Pasquier), and Doninelli (Madame Seraskier). The audience was large and characteristically well-wishing ; Walter Damrosch — to whom the score is dedicated — greeted the press after the final curtain with the words, 'This marks a milestone in the history of American opera.' Gatti, too, abandoned his much-publicized silence to declare, 'I think that this opera is one that should succeed with the public.' There were six performances of *Ibbetson* in this season, and six in the next. The depression and its effect on the opera repertory may account for its lapse in 1932–1933, and the total of but four performances in the next two seasons. However, the primary disappointment of the work lay in the failure of Taylor to develop individuality of style. Though there was less obvious *Tristan* and *Pelléas* in *Ibbetson* than had been contained in *The King's Henchman*, there was

no larger quantity of Taylor. The efficient musicianship of the scoring remained Taylor's distinction, almost his sole one.

For the decidedly Saxon Rethberg, there was a revival of Mascagni's *Iris* on 7 March. The last previous performances at the Metropolitan had been those of 1914–1915, the last new undertaking of Toscanini. This third attempt to install the Mascagni opera in the repertory was attended by no greater success than were the two previous efforts. The total of four performances exactly matched those for the Toscanini-Bori production, and was one less than the number recorded for Conried's production, in 1907–1908, with Eames, Caruso, and Scotti. With Rethberg (Iris), were Gigli (Osaka), de Luca (Kyoto), Pinza (The Father), Paltrinieri (A Ragpicker), Biondo and Besuner (Two Geishas). Solo dancers in the first act were de Leporte, Bonfiglio, and Joseph Levinoff. Bellezza conducted, and the scenery was by Novak. This artist also contributed two new settings for this season's production of *Forza del Destino*, on 21 November. The occasion was a benefit *matinée*, and the cast included Ponselle, Olga Didur (debut, Preziosilla), Martinelli, Basiola, Pasero (The Abbot), and Gandolfi (Mellitone), with Serafin conducting. The scene at the cloister was divided, with the second portion sung inside the church ; and the third act opened with an exterior in place of the customary scene within the tent. *Guglielmo Tell*, silent since 2 April 1924, was heard in this season on 21 March, with Fleischer (Mathilde), Danise (Tell), Lauri-Volpi (Arnold), Pinza (Fürst), Ludikar (Gessler), and D'Angelo (Melchtal). The production was that of the previous revival. The performance was conducted by Serafin. On 4 April Rothier replaced Pinza.

The presence of Maria Müller during the first portion of the season resulted in the single alteration in the casting of *Don Giovanni* when the opera was returned to the repertory on 7 November. She was, both physically and vocally, a more plausible Donna Elvira * than Rethberg. Her characterization has remained the standard for this revival along with Ponselle's Donna Anna, Pinza's Giovanni, Fleischer's Zerlina, and the Masetto of D'Angelo. The revival of interest that had been provided to one aspect of the Metropolitan's repertory by the debut of Pons was continued in another by the beginning of the Wagner cycle on 6 February with a performance of *Der Fliegende Holländer* in which Bohnen appeared as Daland *. Also in the cast were Jeritza, Laubenthal, Schorr, and Clemens. In *Die Meistersinger* on the 12th Branzell was seen as Magdalena

for the first time, an impersonation better sung and acted than any other the role has had since the war. Her appearances as Magdalena, however, have been curiously infrequent for a singer whose superiority in the role was so definitely established. In the cast were Rethberg (Eva), Laubenthal (Walther), Whitehill (Sachs), Tappolet (Pogner), Gabor (Kothner), Schützendorf, and Meader.

This year's uncut performances of the *Ring* began on 20 February with Bohnen (Wotan), Kappel (Fricka), Branzell (Erda), Manski (Freia), Kirchhoff (Loge), Meader, and Schützendorf in *Das Rheingold.* Lauritz Melchior returned to the company for *Die Walküre,* on the 26th, appearing as Siegmund, with Kappel (Sieglinde), Branzell, Ohms (Brünnhilde), Bohnen (Wotan), and Tappolet ; and as Siegfried, on 6 March, in *Siegfried* with Kappel (Brünnhilde), Schorr, Meader, Schützendorf, and Maria Ranzow (debut, Erda). Laubenthal was the Siegfried of *Götterdämmerung,* on the 14th, with Ohms (Brünnhilde), Bohnen (Hagen), Whitehill (Gunther), and Ranzow (Waltraute). A performance of *Tristan,* on the 20th, with Melchior, Kappel, Bohnen, Whitehill (Kurwenal), and Ranzow (Brangaene) completed the cycle. Melchior was heard in the season's only performance of *Parsifal,* on 3 April, with Kappel (Kundry), Bohnen (Gurnemanz), Whitehill (Amfortas), and Schützendorf (Klingsor). Variations in the casting of *Der Fliegende Holländer* offered Tappolet as the season's third Daland on 28 February, with Kappel (Senta *), Laubenthal, Schorr, Telva, and Clemens as before ; and on 18 March Schützendorf was heard as Gunther in a performance of *Götterdämmerung* with Laubenthal, Bohnen, Ohms, Ranzow, Manski, and Gabor (Alberich). All the German performances of the season were conducted by Bodanzky, save a *Lohengrin,* on 5 January, for which Riedel replaced him. Kappel was also indisposed for this performance, and Manski was heard as Elsa *, with Laubenthal, Schorr (Telramund), Branzell, and Andresen (Heinrich).

To the mounting list of American singers at the Metropolitan were this season added another half-dozen names, beginning with that of Beatrice Belkin, who made her debut on 30 October in a performance of *Hänsel und Gretel* (The Dewman), with Fleischer, Mario, and Schützendorf. On 15 November both Faina Petrova (Azucena), and Claudio Frigerio (Count di Luna) joined the company to sing in *Il Trovatore,* with Corona and Martinelli ; and, on 27 November, Myrna Sharlow,

formerly of the Chicago Opera Association, sang for the first time in the Metropolitan as Nedda in *Pagliacci,* with Martinelli, de Luca, and Frigerio (Silvio *). Her later appearances included an *Aïda* as a substitute for Corona, on 1 January, with Martinelli, Claussen, de Luca, and Rothier (Ramfis). She sang again in the same opera on the 10th. To replace Trantoul, Gatti brought Georges Thill from the Paris Opéra to make his debut on 20 March in *Roméo et Juliette,* with Grace Moore. Though his Roméo was undistinguished, and his Faust, on the 25th, with Rethberg, Pinza, Tibbett (Valentin), and Swarthout, was scarcely better, he reappeared again in the following season.

Ponselle added the role of Violetta to her Metropolitan repertory during this year, singing it for the first time on 16 January, at a benefit performance of *La Traviata,* with Lauri-Volpi and de Luca. Her inclination to over-dramatize the role found favour with those who were easily impressed, but her conception was wide of the lines indicated by Verdi, and exemplified by the great Violettas of the past. Also an important new role for an American artist was Tibbett's first Amonasro on 21 January, in an *Aïda* with Rethberg, Martinelli, Branzell, and Pinza. During this season Rethberg was heard in a French role for the first time, on 28 January, as Rachel in *La Juive,* with Martinelli, and Rothier (Brogni). On 25 March she sang in *Faust* with Thill, Pinza, Tibbett, and Swarthout. Her operas during this season included *Andrea Chenier, Madama Butterfly, Die Meistersinger, Iris, Aïda, Faust,* and *La Juive,* to the neglect of her greater gifts for *Lohengrin, Walküre* (Sieglinde), *Tannhäuser,* etc. The casting for *Pelléas,* which had altered but little since its presentation in 1924–1925, suffered a major change on 4 April when Ludikar replaced Whitehill as Golaud, with Sabanieeva (Yniold), Bori, Johnson, and Rothier the principal singers. The use of a raised orchestra for this score, which had been instituted on 8 March 1930, was continued. Also continued was the policy of using such singers as Mario, Jacobo, Grace Moore, Corona, and Manski in principal roles, when their capabilities were plainly for matters less exalted. The misadventures of *Faust* at the Metropolitan continued, too, with Fleischer, Mario, Rethberg, and Moore as Marguerites of various performances. There was variety, to be sure, in this group ; but of a somewhat different order than the season of another year which had offered, to Metropolitan patrons, Eames, Melba, and Calvé in the same role.

Another effort to present German opera in competition with the Metropolitan was made during the latter part of March, this

time in the Mecca Temple. Carl Braun, Johannes Sembach, and Gadski were again members of the company, whose repertory was Wagner, plus D'Albert's *Tiefland*. The results were auspicious neither financially or artistically, though the company introduced an excellent dramatic soprano, Margarethe Baumer, and Marie von Essen, a capable contralto who joined the Metropolitan company in the next season.

Following the usual tour to the south, Cleveland, and Rochester, it was said that ninety-five per cent of the Metropolitan's subscribers had signified their intention of renewing their claims on seats for the season of 1931–1932. The tour itself had yielded excellent results, it was announced on 5 May ; and the performances of *Peter Ibbetson*, both the six in New York and those on tour, had brought the company nearly $150,000. There was less comfort in the declaration of Ernst Lert, for two seasons stage director of the company, who retired after this season. He termed the Metropolitan 'Victorian,' and added, 'It is not opera that is dying, only the traditional method of presenting it.' [136]

[136] Dr. Lert expanded somewhat his opinion of the Metropolitan in an article published in *Chord and Discord* (Journal of the Bruckner Society of America) for December 1935. 'The example set by the Met,' says Dr. Lert, 'where the most experienced impresario, the most lavishly paid conductor, the most highly publicized star, the most bombastic scenic artist, the most stylistically affected choir-master, and the most saccharine-sweet ballet mistress have each performed his or her part with such outstanding excellence that the opera house has literally rung with the claque's salvos of applause, richly confirmed by the subsequent showers of press clippings singing their praises of the prowess of individual participants — all this shows conclusively that just because of these many uncoördinated virtues, an evening of opera may make upon an audience the impression of a variety show rather than of a thoroughly unified dramatic experience !' 'Of course there is a man present at the opera who is intended to answer the critic's description,' says Dr. Lert, in considering the matter of responsibility for the staging of the Metropolitan's productions, 'but he has been placed in an impossible position. Mr. Gatti . . . had entered the name of this man in an obscure corner of each opera program as responsible for the production, even though he had not granted him a single rehearsal for nineteen out of twenty such performances. The man (and his colleagues) . . . was here permitted no say in the choice of singers, dancers, conductors, or scenic artists for "his" production. Yet he was required to render the most complicated opera fit for performance within ten or twelve hours (three or four rehearsals) !' Commenting on the Metropolitan's failure to utilize Hammerstein's ideas after buying him out of the operatic field, Dr. Lert cleverly paraphrases Fafner's complaint to Siegfried, in *Siegfried* : 'Again the Met sighed with relief, turned over on its other side and yawned, "Here I lie midst all that's mine ;

Important to the future of the Metropolitan was the first radio broadcast from its stage during an actual performance, on 21 April 1931.[137] It was not a Metropolitan production which had this honour, however, but the League of Composers' presentation of Strawinsky's *Oedipus Rex,* performed by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, assisted by Remo Bufano's puppets and a chorus.

1931–1932

As revolutionary an announcement as would have been the news of Gatti-Casazza's own retirement was made to the public of New York on 26 October 1931. It was the information that Otto H. Kahn, for twenty-eight years a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company's board of directors,[138] and for twenty-three of those years a dominant figure in the affairs of the organization, had retired from the presidency of the Board, and from the chairmanship. His double position was assumed by Paul D. Cravath, for many years Kahn's lawyer, and a person long interested in artistic philanthropy in New York. From this same meeting of the directorate — it was held in the offices of Kuhn, Loeb and Company, at 52 William Street — also came the news that Kahn would retain his stock and his position as a member of the Board. His action he attributed to the recent death of Mortimer Schiff, a partner of Kuhn, Loeb and Company, which increased the demands upon Kahn from his business. Curiously, it had been the intervention of one Schiff

let-me-sleep !"' One should read the article in its entirety for an interesting consideration of the general matter of staging at the Metropolitan. The management characterizes Lert's remarks as those of a disgruntled former employee, whose contract had not been renewed.

[137] The first broadcast from an American opera house on a national network of stations occurred on 21 January 1927, when the Garden Scene from *Faust* was heard from Chicago. In the performance directed by Giorgio Polacco were Edith Mason, Charles Hackett, Richard Bonelli (Valentin), and Vanni Marcoux (Méphistophélès). A spokesman for the Metropolitan declared such transmission was 'not opera.'

[138] Including with that the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company.

(Jacob) that had introduced Kahn to opera and to the Metropolitan (see page 91) and it was a completion of the cycle that the death of Mortimer Schiff should stand as the reason for Kahn's retirement. Shortly after the beginning of the opera season, on 5 November, Kahn announced his resignation, for similar reasons, from the board of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society.

A loss of but ten per cent in the number of subscribers from the total for the preceding year was announced when the season opened on 2 November, with *La Traviata* sung by Ponselle, Lauri-Volpi, and de Luca. This was regarded as a highly promising augury for the season's success, in the light of the increasing seriousness of the general depression. Optimism was further encouraged by the presence of nearly four thousand persons at the opening performance. Single seats for the opening were still priced at eleven dollars ; and for the rest of the season, the top price was $8.25. On the second night *Tannhäuser* was restored to the repertory — it had not been given in the previous season — with Jeritza, Laubenthal, Ohms (Venus), Schorr, and Andresen (Landgraf Hermann). Kautsky's settings, made in 1923, were continued in use, and the work was given without benefit of re-study.

Plans for the season's novelties and revivals were again on the ambitious scale — in numbers, at least — of the post-war years of Gatti's directorship. Cognizance of the great European success of Jaromir Weinberger's *Schwanda* was taken with the first American presentation of the work on 7 November, directed by Artur Bodanzky. Max Brod's German translation of the original Czech text by Milos Kares was used, and the production was by Urban. Though Schorr laboured conscientiously with the role of Schwanda, the required lightness of touch was not in his power. But Müller (Dorota), Laubenthal (Babinsky), Branzell (The Queen), Andresen(The Sorcerer), Schützendorf (The Devil), and Windheim (The Executioner *and* The Devil's Disciple) were all highly able. Despite

the charm of the music and the generously enthusiastic press, there were no performances after the five of this season. On the 16th Max Lorenz appeared as Babinsky, but Laubenthal resumed the role for later performances. Von Suppé again graced the stage of the Metropolitan in this season, his *Donna Juanita* — revised and edited by Bodanzky — being presented for the first time in the auditorium on 2 January. No more than its predecessor (*Boccaccio*) did *Donna Juanita* impress itself on the Metropolitan's repertory, for it had a life of but one year. The termination of Jeritza's engagement with the company likewise ended, for the moment, experiments with light opera. With her as Rene du Faure — Donna Juanita, were Manski (Donna Olympia), Windheim (Don Pomponio), Laubenthal (Manrique), Schützendorf (Gil Polo), Fleischer (Petrita), Clemens (Gaston du Faure), and D'Angelo (Sir Douglas). The naïve local references interpolated in the dialogue did not enhance the authenticity of the production, nor did they supply the ebullience they were meant to contribute.

In succession to *Ernani, Luisa Miller, Don Carlos,* and the other operas of lesser familiarity from the literature of Verdi which had been produced within the decade by the Metropolitan, Gatti in this season added *Simon Boccanegra.* Both its quality and its reception by the public were unusual for an uncelebrated work, which had never been produced in America during the long years of its existence. It was presented in the revised edition which Verdi had worked over late in life, a version in which Maurel, Edouard de Reszke, and Tamagno appeared in Milan in 1880. To the Metropolitan production on 28 January the most potent contribution was made by Tibbett, whose Simon Boccanegra marked a long step forward in his artistic progress. Especially the death of Boccanegra — suggestive, in its force, of an Italianate Boris — was remarkably recreated by Tibbett. As Jacopo Fiesco, Pinza was also admirable, together with Frigerio (Paolo Albiani), Ananian

LAWRENCE TIBBETT
Photo. Carlo Edwards

(Pietro), Müller (Maria), Martinelli (Gabriele), Paltrinieri (A Captain), and Besuner (A Maidservant). On 24 February Rethberg was heard as Maria. Serafin conducted excellently, and there was an ornate and old-fashioned scenic production by Camillo Parravicini.

The importance of Pons to the repertory was demonstrated by the revival for her of two works from the coloratura's literature. Both had been absent since the war from the Metropolitan — for the last revival of *Lakmé* had been on 24 March 1917, and that of *La Sonnambula* on 3 March 1916. Both of these revivals had been for Barrientos. For the new production of *Lakmé*, on 19 February, there was a scenic outfitting designed by Novak, and Hasselmans conducted. Next to the well sung and altogether attractive impersonation of Pons, the best performance of the afternoon was that of Swarthout, as Mallika. De Luca (Frederic) and Rothier (Nilakantha), who had these roles in the Barrientos revival, were again in the cast. The other principal roles were sung by Thill (Gerald), Doninelli (Ellen), Flexer (Rose), and Egener (Mistress Benson). A more than usually elaborate ballet was a feature of the presentation, with more undress than was customarily seen on the Metropolitan's stage. Rita de Leporte and Alexis Kosloff were the principal dancers. At the first repetition on 27 February, Jagel sang Gerald, and retained the role through the season. In the following year, Martinelli returned to this role, which he had sung at the Metropolitan in 1917. For *La Sonnambula* there was a new production by Urban when the work was given on 16 March, with Pons (Amina), Gigli (Elvino), Pinza (Rodolfo), Doninelli (Lisa), Bourskaya (Teresa), D'Angelo (Alessio), and Paltrinieri (A Notary). Serafin was the conductor. Pons' adaptability for the music of *Lakmé* was not paralleled in *Sonnambula*, for which she lacked the requisite vocal finish. Her popularity was an assurance that both operas would remain in the repertory, temporarily, at least.[139]

Despite the auspicious start of the season, less than a month had passed before the Metropolitan made known its first concession to hard times. On 21 November Gatti announced that a 'voluntary' cut of ten per cent had been proposed to all the employees of the house, artistic and technical. This saving, it

[139] The last previous hearing of both works in New York had been in the season of 1920-1921, when the Chicago Opera Company offered them at the Manhattan Opera House with Galli-Curci.

was unofficially estimated, would reduce expenditures by nearly two hundred thousand dollars a season.[140] A few days later — coincident with the production of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* for the first time in New York, on 24 November, by the Philadelphia Opera Company and Orchestra under Stokowski at the Metropolitan — the retirement of Messrs. Eastman and Harkness was announced by the board of directors of the Opera Company, with Clarence Dillon and Robert Low Bacon accepting the posts they had renounced. On 14 December, after considering at length the proposal of the management, the unionized employees of the organization — with the exception of the chorus — were forbidden by their superiors to accept the cut. The average wage for the mechanical staff — electricians, carpenters, stagehands, etc. — was eighty dollars a week. The orchestra received $128 a week as the top wage. For the musicians, it was said by Edward Canavan, chief power of Local 802, that the proposed wage cut would not aid in the employment of more musicians, and would reduce the capacity of those now working to contribute to the support of the large number of jobless musicians. Even should the chorus accept the cut — it had not yet decided upon its course of action — it would leave about $1750 weekly lacking towards the contemplated saving.

In response to reports that the Metropolitan would not function during the 1933–1934 season, it was declared by Paul Cravath on 15 December : 'There has been no consideration of the abandonment of an opera season next year.' He said further : 'Even if the thought had been entertained in the most casual manner, no one could explain how the company could avoid the obligations of its contracts and subscriptions without going into bankruptcy, which, it was pointed out, was quite out of consideration.' An endorsement of Gatti by both boards of directors was appended to the report. The retirement of Kahn was said not to have any connexion with the prospect of a deficit

[140] This would imply that approximately two million dollars was the annual salary budget for the production of opera in New York.

on the season's operations, and he still retained a controlling interest — amounting to approximately eighty per cent of the stock — in the Metropolitan Opera Company. Possibility of a removal to Radio City (see page 375) was said to be virtually negligible.

During the early portion of the season the Metropolitan introduced Max Lorenz as Walther in *Die Meistersinger* on 12 November, with Fleischer, Schorr, Andresen (Pogner), Marie von Essen (Magdalena, debut), Schützendorf, and Clemens (David *). Also, in *Die Walküre* on 14 November, Carlton Gauld made his debut as Hunding with Lorenz (Siegmund *), Manski (Sieglinde), Branzell, Ohms (Brünnhilde), and Schorr. Lorenz possessed a voice of better quality than that of most German tenors, which he had learned to employ with considerably more skill when he returned to the company for the season of 1933–1934.

In his first season he was heard in *Schwanda* (Babinsky) on 16 November ; in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Erik), on 9 December, with Jeritza, Schorr, and Andresen ; and as Siegfried with Kappel, Branzell, Schorr, Clemens (Mime *), and Schützendorf in *Siegfried* on 15 January.

The performances of Wagner at the Metropolitan reached their lowest point in the history of the modern era of the institution on 20 November, in a performance of *Tristan,* sung by Laubenthal, Ohms, Branzell, Schorr, and Andresen. These singers had demonstrated varying levels of ability in the past, but both Ohms and Laubenthal were in particularly unfortunate vocal condition. In addition, Bodanzky was possessed by one of his extraordinary moods, resulting in a performance of the first act (uncut) faster by eighteen minutes — so it was stated in *The Herald Tribune* — than the usual one of Fritz Busch, in Dresden. On 3 December it was announced that the illness of Ohms would make it impossible for her to appear for 'some time.' The 'some time' lengthened into permanence, for shortly

afterward the singer departed for Europe, and has not reappeared since.

To the Italian repertory was added, on 2 December, the second attempt to find a successor among the output of Italo Montemezzi to his *L'Amore*. This was *La Notte di Zoraima*, the composer's first opera since *La Nave*, a dozen years before. No more than *Giovanni Gallurese* did *La Notte* possess the qualities of *L'Amore*, even though its workmanship showed a more certain hand. The dramatic instinct which had distinguished the composer's masterwork was nowhere apparent. Ponselle appeared as Zoraima, with Jagel (Muscar), Basiola (Pedrito), Biondo (Manuela), D'Angelo (Lyoval), Tedesco (A Voice), Gabor and Wolfe (Two Inca Insurgents). The conductor was Serafin, and there was scenery by Novak. To it — after the *première*, when it was followed by *Pagliacci* — was joined *L'Oracolo*, which had been revived on 23 November, after a lapse since 26 March 1926. Scotti resumed his characterization of Chim-Fen ; and with him were Pasero (Win-Shee), Bori (Ah-Yoe), Tokatyan (Win-San-Lui), and D'Angelo (Hu-Tsin). The Montemezzi opera — in one act — had four performances in this season, and none since then. At the performance of 10 December, Doninelli replaced Biondo.

In addition to Lorenz and Gauld, the German company was augmented by the addition on 20 January of Göta Ljungberg, who made her debut as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. With her in the cast were Lorenz, Schorr, Tappolet (Hunding), Branzell, and Kappel (Brünnhilde). Ljungberg's natural talent for the stage and her attractive physical presence for the heroic Wagnerian roles, aroused an interest in her performances which was never matched by her vocal qualities. Indiscriminate use had damaged a voice once admirable ; and though occasional performances were better sung than others, her only consistent tendency was to be erratic. On 30 January she was heard as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, with Melchior, Bohnen (Wotan), Tappolet, Kappel, and Branzell (Fricka) ; and on 3 February, as Isolde *, with Melchior, Bohnen, and Schorr (Kurwenal). The Brangaene of this performance was Doris Doe, an American contralto making her first appearance in the Metropolitan. She had a promising voice, but neither the experience nor the dramatic instincts for Brangaene. The choice for her debut

was as far-fetched as any in the Metropolitan's history. Nevertheless, she was heard again as Brangaene in the performance of *Tristan* during the Wagner cycle on 18 February, with Kappel, Melchior, Whitehill, Clemens (Shepherd *), and Bohnen (Marke) ; also as Waltraute * in the cycle performance of *Götterdämmerung* on 17 March, which offered — in addition to Melchior, Kappel, and Bohnen — Schützendorf as Gunther in place of Whitehill, who was ill ; Gabor, in Schützendorf's role, as Alberich ; and Manski as Gutrune. Schorr, the first choice for Gunther, was reported to be singing at a musicale in a neighbouring city. Gabor was plainly not at ease in his role, and Schützendorf was guided to his various positions about the stage by nods and gestures from the other characters, principally Melchior. On 8 April Doe sang Fricka in *Die Walküre* with Ljungberg (Sieglinde), Kappel, Laubenthal, Bohnen, and Tappolet (Hunding) ; and, on the 13th, Erda in *Siegfried,* with Melchior, Kappel, Clemens (Mime), and Bohnen (Der Wanderer).[141] For none of these did Doe possess the authority to succeed to the laurels of the Metropolitan's able contraltos of the past.

This year's Wagner cycle began on 12 February with a performance of *Tannhäuser* in which were Jeritza (Elisabeth), Kappel, Melchior, Schorr, and Bohnen. Following *Tristan,* on the 18th, recorded above, the *Ring* was initiated on 26 February with *Das Rheingold* in which were Laubenthal (Loge), Bohnen (Wotan), Windheim (Mime *), Kappel, Schumann-Heink (Erda), Ljungberg (Freia), and Schützendorf (Alberich), with Tappolet and Wolfe as the Giants. Kappel was heard as Brünnhilde, in *Die Walküre,* with Ljungberg, Claussen (Fricka), Laubenthal, Schorr (Wotan), and Tappolet, on 3 March ; also in *Götterdämmerung,* on the 17th (see above). In *Siegfried,* on the 11th, Ljungberg was the Brünnhilde *, with Melchior, Bohnen, Schumann-Heink (Erda), Clemens (Mime), Tappolet (Fafner), and Fleischer (Voice of the Forest Bird). Bodanzky was the conductor for all these. *Parsifal* reappeared as an evening opera on 22 March — a benefit performance — with Ljungberg (Kundry *), Laubenthal, Bohnen (Gurnemanz), Whitehill, Schützendorf, and Tappolet (Titurel). Save for Kappel (Kundry) and Melchior (Parsifal), the cast was unchanged for

[141] Bohnen's final appearance at the Metropolitan.

the *matinée* on Good Friday, the 25th. Of interest in the German repertory was the first essay at the Metropolitan in a role of this genre by Ezio Pinza on 25 December. He was heard as Landgraf Hermann in a performance of *Tannhäuser* with Jeritza, Laubenthal, Claussen (Venus), and Schorr. There was much to admire in the effort, but the qualities of Pinza's voice were somewhat too lyric for such use.

On Christmas Day the Metropolitan made its first experiment with broadcasting from its stage during an actual performance of opera. Through the accident of the date, the choice for the first work fell on *Hänsel und Gretel*, sung by Fleischer (Hänsel), Mario (Gretel), Wakefield (Gertrude), Schützendorf (Peter), Manski (The Witch), Besuner (The Dewman), and Flexer (The Sandman), with Karl Riedel conducting. Comment on the opera during its progress was made by Deems Taylor, who had no scruples about offering his voice in competition with Humperdinck's music. There was much objection to this form of annotation, and its use was eventually discontinued. The facilities employed were those of the National Broadcasting Company, and the event was solemnized by an address to the radio audience by M. H. Aylesworth, its president. Since there was already public discussion of the difficulties besetting the future of the Metropolitan, it was of significance that Mr. Aylesworth said, in part : 'The contribution made by NBC to the Metropolitan Opera Company in your behalf helps to maintain the opera.' The broadcasts were continued, as a sustaining programme, on a weekly basis.

Armando Borgioli, a baritone whose services have been useful rather than brilliant, joined the company on 22 January as Don Carlos in a performance of *Forza del Destino* with Ponselle and Martinelli. On 1 February, with Corona, Lauri-Volpi, Claussen, Petrova (La Cieca), and Pasero (Alvise), Borgioli was heard as Barnaba in *La Gioconda ;* on the 13th, as Tonio in a performance of *Pagliacci* with Bori and Johnson ; on the 27th, in *Il Trovatore* (di Luna), with Vettori (Leonora), Petrova (Azucena), Martinelli, and Pasero ; and on 2 March as Amonasro in an *Aïda* with Rethberg, Claussen, Pinza, and Francesco Merli (Rhadames, debut). Merli enjoyed a period of celebrity as a leading tenor during the remaining weeks of the season, but he was not

re-engaged. His roles included Edgardo, in *Lucia*, on 11 March, with Pons, de Luca, and Pasero — with Pietro Cimara, an assistant conductor, making his debut directing opera at the Metropolitan, in place of Bellezza who was ill ; a scheduled Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, on the 25th, which he had to forego — Ransome was his replacement — because of illness ; Gabriele, in *Boccanegra*, on 9 April, with Rethberg, Tibbett, and Gandolfi (Paolo) ; and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, on the 14th, with Rethberg, and de Luca. Beside her Mallika, in *Lakmé*, there were larger opportunities for Swarthout in this season. She sang her first Preziosilla in *Forza del Destino* on 14 November, with Ponselle, Martinelli, and Basiola ; her first Mrs. Deane, in *Peter Ibbetson*, on 18 January ; and her first Adalgisa in *Norma* on 25 January, with Ponselle, Jagel, and Pasero. Arthur Anderson, a basso of American origin, joined the company on 26 February, his first role being Donner in *Das Rheingold*. He was later heard in *Sadko* (The Norse Merchant) on 12 March, with Thill (Sadko *), Fleischer, and Petrova ; and as the King in *Aïda*, on 2 April, with Rethberg, Carmela Ponselle (Amneris), Merli, Borgioli, and Pinza.

To the *Tristan* of 20 November — disastrous to Ohms — and the impromptu *Götterdämmerung* of the Wagner cycle, there were parallels elsewhere in the repertory. For example, in a performance of *Faust*, on 13 February — a Saturday *matinée*, and broadcast — both Rethberg and Thill were in obviously bad voice, and the tenor could not manage his C in 'Salut ! demeure,' nor approach within plausible distance of it. The cast also included Besuner, Rothier (Méphistophélès), and Basiola. Other performances that were scarcely worthy of the Metropolitan's traditions were an *Aïda* on 19 December, in which Guilford was heard as the Egyptian princess for the first time, with Lauri-Volpi, Branzell, de Luca, and Pinza ; and *Il Trovatore*, on 27 February, with Vettori, Martinelli, Petrova, Borgioli, and Pasero. The financial depression would undoubtedly have severely affected the business of the Metropolitan if the performances had been maintained at their pre-war level — not to mention that of Grau's day — but it was slight hardship for anyone to forego opera that offered no more than these performances did.

Following the rumours of curtailment of the opera season,

or of a suspension of activities, and their denial on 15 December — together with a rejection of so lurid a course as bankruptcy — there was a lack of further definite information until 3 March, when a report was circulated that a membership corporation would be formed to replace the Metropolitan Opera Company.[142] It was denied that the action was one towards economy ; but it was recognized that the singers, musicians, and technical staff of the organization would have to make new contracts with the Metropolitan Opera Association, which took up the activities of the Opera Company. Scenery and costumes of the latter were transferred to the new form of the organization for a nominal sum. Officially it was stated that the Association could add members at will, who would not be required to purchase stock ; and it also developed that the Association, as an 'educational institution,' would not be subject to the government amusement tax on tickets. Thus, it was able to lower its prices by considerably more than it decreased its own income. From the meeting of 23 March also came an announcement stating : 'Because of reduced receipts due to the prevailing financial depression . . . the season will result in a loss which practically wipes out the capital of $550,000 of the Metropolitan Opera Company and leaves it with insufficient funds to assure another season.'

The meaning of this, to the members of the company, was not apparent until a notice signed by Gatti was posted in the opera house on 25 March. He offered to serve without a salary,[143] if necessary, and exhorted his forces with these words : 'In such a critical and decisive moment it would be petty and without a realization of this grave situation to *raise questions of contracts and rights.* [Italics mine. — Ed.] When a house is on fire one does not send for lawyers or notaries.' It is perhaps pointless to indicate that those who supported this declaration — the

[142] The Metropolitan Opera Company was a stock corporation.

[143] Even if Gatti had received no increase in his original salary of $30,000 per year, his earnings would now have totalled $720,000.

directors of the Association — were typical of the most vigorous complainants against a similar movement by the government of the United States.

That any artist should have been so bold as to stand firmly for his contractual rights was scarcely to have been expected ; but the fate of Beniamino Gigli pointedly demonstrates what happened to one who did. On 1 May, when the opera season for 1932–1933 was planned to extend for sixteen weeks, and only the matter of raising a guarantee fund among the directors stood in the way of the definite announcement of such a season,[144] Gigli informed the press that he had returned his contract, which would not have expired until 1935. His earnings during this period would have amounted to approximately $300,000 ; and he contended that he was asked to accept a reduction of $23,000 yearly, or more than twenty per cent. He declared his willingness 'to contribute a substantial part of my earnings to alleviate the burdens of the management,' but contended that his 'sincere efforts were met with conditions and impositions which would have diminished my dignity as a man and an artist.'

To this Gatti replied that Gigli had refused to accept a cut in December and had ridiculed those who did. 'Now, he again refused to cooperate in the proportion accepted by all the others. Under these circumstances, then, the relations became intolerable.' Appended to this statement was a letter, dated April 12 and addressed to Gatti-Casazza. It reviewed the case against Gigli, and then stated :

'No serious pretext can explain such behaviour and we all feel it our duty to protest against a colleague whose conduct is inexcusable. He disturbs the harmony and endangers the safety of our institution and is a challenge to the sentiment of every one. Mr. Gigli has during the

[144] On 17 April a statement from Mr. Cravath said : 'The directors are so hopeful of being able to raise the required guaranty fund that they have authorized the management to send out the usual invitations for subscriptions. . . If the response indicates support at least equal to the support the opera received during the season just closed, we believe the production of opera next season will be assured.'

current season profited from the sacrifices we have made to keep the Metropolitan going and is again trying to get his full salary at the expense of all of us who are reducing our respective salaries. We protest against Mr. Gigli's lack of cooperation and *esprit de corps.*

Faithfully yours,

[*Signers*]

Conductors : Bellezza, Bodanzky, Hasselmans, Pelletier, Serafin, Setti, and Sturani. Stage-director: Hans Niedecken-Gebhard. Singers : Mmes. Bori, Bourskaya, Corona, Doe, Flexer, Ljungberg, Manski, Morgana, Pons, Ponselle, and Swarthout ; Messrs. Bada, de Luca, Jagel, Johnson, Laubenthal, Martinelli, Melchior, Pinza, Rothier, Schützendorf, and Tappolet.'

Gigli took comfort from the lack of Tibbett's signature, but Tibbett later said that he agreed to the sentiment expressed, but that he had not been present to sign the document. Gigli further contended that the signatures were 'not written spontaneously,' and his secretary cogently pointed out that the letter, dated 12 April, was not given to the press until two weeks afterwards.

There was no further word until 6 May, when Gigli put forth a long defence of his position, declaring that he first agreed to accept a cut of ten per cent, in December, and then discovered that such a course would invalidate his contract. He then offered to sing extra performances and to broadcast without payment, though, he claimed, his contract called for extra fees on such occasions. Both offers were refused by Gatti. Gigli continued, saying : 'I do not think it was fair of the artists to protest on 12 April against what happened fifteen days later, and to leave at the discretion of one individual a document which he misused, and released for publication after many of those who signed it were not in this country any longer.' There were no further repercussions until 14 January 1934, when a statement was transmitted to America from Gigli, in Rome, through the Universal Service : 'I had a four-year contract with the Metropolitan for a total of $275,000. . . I would have been one of the first to accept a cut of even 30 per cent had I not been told point-blank that my contract was also to be cancelled

. . . the contract, Gatti-Casazza informed me, was "not worth the paper it was written on." '

A further siege of acrimony followed an announcement from Clarence Whitehill on 13 May. Retiring from opera, he complained of the discrimination against American singers at the Metropolitan, and suggested the engagement of Richard Crooks and John Charles Thomas. Whitehill thought Gigli's demands excessive, and estimated his payment to be about $3000 per performance, or in excess of even Caruso's highest wage ($2500). He further declared that the Metropolitan had not offered Lucien Muratore more than a thousand dollars per performance. Gatti's reply was that Whitehill had not been offered a contract for 1932–1933, and that his remarks were inspired by malice. Gatti declared that Whitehill had implored him to retain his name on the roster, and that he had promised to 'see what he could do.' Whitehill contended that he had been offered five performances, that Gatti termed him 'indispensable' for Golaud and Amfortas. The matter rested at that point ; but it was a singularly inglorious termination to one of the most substantial and worthwhile careers of an American singer at the Metropolitan.

In the history of the season's performances there was a new departure on Sunday night, 6 March, when the first 'Surprise Party' — a concert by the members of the company, followed by miscellaneous 'turns' and specialities, mostly humorous in intent — was given, for the benefit of the Musicians' Emergency Aid Fund. Among the guests on the stage was Mme. Marcella Sembrich. Nearly twenty-five thousand dollars was raised. In emulation, the Sunday night concert of 27 March was composed of American music, the orchestra in the pit augmented by a jazz band supplied by the National Broadcasting Company. Grace Moore and Lawrence Tibbett reproduced a duet from their sound film *New Moon*, based on Romberg's operetta ; Jagel sang two songs by Ethelbert Nevin ; and Tibbett was heard in Jerome Kern's 'Old Man River.' Not

to be outdone, Gigli made one of his last appearances in the Metropolitan on the following Sunday — 3 April — singing Neapolitan songs to the accompaniment of a mandolin-guitar orchestra. Following the close of the regular season, the company participated in the first post-season performances at the Metropolitan in many years, presenting *Rigoletto* on 27 April, with Pons, Gigli, and Basiola — the tenor's last appearance at the Metropolitan — and *Lakmé*, with Pons, Jagel, and Rothier, on the 30th.

Before his departure on 20 May, Gatti announced that, in addition to Gigli and Whitehill, Jeritza, Bohnen, Claussen, Lorenz, Didur, and Andresen would not be members of the company in the next season. Between this date and the beginning of the next opera season, Richard Crooks, Richard Bonelli, Helen Gleason, Tito Schipa, Frida Leider, Eide Norena, Maria Olszewska, and Margaret Halstead were added to the company.

Culminating this period of transition and adjustment — one of the less attractive chapters of the Metropolitan's history — was a letter from the Chairman of the Metropolitan Opera Association to Gatti, sent on the eve of the latter's departure for Europe. It was dated 18 May :

> Realizing the unusual difficulties that have beset you in the conduct of opera for the past season and the serious complications attending the planning of the next season, I wish to express to you my satisfaction as chairman of the board, and that of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Opera Association, with the masterly manner in which you have performed this task. I wish also to add our approval of the new artists engaged and of the changes you have made in the personnel of the company.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Paul D. Cravath [145]
> Chairman

When the sixteen-week season of 1932–1933 was proposed to the public, the new prices (by subscription) were set as follows :

[145] To this *The Times* of 19 May 1932 added the comment: 'The change of personnel referred to by Mr. Cravath probably concerns the departure from the company of Beniamino Gigli, Italian tenor, and Clarence Whitehill, American baritone.'

Orchestra and Orchestra Circle (except last row)	$7.15	formerly	$8.25
Last row of the " "	5.50	"	8.25
Dress Circle	4.13	"	4.58
Balcony (first three rows)	2.97	"	3.00
Balcony (other rows)	2.75	"	2.79
Family Circle (first three rows)	2.00	"	2.06
Family Circle (other rows)	1.54	"	1.65

This marked the first movement towards lower prices since 1884, when the opera in German era began ; but the reduction only returned the rates to the level of the seasons from 1920–1921 to 1924–1925. Moreover it is interesting to observe that the reduction to the orchestra patrons was approximately fifteen per cent ; the reduction to the dress circle patrons, about ten per cent ; to the balcony patrons no more than one per cent ; to the first row seat-holders in the family circle, three per cent ; and to the others, about seven per cent. Thus the principal concessions were made to the ticket purchasers in the higher brackets, with the lower rates — in the balcony and family circle — remaining virtually unchanged. However, on 14 September, it was announced that as an 'educational and artistic institution' whose operations were non-profit making, the Metropolitan Opera Association had been granted exemption from Federal amusement taxes. This brought the prices, by subscription, to : orchestra, $6.50 ; last row of the orchestra circle and the dress circle, $3.75 ; first three rows of the balcony, $2.69 ; other balcony seats, $2.50 ; first three rows of the family circle, $1.88 ; other rows of the family circle, $1.50. The basic price for seats purchased at the box office for single performances was $7.00 in the orchestra. Even prior to this reduction, on 11 May, Earl Lewis, treasurer in charge of ticket sales, was reported as saying that all but five per cent of the previous season's subscribers had signified an intention of renewing their claims and that seventy-five per cent of the house was sold for the next season, by subscription.[146]

[146] At the beginning of the regime of Giulio Gatti-Casazza, approximately twenty-five per cent of the seats in the Metropolitan were sold in advance of the season,

The Diamond Horseshoe

It was inevitable that the horseshoes should be called 'golden' when the first *Faust* in 1883 found the representatives of half a billion dollars in the boxes of the Metropolitan. Whether the more characteristic phrase of a later day came into popularity as a tribute to Caroline (Aunt 'Linie) Astor [147] and her famous diamond stomacher or was inspired by the fashion in jewelry during the nineties is not now apparent. However, the compression of the *crème de la crème* of New York's society into one tier of boxes — in the place of the earlier two — made it imperative that some designation indicative of the greater exclusiveness of the parterre row be found. From gold to diamonds was no more than a natural progression in the minds of the journalists of the day.

As it relates to the present day, the social history of the Metropolitan's horseshoe dates not from the opening of the auditorium, but from the second opening in 1893, following the fire of the preceding year and the organization of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company. Reducing the number of stockholders from seventy to thirty-five did considerably more than make the one persisting, permanent horseshoe twice as exclusive. There had been, in the first organization of the Metropolitan Opera-house Company, Ltd., not only a disposition but a necessity to welcome very nearly any person nominally a

by subscription. During the next score of years the total mounted steadily until — between 1926–1927 and 1929–1930 — nearly ninety per cent of the season's sale was by subscription. This is even more startling than it superficially appears, for at least ten per cent of the Metropolitan's seats are undesirable. Thus, every *desirable* seat for the subscription performances during this period was sold before the season began.

The progress towards the high level was constant, showing no widely various curves of gain or recession. Losses in the subscription total during the years of the war were made good by increased sales at the box office. The most surprising reaction, for the executives of the Metropolitan, was the increase in subscriptions following the death of Caruso. (See p. 289.)

[147] Arbiter of the social life of New York from her marriage in 1853 to William Astor. She had been Caroline Schermerhorn. The acceptance of the Astors, in a social sense, dated from the marriage of William Backhouse Astor (son of J. J. Astor) to Margaret Armstrong, daughter of an old New York family.

member of that vague group called 'society,' who also possessed the requisite capital. It was a movement founded on rebellion ; and pioneers, even in a social activity, cannot afford to be too discriminating.

But the line of distinction was very much sharper in the second constitution of the boxes, particularly since it represented, also, an amalgamation of the Academy of Music's box-holders with those who persisted from the old Metropolitan group. The second gala *Faust*, on 26 November 1893, found the boxes allocated thus (the listing of the present box-holders is in the column at the right) :

	1893–1894	1935–1936
1.	Ogden Goelet	Robert Goelet, the Duchess Dowager of Roxburghe
2.	A. D. Juilliard	F. A. Juilliard ; two lessees
3.	R. T. Wilson	Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Mrs. Orme Wilson
4.	Cornelius Vanderbilt	Robert S. Brewster ; two lessees
5.	George P. Wetmore	George P. Wetmore,* Mrs. Harold Brown
6.	W. K. Vanderbilt	Frazier Jelke
7.	J. J. Astor	Vincent Astor
8.	Cornelius Bliss ; McC. D. Borden	C. N. Bliss, Bertram Borden, General H. S. Borden ; one lessee
9.	C. T. Barney	E. H. Harriman *
10.	George F. Baker ; H. C. Fahnestock	George F. Baker, Dr. E. Fahnestock, Mrs. John Hubbard
11.	Perry Belmont	Arthur Curtiss James, Archer Huntington ; two lessees
12.	Henry Clews	James B. Clews,* Henry Clews ; * one lessee
13.	Edward Cooper ; H. T. Sloane	George H. Warren, Myron C. Taylor
14.	Mrs. George H. Warren	Otto H. Kahn *
15.	Adrian Iselin	Miss Iselin, Mrs. Watts Sherman
16.	Levi P. Morton ; George Bliss	Mrs. Walter P. Bliss, W. W. Reese ; one lessee

* indicates that the box is held by the estate of the person marked.

	1893–1894	1935–1936
17.	W. D. Sloane ; H. McK. Twombley	H. Edward Manville
18.	Calvin S. Brice	Miss Helen O. Brice, Mrs. Charles B. Alexander ; * four lessees
19.	Mrs. H. I. Barbey	Elbert H. Gary ; * one lessee
20.	D. O. Mills	Ogden Mills,* Elisabeth Mills Reid *
21.	J. Hood Wright	Charles Steele, Mrs. Herbert L. Satterlee, Mrs. Morgan Hamilton
22.	W. Seward Webb	Mrs. W. Seward Webb ; one lessee
23.	E. T. Gerry	Robert L. Gerry, P. G. Gerry, Miss A. L. Gerry, Mabel Drury ; * one lessee
24.	Robert Goelet	Robert Walton Goelet ; one lessee
25.	G. G. Haven	John E. Parsons,* G. G. Haven,* Forsyth Wickes ; two lessees
26.	S. O. Babcock	Mrs. E. S. Proctor ; one lessee
27.	G. S. Bowdoin ; Charles Lanier	R. Fulton Cutting,* Mrs. John T. Pratt
28.	W. Bayard Cutting	Mrs. W. Bayard Cutting
29.	A. T. Van Nest	R. V. N. Gambrill, Mrs. Arthur Little, Mrs. Johnston L. Redmond
30.	W. C. Whitney	Mrs. H. P. Whitney, Mrs. Francis P. Garvan
31.	Cornelius Vanderbilt	Alice G. Vanderbilt ; * one lessee
32.	Luther Kountze	De Lancey Kountze, Grafton Minot, Mrs. Henry Walters ; three lessees
33.	Thomas Hitchcock	Mrs. G. Beekman Hoppin ; two lessees
34.	Heber R. Bishop	James B. Haggin *
35.	J. P. Morgan	J. P. Morgan [148]

[148] It is well to emphasize again the distinction between the parterre and the grand tier boxes of the Metropolitan. The parterre box represents a hereditary interest in the building and site through an original investment in the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, or else an interest acquired by purchase from an original investor. The grand tier boxes are leased by the season, or part of the

Of the first opening in 1893, the 'official' gazetteer of society, *Town Topics*, reported in its issue of 7 December : 'Crowned heads were not out in such force as I expected on the first night of the opera. Whichever way I looked there were, of course, many jewels, but they were of lesser magnitude than those prominent in past years.' The emphasis, thus, was on *who* sat in the boxes rather than on what they wore ; and the greater significance that had arisen in regard to the parterre may well have influenced the occupants to content themselves merely with being present, and not so much with gems and brilliants. However, continued the same observer : 'Mrs. Ogden Mills' head ornament I shall not attempt to describe. Her head had the appearance of being set with radiating gold spikes, each one topped with a gem. The effect was certainly novel.' As contrasted with the jewels worn during the previous period by Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt or the diamond be-studded Mrs. Bradley Martin, the display in the parterre was comparatively modest. As for the more venerable of the hostesses in the various boxes, it was said : 'Only on the night of the balls do the dowagers come to the opera in full regalia.'

During the period of Grau and Conried, the interest of society in opera as the setting for its most serious activities — the Horse Show competed with it, but only briefly each fall — moved to its highest level. The number of those 'in society' was still limited ; and it is likely that a considerable number of the Diamond Horseshoe's regular occupants were known to each other, and accepted by them in common. The current Mrs. Astor, true to the traditions of her illustrious forebear, appeared promptly in her box at nine o'clock, regardless of what opera was being played ; the young men-about-town, on

season merely upon payment of the fee set by the operating company. For the season of 1935–1936 this fee was $840.00 for fourteen performances, for a box seating six persons. For the privilege of attending the same number of performances as the holder of a parterre box is entitled to, the cost would thus be $4200. Persons owning parterre boxes have the use of them for every performance during the season, and are subject to an assessment by the ownership company, for the payment of taxes, maintenance, etc. The amount is approximately $4,000 per year.

important evenings, donned the approved uniform of polite society, paid their dollar at the window for a general admission ticket, and spent the evening visiting from box to box, absorbing the gossip of the moment, and enjoying the prestige of 'being seen' in this *loge* or that. Visiting and eligible debutantes from other cities, when invited to the opera by interested sponsors in the higher flights of American society, were painstakingly coached in the details of the garments to be worn, the cut and materials that were favoured for a particular occasion, the colour that would coincide best with the gowns to be worn by others in the party, and even the jewels that would be most generally approved.

The advent of the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company in 1903 and the renovation of the auditorium marked the beginning of another period in the history of the Diamond Horseshoe. Then, finally, the gold and deep maroon that have come down as the traditional background for the vari-coloured gowns of the women in the audience were installed as the official decorative scheme. So pleased was the board of directors of the ownership company that on 23 November 1903 a resolution was adopted lauding the work of Carrère and Hastings, who carried out the alterations. In place of the silks which had been specially designed twenty years before for the first opening of the Metropolitan by Cheney, there were hangings and curtains from the house of Sloane. In addition to supplying the draperies and rugs, Sloane's also supplied a box-holder to the parterre, prompting the social commentators to record : 'In what other country could we find the society man and the upholsterer combined in the one person — the man occupying on an opera gala night a box draped with curtains made in his own shop ?' [149] Together with this admiration for America's democratic aristocracy, there may also be discerned a lingering note of regret for the decadence indicated. More comfort could be taken from the presence of the leading financiers of

[149] *Town Topics*, 26 November 1903.

the day — particularly from one intermission during which J. Pierpont Morgan, D. Ogden Mills, William C. Whitney, and H. McK. Twombley were to be seen engaged in social conversation 'chatting cordially and occasionally slapping one another on the back.' The interest of society, on this occasion, was divided between an examination of the new decorations of the Metropolitan, and scrutiny of the fashionables' gowns. It was understandable that the evening's performance should have been all but ignored, for it offered only Sembrich and Scotti in *Rigoletto,* a 'tiresome' opera in which they had been heard times without number before. An unfamiliar Italian tenor attracted little notice from the smart set, though he had the mellifluous name of Enrico Caruso.

The next important opening of the Metropolitan, on 16 November 1908 was historic, both on-stage and off. It marked not merely the first appearance of Arturo Toscanini, and the first presentation by the new director, Giulio Gatti-Casazza, but also the fact that for the first time in the history of the organization, the Astor box had been sublet for a portion of the season. It was held by the Philip Lydigs on odd Mondays, Mrs. Fred F. Thomson on Fridays, and the Seth Barton Frenches on *matinées.* That the famous number seven would not be occupied by a representative, at least, of the Astor family on every Monday night, was a blow to the prestige of the Diamond Horseshoe for which no number of financiers in attendance could atone. At the opening performance, the Lydigs were accompanied by the Clarence Mackays, the party taking rank among the two or three most attractive in the parterre. Of Mrs. Lydig, the indefatigible *Town Topics* reported : [150] 'Mrs. Lydig looked stunning . . . I got an occasional glimpse of a superb renaissance stomacher of diamonds built in three sections.' During this season, the George Goulds divided number twelve with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clews — the nominal owners of the box — a prestige more pronounced than that possessed by the parent Gould in the

[150] 19 November 1908.

earlier organization of the house, even though he had actually been a box owner. During the early weeks of the season, however, a considerable alteration in the list of the box-holders caused the same journal to report on 26 November 1908 : 'The traditional exclusiveness of the proud Diamond Horseshoe has been shattered.' Between the first publication of the list and its revision three weeks later, there had been *forty* changes in the personnel of the persons to whom the box-holders had agreed to lease their privileges.

In the word of Henry Rogers Winthrop, a member of the board of directors of the producing company since 1903, 'The society interest in opera reached its climax before 1910. After that a greater interest in the musical quality of the performances replaced the emphasis on who was seen or by whom one was seen.' There was still, of course, great social significance attached to the possession of a parterre box — particularly by those who did not own one — but New York's society had become too complicated, too unwieldy to be limited by the number of those who could sit in thirty-five boxes, or twice thirty-five. The contemporary rise of other forms of entertainment — the theatre, and later, symphony concerts as a setting for society's display, the decline in number of the original box-holders still in attendance at the opera, the greater number of performances in each season and the impossibility of one person attending all of them, the lack of a dominating social personality such as Mrs. Astor had been — all these things had their part in the diminishing importance of the horseshoe. The practice of sub-leasing became general, when affluent and eligible lessees were to be found, and struck the final blow at the tottering exclusiveness of the parterre. In 1914 one sorrowful observer declared, 'Time was when millionaires would willingly crawl on hands and knees up the red velvet stairs to the diamond horseshoe and feel that the dust accumulated on their knees in the painful Odyssey was a hallmark of

social progress.' [151] But that time belonged to the past. The rise of new fortunes during the war contributed further to the dissolution of the former solidarity, leading a correspondent to *The New York Times*, George Hilliard Benjamin, to write on 27 January 1926 : 'Within the last ten years subrenting of the boxes has prevailed, a thing which would not for a moment have been considered in the old days. Today the ownership of an opera box has no social significance whatever. The majority of the occupants of the opera boxes are socially unknown, not because they are not worthy people but because organized society in New York has ceased to exist.'

Though this overstates somewhat the actual situation, it summarizes well the changed importance of the parterre. There had been sub-renting of boxes since the 90's, though the unity of the group was then much more pronounced.

By 1923 the recorders of society activities were referring with increasing frequency to the 'Thursday night' hostess in this or that box, the 'Friday night' hostess in another box, the 'Saturday *matinée*' party in a third box, rather than to the presence of the *grandes dames* of the exclusive families, as had been traditional in the earliest days. Formerly it had been Mrs. Vanderbilt or Mrs. Astor, Mrs. Whitney or Mrs. Warren in her own box who was the object of her intimates' regard ; now it was a commonplace to read such a note as this : 'Mrs. William A. M. Burden was the hostess in the White-Twombley box and she did not escape the scrutiny of the opera glass battalion, for she wore the longest and most magnificent chain of diamonds seen in the parterre for several years.' [152]

Despite this obvious retrogression, the box-holders of the Metropolitan still clung jealously to their nominal, if not factual, prestige as arbiters of New York society. The initial proposal of Kahn that his 'new' Metropolitan Opera House be con-

[151] *Town Topics*, 19 November 1914.
[152] *Town Topics*, 3 December 1923.

stituted on a different basis (see p. 367) was obviously distasteful to them ; and in its nearly achieved form, the plan had reverted to an arrangement of owned and leased boxes. But the problem of deciding upon those eligible for inclusion as lessees remained perplexing, nor was it solved by allotting an equal voice to representatives from both the operating and ownership groups. It was probably this consideration that ultimately resulted in the rejection of Kahn's proposal ; for it does not seem likely that the economic barrier would have been insurmountable, had there been agreement on all other points.

Nevertheless, the sale of an opera box still remains an exciting transaction in the social life of New York. During the forty-two years of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company's existence, there have been fourteen such sales. Superficially a small number, it is rather more impressive when it is considered that it represents an alteration of forty per cent in the original ownership personnel. The sale of these boxes has been only reluctantly made public by the controlling company. Some sales have been reported immediately ; others only become apparent in the appearance of the seasonal list of box-holders and lessees.

The earliest recorded purchases occurred in 1913, or twenty years after the reorganization of the enterprise and the establishment of the Opera and Real Estate Company. During this year Box 26 was purchased by William Ross Proctor from the S. O. Babcock estate, and Box 33 was purchased by Henry E. Hoyt from the estate of Thomas Hitchcock. The cost to each was quoted as $120,000, representing the purchase of three hundred shares in the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, which carries with it a licence for the use of the box. In 1921, in an affidavit filed in connexion with the appraisal of the Henry Clews estate, Frank Dodd, secretary of the Opera and Real Estate Company, specified the value of the ten thousand five hundred shares in the company to be $3,977,000 or $378.76 each. Thus the precise value of a box (300 shares)

would be $113,628. That amounts in excess of this — as much as $200,000 has been reported — have been quoted in connexion with the sale of opera boxes indicates the premium which the sellers have been able to place upon their property.

Between 1913 and 1924 there were five further sales. Box 34, originally the property of Heber R. Bishop, passed to James B. Haggin and is now held by his estate ; Box 11, held in 1893 by Perry Belmont, was purchased by Archer M. Huntington and Arthur Curtiss James, each of whom now owns a half-interest in the box ; Box 19 was sold by the estate of Henry I. Barbey to Henry C. Frick, whose estate in turn sold it to Judge Elbert H. Gary in the fall of 1924. The price quoted for the Gary purchase was $200,000 but it is likely that the amount was somewhat exaggerated for the convenience of a round sum. Shortly before this purchase, Otto H. Kahn, who had been for a score of years a leading figure in the affairs of the Metropolitan Opera Company and of its predecessor, the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company, purchased Box 14, originally held by Mrs. George Henry Warren ; and, in 1923, James B. Clews purchased from the estate of his father a half-interest in Box 12.

During the boom period between 1924 and 1927, the sale of boxes quickened, with transactions occurring almost yearly. In 1925 Johnston L. Redmond purchased a one-fourth interest in Box 29, formerly held by Giraud Foster, of Aiken, South Carolina.[153] In the same year Box Number 11, held by the estate of August Belmont, was purchased by Paul H. Helm, president of the General Baking Company. He retained this privilege for but a year, however, relinquishing it in 1926 to Robert S. Brewster, who holds it today. Also in 1926 was recorded the sale of a Vanderbilt box (Number 6, the property of Harold S. Vanderbilt) to Frazier Jelke ; and in 1927 another Vanderbilt box changed hands when Mrs. H. McK. Twombly and Mrs. Henry White — both daughters of W. H.

[153] Mr. Redmond had married Katherine Sergeant Haven, a niece of George G. Haven, for many years president of the Opera and Real Estate Company.

Vanderbilt — sold 17 to H. E. Manville, president of the Johns-Manville Corporation. Not long before, J. Pierpont Morgan had invested a sum in excess of seven million dollars in the Johns-Manville Corporation ; and the subsequent purchase of an opera box by Manville was regarded as a result of the sponsorship of Morgan. Beyond the ownership of his own box — 35, at the center of the horseshoe — Morgan's influence is also felt in the disposition of Number 21. In this regard, the secretary of the Opera and Real Estate Company said, several years ago : [154] 'As to the sale by the estate of H. P. Davison of 150 shares carrying a licence for one-half of box 21 — since the erection of the house 21 has been owned by the late J. P. Morgan, members of his family, or an associate in his firm, and the sale was to a member entitled to the other half of the box.' In the same interview the secretary declared : 'It is more difficult to find a purchaser acceptable to the Board of Directors for boxes in the central portion of the sides of the opera house than for those near the stage or in the rear. . . For some time past I have been endeavouring without success to sell the stock entitling the holder to one-fourth the use of Box 13.' Box 13, originally held by Edward Cooper and H. T. Sloane, is now held by George Henry Warren and Myron C. Taylor. Other divergences from the original list not included in the preceding discussion are : the ownership of Box 9, originally belonging to C. T. Barney, now held by the estate of Edward H. Harriman, and of number 27, which passed from George S. Bowdoin and Charles Lanier to R. Fulton Cutting (it is now held by his estate) and Mrs. John L. Pratt.

Though the modified significance of the Diamond Horseshoe is undoubtedly reflected in the lives of the box-holders, it is of considerably greater significance in relationship to the general subject of opera in New York. It is altogether reasonable to suppose that there was a larger general interest in opera, on the part of 'society,' thirty years ago, when the number of perform-

[154] *New York Times*, 29 June 1927.

ances was fewer and the nominal owner of a box was present at a majority of the performances given. In the season of 1935–1936, only nine boxes were not shared or sub-let (among them were four owned by estates of the deceased stock-holders) ; and there have been seasons in the recent past when the number of those who did not sub-let was as low as three. In 1916, for example, only five boxes were not sub-let ; in addition to Numbers 12 and 30, which were shared by two stockholders. In this year there were 154 persons listed in the programmes as owners or lessees of parterre boxes. After the war, in 1920–1921, only three were not sub-let, but the total of persons entitled to parterre privileges was only 131. The lessening of interest in the performances indicates, as well, a lessening of interest in the general subject of opera, a greater inclination to transfer the obligations of perpetuating the opera to other hands — more specifically, to those of the public and the Juilliard Foundation.

But the peculiarities of the Metropolitan Opera's construction — architectural as well as financial — make it imperative that those who occupy the boxes should care for the support of the opera. It was built as a rich man's opera house ; and the alterations in its layout have been in no degree drastic enough to change that fact. As long, therefore, as the seats for the general public only *begin* two tiers above the orchestra floor, and are seriously limited in number — particularly the desirable places — the obligation for maintaining opera truthfully belongs to those beneath. An operatic organization supported by the community is not an unreasonable prospect in a city of New York's size, especially with the help of the radio public. But community support for what is now largely the relic of a real estate enterprise — a building privately owned, with two hundred and ten of the best seats automatically distributed to a definite group of persons — cannot be reasonably expected. The investment during the last two years of six hundred thousand dollars, by the Real Estate Company, in improving the property has brought certain immediate comforts and conveni-

ences. It has also increased the utility of the building for other theatrical purposes, though the expenditure of a similar amount for the production of opera in that period could have saved the operating company the embarrassment of making public pleas for funds. But it does nothing to solve the essential problems of the situation, which yearly grow more complex and unwieldy.

Though the Diamond Horseshoe glitters less, and its significance diminishes yearly, it continues to occupy the most paradoxical of positions — a bulwark for the immediate future of opera, but an insurmountable barrier to the fostering of the Metropolitan as a democratic institution.

VII

METROPOLITAN OPERA ASSOCIATION

1932—

Public Participation in Guaranty Funds

1932–1933

ALTHOUGH Paul Cravath, on 15 December 1931, had declared that 'bankruptcy . . . was quite out of consideration,' on the following 21 November a new corporate entity commenced the production of opera at the Metropolitan Opera House. Its board of directors was indistinguishable from that of the obsolete group ; it costumes, singers, scenery, conductors, orchestra, and technical staffs were also unchanged in essentials. There had been, of course, no action in a court of bankruptcy ; but the desired ends had been achieved by the Metropolitan Opera Company in a completely proper and dignified way. There had been, in the custom of the early 30's, a 'reorganization.' The singers who were affected accepted the new contracts that were offered to them, conscious that if they had insisted on their old contracts, their further career with the company would have been brief. The important example was Gigli who was forced, by the action of his colleagues, to abandon his contract in disgrace. Another singer, less important, who insisted on his original agreement, was paid as he desired but not re-engaged when his contract expired. Unlike the Metropolitan Opera Company, which had directors, stock, and a considerable investment in scenery, costumes, etc., the Metropolitan Opera Association, Inc., has no stock, no capital investment, and no property.

The public, as is the wont of the public, accepted this transition — if it were conscious of it at all — placidly ; but the attitude implied in the reorganization was characterized ably in these words to the press, on 6 October 1932, by a traveller returning from abroad : 'You tell me that both the Philadelphia and the Chicago Opera have had the support of their few financial backers withdrawn. This is not like your real Americans, but it is decidedly like those who use opera for their own social ends. Gentlemen, upon my word, I had no intention of discussing the finances of the Metropolitan. But you have brought it up, so perhaps it is just as well. I say it was the artists who saved this distinctly great American institution from going to the wall. *The bankers and the backers — why, they quit !*' [Italics mine. — Ed.] The Speaker was Artur Bodanzky.

Concerning the future of the institution, the conductor continued : 'Yes, there is a plan afoot here. It is to take the Metropolitan out of the hands of the wealthy few and put it in the hands of the appreciative public. Perhaps I have said too much — for it is but a plan — and you must ask Mr. Ziegler and Mr. Gatti-Casazza about it. I shall confer with them about it on the occasion of our next meeting.' What the nature of this plan might have been has never reached the public ; for it can scarcely be the conductor had reference to the public financing that was proposed during that season. Though effective, this device can scarcely be dignified as a 'plan.'

The season which began on 21 November with *Simon Boccanegra* was the shortest projected in the Metropolitan since that of 1903–1904, when Conried had limited his first experiment with operatic production to fifteen weeks. His next two had been seventeen each ; and the two after, twenty. Twenty weeks had remained the model for Gatti until 1911–1912, when the period was extended by two weeks. Another week was added in 1912–1913, and established as the standard season until 1923–1924, when the twenty-fourth week was included. There was no further change until the recession to sixteen weeks

in 1932–1933. The first of this season's one hundred and thirteen performances was distinguished by the appearance of Lawrence Tibbett as Simon Boccanegra ; for it marked the first time since the last opening with Caruso, in 1920, that a male singer had been, indisputably, the center of the evening. His principal associates were Müller, Martinelli, and Pinza, with Serafin conducting. The auditorium was comfortably filled — the former price of eleven dollars for a single orchestra ticket for the opening night was this year reduced to ten — but there was no uncommon overflow. Arturo Toscanini and the Fritz Kreislers were noted to be in attendance for the beginning of Gatti's twenty-fifth season ; and both Otto Kahn and Clarence Mackay were among those absent. On the second night, the 23rd, the first of the prominent additions to the company made his appearance, Tito Schipa being heard as Nemorino in a performance of *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Fleischer, de Luca, and Pinza. Schipa had been made available to replace Gigli through the discontinuance of the Chicago Opera Company, of which he had been a member for a dozen years. His art and intelligence — somewhat less his now well-worn voice — were valuable additions to the organization.

Debuts continued to be the features of the Metropolitan season during the next week, with the quantity of the unfamiliar artists rather more impressive than their abilities, either inherently or in contrast with the singers they replaced. Outstanding were the first appearances of Ludwig Hofmann, German bass-baritone, and Richard Bonelli, American baritone. Hofmann was first heard as Hagen in a performance of *Götterdämmerung* on the 24th, in which Gustaaf de Loor also made his debut as Siegfried, with Kappel, Branzell, Schorr, Schützendorf, and Manski (Gutrune) in the cast directed by Bodanzky. De Loor's abilities were barely more than routine, but Hofmann was a singing actor of high accomplishments.

Among his roles in this season were Landgraf Hermann in *Tannhäuser* on 12 December, with Rethberg, Laubenthal, Schorr, and Hal-

stead (Venus) ; Marke in *Tristan* two days later with Kappel, de Loor (Tristan *), Schorr, and Branzell ; Wotan in *Die Walküre* on the 23rd, with Stückgold, Doe, Kappel (Brünnhilde), de Loor, and Tappolet ; Heinrich in *Lohengrin*, with Rethberg, Branzell, de Loor, and Schorr on 14 January ; and Gurnemanz on 13 February in a performance of *Parsifal* commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Wagner's death. He was also scheduled to appear as Der Wanderer in *Siegfried* on 9 February, but illness prevented.

Bonelli first displayed his lovely voice in *La Traviata* (Germont) on 1 December, with Ponselle and Schipa (Alfredo *). He was later heard as Marcello in *La Bohème* on the 8th, with Bori and Lauri-Volpi ; as Tonio in *Pagliacci*, on the 10th, with Morgana, and Lauri-Volpi ; and on the 16th as Valentin in *Faust* with Mario, Martinelli, Rothier, and Swarthout. Also of American origin were Helen Gleason, whose debut occurred as Bersi in *Andrea Chenier* on 25 November, with Ponselle, Lauri-Volpi, and Borgioli (Gerard *) ; Margaret Halstead, first heard in *Tannhäuser* (Venus) on 26 November, with Müller, Laubenthal, Schorr, and Tappolet ; and Rose Bampton, introduced in *La Gioconda* (Laura) on 28 November, with Ponselle, Lauri-Volpi, Borgioli, and Petrova. Broadcasting was resumed with the second act of *Lakmé* on 24 November, the cast including Pons, Martinelli, Rothier, and Swarthout. Annotations during the course of the opera had been discontinued, introductory remarks being substituted.

Beyond the addition of more new singers than in any recent season of the Metropolitan, the year received its most pronounced artistic impulse from the production of *Elektra* # on 3 December, given for the first time in the Metropolitan. The opera had not been heard in New York since its last performance at the Manhattan Opera House, on 24 March 1910. There was to be noted little of the outcry against either the text or the score that had marked the former appearance of *Elektra* in New York ; it was apparent that both the ears and eyes of the musical public had acquired new capacities in the years since its first appearance. Kappel was heard as Elektra, with Branzell

(Klytemnestra), Ljungberg (Chrysothemis), Laubenthal (Aegisthus), Schorr (Orestes), and Tappolet (The Fosterfather). The production had been superbly well prepared by Bodanzky, who led a remarkably vital performance at the *première*, though Ljungberg was hardly equal to the higher reaches of her role. There was also an impressive setting by Urban. At the performance of 19 December, Petrova replaced Branzell, who returned as Klytemnestra on 12 January. How greatly time had altered the attitude of the conservative public toward such works was demonstrated by its choice for a Vassar College Benefit on 3 February. In this performance Ljungberg appeared for the first time as Elektra, with Olszewska (Klytemnestra *), and Manski (Chrysothemis *). The other roles were not changed. The total of seven performances in this season of *Elektra* exceeded even the number of *Aïda*, being equalled only by those of Louis Gruenberg's *Emperor Jones*.

The production of the latter, on 7 January, had been attended by much advance publicity as the world *première* [1] of the first play by Eugene O'Neill to be accorded musical treatment. Though Tibbett offered an amazingly apt performance of Jones, the opera lacked the tremendous impact of the play, especially as Gruenberg had minimized the use of the drumbeat which is so vital a factor in the play's success in the theatre. There was little character to the music, nor was the *Sprechstimme* utilized with a sufficient appreciation of word-emphasis to be really meaningful. Able scoring and shrewd use of the chorus were the primary contributions of the composer to the operatic *Emperor Jones*.[2] With Tibbett were Windheim (Smithers) and Besuner (An Old Native Woman). Hemsley Winfield appeared as the Negro Witch Doctor. Ambi-

[1] A performance in Berlin that would have anticipated the New York production was cancelled, for reasons that were never clearly understood. The imminent rise to power of the National Socialist party and its rejection of all foreign musical activity was said to be Kleiber's reason for tabling the work.

[2] A French translation of the text was prepared by the publishers of *Emperor Jones* when it was offered for the consideration of the Metropolitan's general director.

tious plans for a thorough-going staging of the drama by Jo Mielziner were discouraged by the management, and the designer's work, as it was finally presented to the public, possessed little distinction. The scenes during Jones's hallucinations were particularly inept, reflecting scarcely anything of Mielziner's ideas. Serafin conducted. The first three performances of *Emperor Jones* were linked with *Pagliacci,* following which it was presented on 30 January with *Hänsel und Gretel,* a coupling almost as grotesque as that of *Cavalleria Rusticana* with *Orfeo* in the early years of Grau. There were no changes in the cast during this season.

Also new to the repertory was Rossini's one-act comedy *Il Signor Bruschino* when it was produced on 9 December, with a setting credited jointly to Urban and Novak. This marked the last occurrence of Urban's name as a designer of new productions for the Metropolitan, for on the following 10 July he died. In this first appearance of *Bruschino* in America, Fleischer was heard as Sofia, with Pinza (Gaudenzio), de Luca (the senior Bruschino), Windheim (the younger Bruschino), Tokatyan (Florville), D'Angelo (Commissary of Police), Gandolfi (Filiberto), and Vettori (Marianna). Of the music, the overture was familiar through its performance at a Philharmonic concert under Toscanini in 1930. There were four performances in this season, and none since, despite the entertaining qualities of the music, the excellence of the cast, and Serafin's tasteful conducting. From the repertory of the past were revived *L'Amore dei Tre Re,* last heard on 19 January 1929; and *Die Verkaufte Braut,* not given since the season of 1927–1928. In the Montemezzi opera, Serafin as conductor, Bori (Fiora), Johnson (Avito), Bada, and Paltrinieri had been heard before; to them were added Pasero (Archibaldo), and Bonelli (Manfredo), when the work was given on 17 February. The orchestral performance of this occasion was not improved by the afternoon's labours of the musicians — merely an uncut performance of *Götterdämmerung.* In *Die Verkaufte Braut,* on 4 February, Laubenthal reappeared as Hans, Rethberg as Marie, with Hofmann (Kezal *), Windheim (Wenzel *), Manski (Kathinka), Schützendorf (Kruschina), Tappolet (Micha), Petrova (Agnes), Gleason (Esmeralda), Wolfe (Muff), and Gandolfi (Springer). Bodanzky conducted, and, contrary to custom, played the overture at the beginning of the opera. Each of these operas had one repetition, but no performances in any later season.

The career of Antonio Scotti came to a close with a special performance of *L'Oracolo* on 20 January. For the last time, Scotti rolled his orange ever so craftily, and died at the vengeful hands of Win-Shee. Mario, Tokatyan, and Pasero were the other principal singers of this performance. A performance of *La Bohème,* with Rethberg, Martinelli, Bonelli, and Morgana had preceded. There was an enormous audience present, and much demonstration of affection for the retiring artist. Scotti thus terminated a Metropolitan record uninterrupted since 27 December 1899, embracing a span of thirty-three seasons, and extending through three different directorships.

This year's Wagner cycle was prefaced by the introduction on 16 January of two artists whose advent was both welcome and long-delayed. Frida Leider and Maria Olszewska had been European celebrities for a dozen years before they sang in New York ; and for several seasons had been annual visitors to Chicago, where both had been heard for the first time during the season of 1928–1929. Chicago's loss was distinctly a gain to New York. The performance of *Tristan* which introduced them — as Isolde and Brangaene — was one of the most distinguished that it had been the privilege of the Metropolitan to present since the beginning of the war. It introduced a period during which the drama made a considerable progress, vocally at least, towards its former high estate at the Metropolitan. Excellent as Kappel's qualities are, she has never possessed the dramatic intensity of Leider, while Branzell's admirable Brangaene paled before the regal splendours of Olszewska's voice, despite the occasionally annoying idiosyncrasies of the latter. In the cast were Melchior, Schorr, and Hofmann.

The week thus introduced was one notable beyond any other in the institution's recent history. On the evening of the 20th there was a performance of *Siegfried* with Melchior, Schorr, Windheim (Mime *), Leider (Brünnhilde *), Olszewska

(Erda *), Fleischer (Voice of the Forest Bird), Schützendorf, and Tappolet (Fafner); on the following evening *Simon Boccanegra* was presented, succeeded by *Pelléas* on the 22nd, with Bori, Johnson, Rothier, Bourskaya (Genevieve), Pinza (Golaud *), and Sabanieeva (Yniold). On the 25th Leider added Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung* to her roles at the Metropolitan, with Olszewska (Waltraute *), Melchior, Schorr, Hofmann (Hagen), and Manski (Gutrune). Not only were these performances distinguished by the singing of Leider and Olszewska — they marked the beginning of a more consistent interest, on the part of Bodanzky, for nuances and niceties of interpretation than he had demonstrated for a decade before.

In place of an introductory *matinée* or two — as in the past — this season's cycle began on 27 January, with *Das Rheingold*, given, as was the balance of the Tetralogy, without cuts. In it appeared Laubenthal (Loge), Schorr (Wotan), Doe (Fricka), Olszewska (Erda), Manski (Freia), Schützendorf (Alberich), and Windheim (Mime). Doe also sang the lines of Flosshilde, the other Rhine Maidens being Fleischer and Bampton. In the performance of *Die Walküre* on 2 February, Leider, as Brünnhilde,* suffered a loss of voice during her plea to Wotan in the third act, ('War es so schmählich') ; but a catastrophe was averted by the remarkable musicianship of Manski. Standing in the wings — she was one of the *Walküren* of this performance — she sang the lines of Brünnhilde until Leider recovered, a few moments later. Although the incident was to the great credit of Manski, the management denied officially (at least, it minimized the fact) that it had occurred. The substitution was perceptible, however, to every musician in the audience. Leider's associates were Schorr, Melchior, Tappolet (Hunding), Stückgold, and Olszewska (Fricka *). She was also scheduled for both the *Siegfried* and the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhildes, but illness prevented her appearance in the former on 9 February, Manski replacing her. In the cast were Melchior, Schorr, Windheim, Olszewska, Fleischer, and Schützendorf. The singers in the cycle performance of *Götterdämmerung* on 16th February were the same as those for the performance of 25 January. The cycle was concluded by *Tannhäuser* on 22 February, with Rethberg, Olszewska (Venus *), Melchior, Schorr, and Tappolet (Landgraf Hermann) and *Tristan* on 3 March with Leider, Melchior, Olszewska, Schorr, and Hoffmann. On 11 March, the last Saturday *matinée* of the season, the same cast participated in the one hundredth performance of *Tristan* in the twenty-five years of Gatti's directorship. This was the total of only twenty-two years of *Tristan*, really, for the

work had been out of the repertory from 1917 to 1920. The final *Parsifal* on 9 April provided Leider with an opportunity for her first Kundry at the Metropolitan, a role in which she was less admirable than in the others of her repertory.

Schipa's presence embellished not only the conventional Italian and French repertory but also the revival of *Don Giovanni,* in which he appeared for the first time in the Metropolitan, on 17 December, as Ottavio. His musical superiority to the previous Ottavio — Gigli — was apparent in both the concerted and the solo scenes ; and he remains the best heard, in this revival, to the present time. Ponselle, Müller, Fleischer, Pinza, Rothier, and Serafin, as conductor, retained the roles they had before, with Pasero (Leporello) and Malatesta (Masetto) new. The qualities of the last two were not appreciably better than those of their predecessors. On the following day the death of Clarence Whitehill — no longer a member of the company — ended his career under the shadow of unpleasantness that had marked his passing from the Metropolitan. On 21 December the Ponselle sisters appeared together for the first time in the Metropolitan, with Rosa as La Gioconda, and Carmela as Laura, in *La Gioconda* with Lauri-Volpi, Pasero, Petrova (La Cieca), and Borgioli (Barnaba).

Besides her appearances in the Wagner dramas previously recorded, Olszewska offered her magnificently dramatic Amneris on 18 February for the first time. Jacobo was the nondescript Aïda, with Martinelli, Borgioli, and Pinza. As in her Ortrud — first seen at the Metropolitan on 6 February in a performance of *Lohengrin* with Melchior, Ljungberg, Schorr, and Tappolet — Olszewska displayed dramatic gifts beyond those of any female singer to join the company since the debut of Jeritza, with whom her European career was curiously linked. In the latter part of the season Gatti added to the company Eide Norena — once of the Chicago Opera Company — as Mimi in a performance of *La Bohème* on 9 February, with Martinelli, Pasero, and Morgana ; and Richard Crooks, American tenor, on the 25th, in *Manon,* with Bori, and de Luca. Both have remained with the company since. During this season Norena also appeared in a performance of *Roméo* on the 22nd, in which were Johnson, de Luca, Swarthout, and Pinza (Frère Laurent *). An earlier *Roméo,* on 9 January, with Bori, Johnson, Rothier,

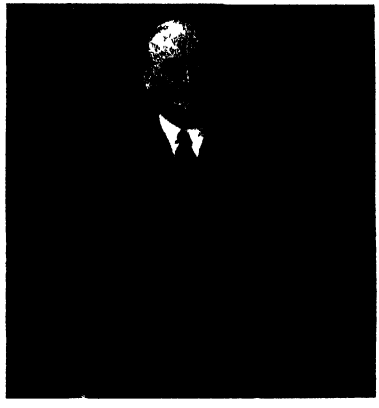
Swarthout, and de Luca, was conducted by Pelletier, Hasselmans being ill; and Riedel directed *Die Walküre* on 7 January — with Müller, Branzell, Ljungberg (Brünnhilde), de Loor, Schorr, and Tappolet — in place of Bodanzky.

There had been various rumours of financial difficulties confronting the management during the first portion of the season, but they drew no reply until 2 February. According to one report, the Metropolitan would disband, and then reorganize in the real estate development known as Rockefeller Center, more popularly, Radio City. There was a denial of any such intention, by Chairman Cravath, in addition to which it was stated that plans for the season of 1933–1934 were being formulated. Regarding the present season's operations, it was the general impression — from the business done to that time — that a deficit of nearly $400,000 was likely.

The 'plans' were finally offered to the public on 10 February, in the form of a letter dated 31 January, from Chairman Cravath of the Metropolitan Opera Association, to Fulton Cutting, president of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company. In it the sentiments of the Metropolitan Opera Association's executives were thus stated:

> The board of directors at a meeting yesterday came to the conclusion that conditions do not warrant us in asking for a renewal of the existing lease beyond the present season. The production of opera at the Metropolitan Opera House, under the sound direction of our general manager, Mr. Giulio Gatti-Casazza, was conducted without loss for more than 20 years, although without profit to the stockholders, who have never received a dollar in dividends. At the beginning of the season of 1930–1931, the company had on hand cash resources of about $1,100,000. The losses for the seasons 1930–1931, and 1931–1932 were such that it was obvious that opera could not be given for the season of 1932–1933 without substantial sacrifices on the part of all concerned. Accordingly, a guaranty fund of $150,000 was subscribed by various directors of your company and ours and by other patrons of the opera. . .[3] Our

[3] Though the Metropolitan's sponsors had not received dividends during the life of the company, they had not been faced with such problems as those besetting the Chicago Opera Company in its various forms. During the period since the war, the backers of that organization had *paid out*, not $150,000, but nearly two million dollars in the support of opera! On 27 January 1928, *before the depression*,



MAURICE GRAU HEINRICH CONRIED

GIULIO GATTI-CASAZZA

ANDREAS DIPPEL HERBERT WITHERSPOON

cash resources, including the guaranty fund of $150,000 will be used up by the close of the current season. . . We do not feel justified in undertaking another season of opera under the terms of the old lease without the assurance of an additional guaranty fund of $300,000. So large an amount may not be required, but another season with all its uncertainties could not be undertaken unless such a fund were available for use in case of need.

Frankly as we will by 31 May have completed the period of our lease and provided New York with opera for twenty-five years, with our entire cash resources gone, we ourselves do not feel called upon to undertake the task of raising the necessary guaranty fund for next season. I may add that when I accepted the presidency of the Metropolitan Opera Company I only undertook to carry opera through the present season and until the end of the lease. That having been accomplished I feel that my personal responsibility will have been discharged.

It was not further elucidated that the $1,100,000 referred to was not the contribution of the directors, but a reserve accumulated from the *operations* of the company ; and indirectly *contributed by the public* — whether it was through payment for tickets, payment for admission to other events in the opera house — transmitted to the lessor in the form of rentals — or receipts from royalties on phonograph records purchased by the public, which furnished a revenue to the opera organization. Through the major portion of the twenty years referred to, there is no record of a demand upon the stockholders of the company for underwriting of Metropolitan Opera. Thus, in a score of years, the 'patrons of opera,' in New York, had made contributions to the support of opera totalling in all one hundred and fifty thousand dollars !

Cutting's reply was to offer a committee composed of Cornelius Bliss, Robert S. Brewster, Myron C. Taylor and himself, to confer with a group from the Association about plans for

Samuel Insull had announced a deficit of $450,000 on that season's activities of the company, calling upon the underwriters for ninety per cent of the $500,000 guaranty fund. For the season of 1931 in Ravinia Park, Chicago, the Louis Ecksteins had paid $187,884 of the deficit, the other guarantors $91,945. When Mr. Eckstein died in December 1935 it was declared that he had personally paid more than a million dollars toward the support of opera in Chicago during his lifetime. References to other losses incurred in providing Chicago with opera during the post-war era will be found on pages 249 and 300.

1933–1934. The Association appointed Charles Hayden, Frederic Potts Moore, Henry Rogers Winthrop, and Chairman Paul D. Cravath as their representatives. From the opera company itself were selected Lucrezia Bori, Edward Johnson, and Lawrence Tibbett, the three groups forming jointly a 'Committee for Saving Metropolitan Opera.' A statement from the committee described the prospect of the Metropolitan's discontinuance as a 'national misfortune,' promised to reduce expenses 'to the lowest possible point consistent with the high artistic standards which have always prevailed at the Metropolitan,' and asked the public to join in raising a fund of $300,000.

Actual campaigning was commenced on Saturday 25 February, with an address to the radio audience by Edward Johnson, during an *entr'acte* in the performance of *Manon* in which Richard Crooks made his debut. On the following Monday, the 27th, Lily Pons was chosen to address the audience at the Metropolitan Opera House on behalf of the fund, the opera of the evening being *Pelléas*. To the committee, by this time, had been added John Erskine, president of the Juilliard School of Music, Theodore Hetzler, Thomas H. McInerney, and Adrian Van Sinderen. Pleas for money by prominent members of the company continued to be a nightly event at the opera house until the end of the season.

A lurid interlude was provided in the generally pious chorus of 'Save the Metropolitan,' on 1 March, by the appearance of a letter in the press from William Mattheus Sullivan, a New York attorney, suggesting a court test of the Juilliard will, and the stipulations therein regarding the Metropolitan Opera Company. The reference was to the will of Augustus D. Juilliard, drygoods merchant, who died in 1919, and under whose will the Juilliard Foundation had been created in 1920 to administer the funds he left for the advancement of American music. During his life Juilliard's interest in music had been manifested largely through the Metropolitan Opera. He had been, from

1908 until 1919, president of the directorate of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, and, of course, a box-holder. Through the liquidation of his estate, a trust fund of thirteen million dollars was created, under which was established, eventually, the Juilliard School of Music. By a clause in his will — through which the other enterprises had been undertaken — Juilliard stipulated as his intention : — '(to such extent as it may be lawfully entitled to do so without affecting the validity of the trust by this section of my will created) to aid by gift or part of such income at such times and to such extent and in such amounts as the trustees of such foundation may in their discretion deem proper, the Metropolitan Opera Company in the city of New York, for the purpose of assisting such organization in the production of operas, providing that suitable arrangements can be made with such company so that such gifts shall in no way inure to its monetary profit.'

On the following day, 2 March, the press was bursting with the news that the Juilliard Foundation had 'saved' the Metropolitan. The contribution, however, had certain stipulations. More attention was to be paid to American singers, certain American works in preparation were to be brought out,[4] methods of staging were to be modernized, and a supplementary season of *opéra comique* was to be initiated. Moreover, Juilliard students were to have entree to Metropolitan rehearsals. It was emphasized, in the announcement of the gift, that the appearance of Sullivan's letter had not prompted the action of the Juilliard — that the matter had been settled several days before, with the intention of announcing it on 6 March. Furthermore, the Juilliard School, through its president John Erskine, stated that an offer of aid to the Metropolitan had been made in 1924, before the Foundation embraced an extensive building programme which left it with but a small income not required by its fixed obligations. This offer, however, had

[4] A reference, in part, to *Merry Mount*, which had been scheduled for 1932–1933 and deferred.

been rejected by the Metropolitan on the ground that its 'normal program' might be impeded. The Foundation, however, had contributed five thousand dollars to the $150,000 guaranty fund raised by private subscription in the previous spring, even though President Erskine was on record as declaring that the Juilliard was 'not interested' in the kind of opera exemplified by the Metropolitan.

The Juilliard gift to the guaranty fund, however, was sufficient to 'see the opera through' — as it had been phrased by Erskine in his announcement to the press — but fifty thousand dollars. At the next public appeal for the opera fund, Bori pointed out that 'a very unfortunate impression had been created' by the announcement ; and Chairman Cravath summoned newspaper representatives to his office at 15 Broad Street, to say that *with* the Juilliard contribution, scarcely more than a third of the necessary amount had been subscribed. In his own words, 'We are very much dismayed by the impression created in the morning papers today that the Juilliard Foundation has agreed to give all the money needed to present opera next year.' There was ample cause for dismay ; for, it was reported in the press, some donors had requested the return of their pledges and actual cash already contributed, when the Juilliard grant was heralded. The pleas to the opera audiences continued ; the press rang with shouts of approbation for the institution, deferring any suggestions of necessary reforms or alterations in the policies of the house. There were no promises of a larger responsibility to the public on the part of the organization. The impression that the programme and presentations of the Metropolitan Opera Association were beyond improvement was permitted to flourish with no discouragement.

Geraldine Farrar was pressed into service for the 'cause,' appearing on the Metropolitan stage for the first time since her retirement eleven years before, to plead for the fund on 9 March, between the second and third acts of a performance of

Parsifal. Contributions of a thousand dollars each were inspired by her appeal from two listeners — Rosa Ponselle and Marion Telva (formerly a member of the company, and re-engaged for the season of 1935–1936). Many dollar bills were passed to the ushers in response to Farrar's suggestion. At the final *matinée* of the season, on 11 March, Bori made a radio plea that brought a pledge of ten thousand dollars in the name of Pierre du Pont, of Wilmington, and a similar amount from Louis Eckstein of Chicago. The management never received a contribution from du Pont, however, for he declared the message had not been sent with his knowledge. Apparently the promise came from a practical joker, for du Pont denied any interest in opera. A contribution of a thousand dollars was made by Rowland Stebbins — jointly in the name of Laurence Rivers, which he uses in connexion with his theatrical productions — bringing the day's collection to $26,000, and the total of the fund to $177,000. On 17 March a performance of *Manon* with Bori, Crooks, de Luca, and Rothier — the artists contributed their services — brought thirteen thousand dollars ; another of *Aïda*, on 24 March, with Rethberg, Martinelli, Tibbett, Pinza, and Bampton (Amneris *), ten thousand more, raising the total to $238,000.

By 4 April the fund stood at $270,000 ; and plans were announced for a ball on 27 April, in the opera house, with tickets at ten dollars apiece, the proceeds to be added to the fund. By the 16th it was apparent that the fund would be completed, and a season of 14 weeks — shorter by two than the one just completed — was announced, with the prices for seats remaining as they had been in 1932–1933. Subscriptions were also invited, though neither personnel nor plans for the season were ready for publication. More than three thousand persons attended the ball — the first in the house since the 90's — which was given in a Second Empire setting. Though the expense of laying the ballroom floor over the orchestra seats, the decora-

tions for the auditorium, etc., was quoted at ten thousand dollars,[5] the income was sufficient for Lucrezia Bori — the most active worker for the fund — to announce at one o'clock in the morning that the quota had been achieved. Next to the fifty thousand dollars from the Juilliard Foundation, the largest contribution was probably that of the Carnegie Corporation, which gave twenty-five thousand dollars to the fund.

Gatti's plans for his twenty-sixth season were finally announced on 2 May. From the company as it had been in the season past were eliminated Rudolf Laubenthal, Lauri-Volpi, Tokatyan, and de Loor, among the tenors ; also Doninelli, Frigerio, and Tappolet. Paul Althouse, now a Wagnerian tenor, Charles Hackett, Claudia Muzio, and Max Lorenz were announced to return ; and John Charles Thomas, Lotte Lehmann, Emanuel List, Cyrena Van Gordon, Nino Martini, and Lillian Clark were added to the roster. Simultaneously, Treasurer Lewis declared that all but three per cent of the previous season's subscribers had signified their intention of renewing for 1933–1934. This was not to be interpreted too hopefully, for a similar announcement on 11 May of the preceding season, which declared the house to be seventy-five per cent sold for 1932–1933, was scarcely borne out by the attendance on some subscription nights during that season. It was the unfortunate experience of the Metropolitan to discover that not a few prospective subscribers who were hopeful in May were absent in December.

Relevant to the course of the Metropolitan at this point is a letter from Tullio Serafin, published in *The New York Times* for 16 June 1935. Serafin left the Metropolitan at the close of the season of 1933–1934 — the first to be conducted on underwriting by the operatic public — and made a small stir by declaring in Rome, on 12 March 1935, 'The Metropolitan has

[5] When another opera ball was given in 1934, this year's expenses were quoted at sixteen thousand dollars.

not kept pace with the artistic progress of the modern stage. The way opera is mounted at the Metropolitan is ridiculous . . . the great fault with the Metropolitan is the little encouragement it is giving to its latent talent.' There were other criticisms, in a similar vein. The Metropolitan attributed these remarks to malice ; and implied that Serafin had left the house because 'he would not take a small cut in salary.' Eventually Serafin's reply reached America ; and, after detailing his sense of injury at the accusation that he had not co-operated with the management, or that he had spoken in malice, he said : 'At the beginning of the 1932–1933 opera season, I signed a three-year contract with the Metropolitan, under the terms of which I was to receive $50,000 for twenty-four weeks of performances, plus $6000 for the period when the company was on tour, plus $2000 for two weeks of rehearsals. I was to receive, in other words, a total of $58,200 [*sic*] for the entire season. The contract had hardly been signed when I was asked to accept a first reduction, and this I did without raising any objection. In the second year, I was asked to accept a second reduction and the third year a third reduction. Again I raised no objection with the result that during the 1933–1934 season, I was receiving only $34,000 instead of the $58,200 which had originally been agreed upon.' [6] The justice of Serafin's complaint is hardly the point at issue here. There is sufficient material for speculation in his statement that at a time when the Metropolitan Opera Association was declaring its intention to 'reduce expenses to the lowest possible point consistent with the high artistic standards which have always prevailed at the Metropolitan' the company was paying, to a single individual, in excess of ten per cent of the *whole amount* subscribed by the public to finance an *entire* fourteen-weeks' season. Under what

[6] If the contract was entered upon at the 'beginning of the 1932–1933 opera season' he would not, by 1933–1934, have served three years. The management explains this by stating that Serafin signed a *two-year* contract in the fall of *1931*, for services in 1932–1933, and 1933–1934.

spell the Metropolitan could have contracted to pay a conductor — and scarcely an indispensable one — fifty-eight thousand dollars for a single season's work cannot be understood. The ease with which a wholly satisfactory replacement for Serafin was found, in Ettore Panizza, gives some perspective on Serafin's qualities and his value to the organization. Moreover, it seems likely that the Metropolitan could have found a German conductor of the first rank to succeed Bodanzky, in 1929, had the management been willing to offer a wage comparable to that paid to Serafin.

It will also be recalled that Serafin was one of those who signed the letter castigating Gigli.

1933–1934

THE first season of Metropolitan Opera underwritten by public subscription was also distinguished, in its opening on 26 December, by other unusual circumstances. A post-Christmas inaugural had never before been attempted, the latest opening previously having been on 23 December 1901, when Grau's season of that year began with *Tristan*. Also, for the first time in history, the opera was by an American. The choice of *Peter Ibbetson* might have been regarded as a progress towards greater nationalization of the house ; but it also provided opportunities for Bori, Tibbett, and Johnson, who had made conspicuous efforts in behalf of the guaranty fund campaign. Serafin conducted. The late date for the opening was in part a recognition of the declining social significance of that event, which had traditionally marked the transition from the summer to the winter social season. In addition, a post-Christmas opening evaded the decline in theatre patronage before the holidays, particularly as the single seat sale had become of greater importance than it was during the years of heavy pre-season subscriptions. Despite a heavy snowstorm which delayed the start of the opera from eight o'clock until a quarter of an hour

later, the auditorium was completely filled with the usual 'well-dressed audience.' [7]

On the following night, the 27th, the first of the new artists was introduced, Emanuel List making his debut as Landgraf Hermann, in a performance of *Tannhäuser* that also marked the return of Max Lorenz. In the cast were Müller, Branzell (Venus), and Schorr. List was to be of great value to the German repertory of the company in the next seasons, and Lorenz was considerably improved as a singer.

During his first season, List appeared as Hunding on the 29th, with Lorenz, Hofmann, Ljungberg (Sieglinde), Kappel, and Branzell (Fricka) — each of the female singers had been heard as Brünnhilde in past performances of *Die Walküre* — ; as the First Nazarene in the revival of *Salome* on 13 January ; in *Don Giovanni* on the 20th (*Il Commendatore*), with the usual cast of Ponselle, Fleischer, Müller, Schipa, and Pinza ; as Fafner in *Siegfried* on the 24th, with Kappel, Branzell, Melchior, Schorr, Schützendorf, Windheim, and Fleischer ; as Pogner in *Die Meistersinger* on the 26th, with Müller, Doe, Lorenz, Schützendorf, Clemens, and Hofmann (Sachs*) ; as Heinrich in *Lohengrin* on 17 February, with Melchior, Manski, Doe, and Schützendorf (Telramund), under the direction of Riedel ; as Hagen in the cycle performance of *Götterdämmerung* on 9 March ; and as Gurnemanz in the season's final *Parsifal* on 30 March. Virgilio Lazzari, familiar to New York through his appearances with the Chicago company, joined the Metropolitan to sing Don Pedro in *L'Africaine* at the performance of 28 December, with Ponselle, Martinelli, and Borgioli (Nelusko).

A new influence on the character of the Metropolitan company was to be noticed with the debut of Nino Martini in *Rigoletto* (The Duke), with Pons and de Luca, at the *matinée* of 28 December. This singer disclosed a small voice, suitable for purposes of radio broadcast, in which field he was celebrated as a distinguished artist. For the spacious Metropolitan, however, his voice was wholly inadequate. He has nevertheless

[7] There were two events previous to the 'official' opening night ; a performance of *Lakmé* in Philadelphia, on 19 December, with Pons, Martinelli, and Rothier ; and a performance of *Hänsel und Gretel*, in the Metropolitan on Christmas afternoon. It was sung by Fleischer, Mario, and Schützendorf, with Riedel conducting. On the 26th the Chicago season also opened with *Tosca*, sung by Jeritza, Dino Borgioli, and Amato (Scarpia), under Papi. The prices ranged from fifty cents to three dollars.

remained a member of the company since his debut, appearing, in this season, in *Lucia* (Edgardo) on 4 January, with Pons and de Luca ; in the revival of *Gianni Schicchi* (Rinuccio) on 19 January ; as Rodolfo in a benefit *matinée* of *La Bohème,* on the 26th, with Bori, Tibbett, Picco, Lazzari (Colline *), and Morgana ; and as Alfredo in *La Traviata* on 10 March, with Bori and Bonelli. Radio broadcasting itself returned to the Metropolitan on a new basis this season, the transmission being commercially sponsored by the American Tobacco Company as advertisement for its 'Lucky Strike' cigarette. This yielded to the Metropolitan — for 14 broadcasts — a sum between seventy and a hundred thousand dollars towards the maintenance of the opera season, and amounted to a new form of partial subsidy for the enterprise. The first of these broadcasts was on 30 December ; the opera, *Mignon,* with Pons, Bori, Swarthout (Frédéric), and Schipa (Meister *). On the evening of the same day Lillian Clark sang for the first time in the Metropolitan, in *Aïda* (The Priestess), with Müller, Bampton, Martinelli, and Pinza (Ramfis).[8]

In relation to the shortened season, the programme of novelties and revivals was maintained as it had been during the greater part of Gatti's directorship. The most interesting production of the season was not, nominally, a novelty to the Metropolitan's repertory ;[9] but in every other sense the presentation of *Salome* # on 13 January marked the introduction of a new work for the Metropolitan. Ljungberg (Salome) laboured diligently with her role, but she could not give it the intensity it demanded. Moreover, her performance was not well sung. There was more of the ludicrous than the inflammatory in the dance, which Ljungberg performed herself. She prepared for it by disappearing into the wings and tucking seven small

[8] On 31 January in Chicago Marion Talley ended her 'permanent' retirement from opera, singing in *Rigoletto* (Gilda), with D. Borgioli, Frigerio, and Chase Baromeo (Sparafucile), the performance conducted by Papi.

[9] There was a single non-subscription performance of *Salome* on 22 January 1907, following which the work was withdrawn. (See page 118.)

fragments of coloured gauze on her person, picking them off as she danced. At the conclusion of the scene she had 'disrobed' to virtually the same garments she had worn all during the performance. Bodanzky's conducting and the Jochanaan of Schorr were the distinguished elements, the Herod of Lorenz, the Herodias of Manski, and the Narraboth of Clemens being as deficient vocally as they were dramatically. On the 29th, the cast was improved by the substitution of Branzell for Manski. On 15 February Manski returned to the cast, with Jagel (Herod *) and Anderson (First Nazarene *). Each of the performances, including the first, passed with no suggestion of the agitation raised by the American *première* in 1907. Though the Metropolitan encouraged the impression that there had been a lapse of the work — simply because it was not given at the Metropolitan — it must be remembered that a score of *Salome* performances, by the Hammerstein and Chicago companies, had accustomed the musical public of New York to its 'sensationalism.' Moreover, the particular point of contention in the earlier production — Salome's fondling of the severed head of Jochanaan — was, in the revival, decorously accomplished *behind* the projection shielding the prompter, and thus was almost obscured from the audience. The setting by Donald Oenslager was architecturally impressive, but not well-painted. There were seven performances of *Salome* in this season, but none in 1934–1935.

One of the last influences of Otto Kahn on the Metropolitan was discernible in this season, in the production of *Merry Mount*, an opera in three acts, suggested by a story of Hawthorne's. The book was by Richard L. Stokes, the score by Howard Hanson. The work had been accepted by the Metropolitan, through Kahn, before Hanson had written a note of this or of any other opera, on the basis of the composer's work for the concert hall. Despite great dependence on the chorus, in the manner of Moussorgsky and Borodin, and other derivative elements, there was considerable sincerity in the score, and a native

strength in certain climaxes that was not unattractive. As a theatre-piece, however, it was lacking in interest ; and the composer's weakness in declamatory writing, in the scanning of the lines for musical purposes — a fault common to most of the American scores heard in the Metropolitan — was a serious failing. Nor did the notion of using Göta Ljungberg, a Scandinavian, as Lady Marigold Sandys, increase the intelligibility of the text. Tibbett (Wrestling Bradford), D'Angelo (Praise-God Tewke), and Swarthout (Plentiful Tewke) were excellent. Also in the cast of *Merry Mount* at its world *première* in dramatic form,[10] on 10 February, were Johnson (Sir Gower Lackland), Cehanovsky (Thomas Morton), Gleason (Peregrine Brodrib), Clark (Love Brewster), and Petina (Desire Annable).

The Metropolitan production of *Merry Mount* was conducted by Serafin, and the singularly flimsy scenery was painted by Joseph Novak from designs by Jo Mielziner. Both Hanson and Stokes were present at the first performance, and at that of the 19th. Corona (Marigold *), and Petina (Plentiful *) were alterations in the cast for the performance on the 28th ; and Bonelli was heard as Bradford * on 23 March. The last evening performance of the season, on the 31st, was given over to *Merry Mount*, with Jagel (Sir Gower *), Halstead (Marigold *), Bonelli (Bradford), and Swarthout (Plentiful). This brought its total representations to six, all the work has had to date at the Metropolitan.

One of the occasional revivals of *Gianni Schicchi* occurred on 19 January, with de Luca once more as Schicchi — as he had been in the last performances during the season of 1927–1928 — with Fleischer (Lauretta), Pinza (Simone), Martini (Rinuccio *), and D'Angelo (Marco). For Pons there was a production of *Linda di Chamounix*, on 1 March, when the work entered the Metropolitan repertory for the first time. It had been heard in the house before, however, on 23 April 1890, during a post-season series of performances with Patti. Galli-Curci had been heard in *Linda* at the Lexington Theatre on 4 February 1919. With Pons (Linda), were Swarthout (Pierotto), Crooks (Charles), de Luca (Antonio), Pinza (The Prefect), Vettori (Maddalena), Malatesta (Marquis de Boisfleury), and Bada (Intendant). The conductor was Serafin. At the performance of 9 March, Lazzari replaced Pinza as the Prefect.

[10] *Merry Mount* had been given in concert form at Ann Arbor, Michigan, on 20 May 1933, with Corona (Lady Marigold), John Charles Thomas (Bradford), and Jagel (Sir Gower Lackland). Hanson conducted his own work.

Of the much publicized additions to the company, the most important was that of the splendid German artist Lotte Lehmann, who made her debut as Sieglinde, on 11 January. Both her skill as an actress and the fine artistry of her singing revealed a strength of personality uncommon to the recent Metropolitan. In this performance of *Die Walküre* with her were Melchior (Siegmund), Hofmann (Wotan), List (Hunding), Kappel (Brünnhilde), and Branzell. Lehmann's appearances during this season were scarcely more than as a guest member of the company ; for, after a long lapse, she sang in *Tannhäuser* (Elisabeth) on 24 February, with Olszewska, Melchior, Schorr, and Hofmann (Landgraf Hermann). Individually and in ensemble, it was one of the best performances of Wagner at the Metropolitan in many years. Lehmann sang again on 15 March, as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, with Lorenz, Schorr, Schützendorf, List (Pogner), Clemens, and Doe (Magdalena).

Also making a debut a dozen years delayed [11] was John Charles Thomas, who appeared for the first time at the Metropolitan on 2 February, as Germont, in a benefit *matinée* of *La Traviata*, with Ponselle and Schipa. His reception was one of the most enthusiastic given to a new artist recently. On 1 March he was again heard in *Traviata*, this time with Bori and Jagel. For an artist of his ability and his popularity with the public, his appearances were perplexingly few. On 14 April he was heard for the first time as Tonio, in a post-season performance of *Pagliacci*, in which Jagel was the Canio *. Claudia Muzio returned to the company on 1 January as Violetta in *La Traviata*, with Schipa and Bonelli ; and Charles Hackett resumed his Metropolitan career on 3 February at a benefit performance of *Roméo et Juliette* (Roméo), with Bori, de Luca, and Swarthout. Cyrena Van Gordon, long with the Chicago company, joined the Metropolitan to sing Amneris on 18 Jan-

[11] Thomas sang at a benefit concert at the Hippodrome on 4 January 1920, his music including 'Eri tu' and the *Pagliacci* Prologue. Of the latter the *Tribune* said : 'Mr. Thomas sang the *Prologo* as effectively as it has been heard in New York for years.'

uary, in a performance of *Aïda* with Müller, Borgioli (Amonasro), and Lazzari. In this, Carlo del Corso made his debut as Rhadames. Both new artists reappeared in these roles during the season, but the Metropolitan career of neither has been extensive.

After a lapse of a year,[12] *Die Meistersinger* was returned to the repertory on 18 January, with Rethberg (Eva), Doe (Magdalena *), Lorenz, Schorr, Hofmann (Pogner *), Schützendorf, and Clemens (David). There was little evidence of fresh study of the work on the occasion of its restoration, although the rest had benefited Schützendorf's Beckmesser. His characterization was marked by a number of new and diverting comic inventions. A virtue of this artist — scarcely a vocalist of unusual quality — was his ability to resist the obvious temptation to distort such a character as Beckmesser. The wisdom of retaining the Wagner cycle at approximately its normal length, despite the otherwise abbreviated season, was demonstrated by the large audiences which attended all of these performances. Though the essentials of the performances remained unchanged — the scenery, the staging, the orchestral playing, and the conductor — the recent addition of a number of fresh personalities enhanced the vocal and dramatic qualities of these works greatly.

Tannhäuser began the cycle on 9 February, with Rethberg, Kappel, Lorenz, Schorr, and List (Landgraf Hermann). *Das Rheingold* followed immediately, on the 16th, with Hofmann (Wotan *), Olszewska (Fricka *), Clemens (Loge *), Branzell (Erda), Manski (Freia), Schützendorf, and List (Fasolt *). Leider — who had rejoined the company for a performance of *Tristan* on 1 February — was the Brünnhilde of all the succeeding *Ring* dramas. On the 22nd she appeared in *Die Walküre*, with Stückgold, Olszewska, Melchior, Hofmann, and List (Hunding) ; in *Siegfried*, on 2 March, with Melchior, Olszewska (Erda), Windheim (Mime), Schorr (Der Wanderer), Schützendorf, List, and Fleischer ; and in *Götterdämmerung* on the 9th, with Melchior, Olszewska (Waltraute), List (Hagen *), Schorr (Gunther), Manski (Gut-

[12] It is a curious fact that during 1932–1933, when many German opera houses were presenting special Wagner revivals in observance of the fiftieth year of the composer's death, the Metropolitan gave no performances at all of his great comedy.

rune), and Schützendorf. All the *Ring* dramas were given without cuts. The performance of *Die Meistersinger* with Lehmann as Eva, on the 15th, concluded the cycle. To the Wagnerian strength of the company the return of Paul Althouse — formerly a lyric tenor — was a substantial acquisition. His debut in this new capacity occurred on 3 February, as Siegmund in a performance of *Die Walküre* with Leider, Kappel (Sieglinde), Branzell, Hofmann, and List. On 16 March he had the distinction of being the first American tenor to appear as Tristan in the Metropolitan, his associates being Leider, Olszewska, Schützendorf (Kurwenal), and Hofmann (Marke). Save for Melchior, his qualities are superior to those of any German tenor heard at the Metropolitan since the war, though he has not yet encompassed the entire Wagnerian repertory. The season's first performance of *Parsifal*, on 28 March, not only continued the appearance of the work at evening performances — the institution had thus reverted to an earlier procedure — but also marked its inclusion in the regular subscription series for the first time in a decade. That portion of the house not taken by subscription was sold for purposes of a benefit. In the cast were Leider, Melchior, Hofmann (Gurnemanz), Schorr, Schützendorf, and Wolfe (Titurel). All of these performances were conducted by Bodanzky.

The progress of the new American singers at the Metropolitan continued in this season with the first appearance of Crooks as Faust on 3 March, with Fleischer, Pinza, Tibbett, and Besuner ; and with the entry of Bonelli into the German repertory as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* on 27 December, with Müller, Halstead (Venus), Melchior, and Pinza (Hermann). This performance was conducted by Riedel. Lazzari's addition to the company provided the most satisfactory Leporello the revival of *Don Giovanni* had yet had, his first appearance in that role occurring on 3 January, with the usual cast of Ponselle, Fleischer, Müller, Schipa, and Rothier. On this occasion Pinza sang despite a cold which necessitated the omission of the 'Champagne' aria. Save for an appearance of List as Il Commendatore on 20 January, the cast for the season's three performances was unchanged. Serafin was the conductor.

No project for continuing the Metropolitan had been advanced to the public before another organization prominent in New York's musical life assumed the centre of the scene on

24 January. This was the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society, which asked public subscription to a guaranty fund of half a million dollars, to pay the deficit of the season in progress, and to assure its life for another two years. Though the appeal was made concurrently to the radio audience which enjoys a weekly broadcast from Carnegie Hall, it was apparent that the major portion of the sum would have to be raised in the vicinity of New York. That essentially the same public would also respond to another appeal from the Metropolitan — in the measure it had a year previously — seemed at least dubious. No authoritative word issued from the Metropolitan as the season progressed ; but, on 28 February, an announcement from the Juilliard School inspired a general assumption that the future of the Metropolitan had been assured. For it stated that a 'Juilliard Opera Prize' had been created, whereby the most promising singer discovered by the Juilliard would be awarded an appearance 'in a future season in a leading role at the Metropolitan Opera House.'

An immediate announcement from Cornelius N. Bliss, on behalf of the Metropolitan Opera Association, dispelled all illusions about the future security of the Metropolitan. He declared that another drive for funds would be necessary, with the Committee for Saving Metropolitan Opera again undertaking the campaign. Mr. Bliss continued : 'The fact is that at the end of the present season the guaranty fund of $300,000 pledged last winter will have been practically exhausted. To assure another season at the Metropolitan a further guaranty fund will be required.' On 11 March another 'Surprise Party,' in the manner of those of the two preceding seasons, was given. It brought fourteen thousand dollars towards the unnamed sum necessary 'to assure another season at the Metropolitan.' On 16 March, with the financial goal still undeclared, the campaign was publicly launched by Bori, during an *entr'acte* in the *Tristan* performance of that date. At a *matinée* of *Peter Ibbetson* on 17 March, its composer, Deems Taylor, was pressed into

service to plead for funds ; and the evening audience of that day was addressed by Lawrence Tibbett. The literary world took up the campaign on 22 March, with an address by Professor William Lyon Phelps, of Yale ; and he was followed, on the next day, by Walter Damrosch. During the remainder of the season, Bori spoke on the 24th and 26th, with Mayor Fiorello La Guardia as the speaker on the 30th. On the last day, 31 March, Swarthout spoke at the afternoon performance, and Ponselle in the evening.

Following a visit to Boston — the first in sixteen years — there was a post-season benefit for the fund on 14 April. *Cavalleria Rusticana, Pagliacci,* and the 'Mad Scene' from *Lucia* were given, with the singers contributing their service. On 14 April it was announced that the Juilliard Foundation had again come to the rescue of the Metropolitan, offering forty thousand dollars towards the expenses of the next season. This brought the total of known contributions — from the 'Surprise Party,' and the benefit performance — to sixty-two thousand dollars. Another Opera Ball on 27 April, this time in a Louis XIV setting, brought an attendance of two thousand persons, and an announcement, at its conclusion, that the fund had been completed. Tickets were again sold at ten dollars, and there was some scepticism that the event had been of any great financial profit, especially in view of the revised quotation for the expenses of the previous season's ball.

What the total amount necessary to 'assure another season at the Metropolitan' was, or how much of the sum was actually raised has never been disclosed to the public. The Metropolitan accepted whatever was offered.

As a result of a routine inspection made by the Fire Prevention Bureau of New York, the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, on 21 June, made known its intention of undertaking the first alterations of the building since 1903. In that year the stage had been rebuilt for *Parsifal.* Why the discovery of the defects in the electrical wiring for the stage — said to be in-

herent in the original installation — had been so long delayed, was made clear in *The Herald Tribune* for 22 June, which declared, after stating that 'enough violations to fill a book had been found' : 'Last year [1933] the Fire Prevention Bureau was transferred from the jurisdiction of the Fire Department to that of the Superintendent of Buildings. Its inspectors are no longer firemen, but trained electrical engineers.'

A thorough-going alteration of the stage and auditorium was estimated to involve an expenditure of nearly a million and a half dollars ; but a compromise was decided upon by the directors of the ownership company. This involved the expenditure of six hundred thousand dollars. The money was obtained by a first mortgage on the property, which had been, for the sixteen years past, unencumbered. Of this amount, approximately half was to be spent during the summer of 1934 on the more urgent requirements ; the remainder in the following year. In addition to meeting the specifications of the Fire Prevention Bureau, the alterations included : a new proscenium curtain, sand-blasting of the exterior — the Seventh Avenue end of the building was not included in this operation — the installation of a circulating ice-water system, new seats for the orchestra floor, new tiling for the floors of the lobbies and fresh paint for the walls and ceilings, etc. On 23 June, a partial list of alterations was announced, which specified : [13]

$232,000	.....for electrical work (including a new switchboard)
11,500	.....for a new curtain
32,000	.....for sand-blasting
$275,500	

Plans for the new season, announced late in June, disclosed that Tullio Serafin would be replaced as chief conductor for

[13] It was surprising to many persons that the ownership company was able to find with comparative ease the means for completing alterations that enhanced the value of their property ; but, as remarked before, they could not, as an entity, see a way to assist the operating company, or avoid public appeals for funds. A mortgage on the building, for purposes of continuing the production of opera, would seem no less reasonable than a mortgage to raise money for alterations.

the Italian repertory by Ettore Panizza ; and that Carlo Del Corso and Max Lorenz among the singers, and Giuseppe Bonfiglio, for long a prominent member of the ballet, would not be with the company in 1934–1935. To the roster were added Mary Moore, Helen Jepson, Anny Konetzni, Myrtle Leonard, Kathryn Meisle, and Dino Borgioli. On 28 June came the news that Serafin had been installed as general manager of the Royal Opera House in Rome. Also, during the summer, Frida Leider decided, in view of the decrease in value of the dollar against the mark, that a trip to America would not be sufficiently profitable for her.[14] Her place would be filled by Kirsten Flagstad, it was announced.

1934–1935

THE return to America of Gatti-Casazza for his final season of Metropolitan Opera was prefaced on 12 October by the report of a plan to merge the activities of the two leading musical enterprises of New York — the Philharmonic-Symphony Society and the Metropolitan Opera — into a single enterprise, giving all of its performances in the Metropolitan Opera House. The advantage to the Philharmonic was held to be a saving of some sixty thousand dollars annually paid for rental of Carnegie Hall. For the Metropolitan there was the prospect of the increased use of its auditorium — which would help to meet the overhead expenses — of a virtuoso orchestra for occasional gala performances, and of the prestige of Toscanini's return, possibly as artistic director of the entire undertaking. Though no definite plans were ever disclosed, it was generally understood that the Philharmonic would reduce the length of its season — ordinarily thirty weeks — and participate thereafter, or previously, in the operatic performances. Now, however, it is said by the Metropolitan's management that there was no intention of employing the Philharmonic Orchestra in operatic

[14] It has also been suggested that Leider resented the engagement of Konetzni, saying that she, alone, could care for the heroic Wagnerian soprano roles.

performances. Interest to the plan was added by the announcement from Gatti on 7 November that he would not accept another renewal of his contract, which expired in May 1935. Thus the way was provided for a fresh approach to the problems of New York's primary musical organizations. His action, he said, had been contemplated previously, but a desire to see the opera through the depression had persuaded him to remain until the expiration of his present contract.

Agitation for the merger grew stronger as the musical season progressed. There were many inviting aspects to the proposal, as exemplified in the parallel arrangements in numerous European cities ; but it is also true that the type of orchestral activity pursued by the Philharmonic is not analogous to that of the European orchestras doing double duty. Also, there was a feeling that the Philharmonic, whatever its new ventures might be, should not ally itself with an institution already so encumbered by traditions and handicaps as the Metropolitan. The view that each institution could, and should, be supported by the largest city in the world was courageously expressed by Bruno Walter when he returned to direct the Philharmonic on 28 November — courageously, because it was an unpopular attitude at the moment, the sentiment of the press being strongly in favour of what appeared to be a plausible solution to an admittedly perplexing problem. It is not unlikely that Walter's courage was one reason for his non-engagement by the Philharmonic following this season.

On 9 December it was reported that the directors of both groups would meet within a fortnight to consider the problem formally ; and Bruno Zirato, assistant manager of the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, was known to be *en route* to Italy, there to put the question directly to Toscanini, who had become the final arbiter. The scheme suddenly collapsed, on 12 December, when Zirato cabled Toscanini's unequivocal disapproval of the plan. The Maestro had cited, first, the unfavourable acoustics of the Metropolitan for symphony con-

certs ; secondly, his belief that a limited number of operas would not satisfy the public of New York ; [15] and, finally, his conviction that the standards of the Philharmonic would suffer through the merger. Though Toscanini had advanced these objections merely as his personal opinion, recognizing the privilege of both organizations to proceed with the alliance if they desired, his approval and participation were deemed essential to the success of the plan. With this denied, the subsequent statement from the Metropolitan was no more than a formality. It declared : 'It has always been the purpose of both organizations to give concerts and opera of the highest possible artistic standards. In view of the doubts of Maestro Toscanini, the societies have decided not to proceed with the merger.' From Walter Toscanini, son of the conductor, came an informal but illuminating comment. He said : 'My father does not think the merger will work because the Metropolitan is too old a theatre. They should have a new Metropolitan. Father advised this some time ago. It is absolutely to be excluded that my father would ever resume direction in the Metropolitan.'

Though talk of the merger was now abandoned, there was still the fact of Gatti's final Metropolitan season to focus unusual attention on the opera house. In tribute to his own departure, no doubt, Gatti reverted to his favourite opening-night opera when the season began on 22 December. It was another opening with *Aïda ;* and it marked the fourth time in his directorship of the institution that he had introduced a new conductor with this work. Panizza's performance was that of an alert, authoritative, and vital musician. If there were regrets for the absence of Serafin, they were not apparent at this performance, which was sung by Rethberg, Martinelli, Olszewska, Tibbett, and D'Angelo (Ramfis). The usual opening on Monday had been advanced to Saturday evening, through the advice of social

[15] A smaller repertory had been suggested, with each work newly studied and performances less frequent than seven times a week.

authorities who declared that an opening on Christmas Eve — as had originally been announced — would find a large number of the desirable social luminaries out of the city, thus greatly diminishing the brilliance of the event. An audience of nearly 4200 — the capacity of the house — was present ; and though the subscription sale was not much in advance of the preceding season's, the prospects for the sale of single tickets were declared to be greatly improved.

Radio broadcasts of the Metropolitan performances were resumed with the Christmas *matinée* of *Hänsel und Gretel*, this year under the sponsorship of the Lambert Pharmacal Company, on behalf of its 'Listerine.' For the privilege of a weekly broadcast, extending through the season of fourteen weeks, a payment of $375,000 to the National Broadcasting Company was reported in *The Sun* of 13 October 1934. How much of this sum was received by the Metropolitan was not stated. As commentator there was Geraldine Farrar, returned to operatic activity for the first time since her retirement, who interspersed her remarks with illustrative vocal material.

On the evening of 26 December Anna Konetzni made her debut as Brünnhilde, in a performance of *Die Walküre*, with Althouse, Schorr, List (Hunding), Kappel (Sieglinde), and Olszewska. She did not arouse enthusiasm in her subsequent performances in *Siegfried* (Brünnhilde), on the 28th, with Melchior, Olszewska, Windheim, Schützendorf, Hofmann (Der Wanderer), and List (Fafner) ; in *Tannhäuser* (Venus) on 1 January, with Lehmann, Tibbett, Melchior, and Hofmann ; or in *Lohengrin* (Ortrud), with Manski, Melchior, Schorr, and Hofmann, on the 5th, under the direction of Riedel. Her final appearance, as Isolde, on the 20th, was interesting in anticipation, chiefly because Pinza had been announced as King Marke for the first time. Little of the first act had progressed, however, before it was apparent that the Isolde of this performance was not the Konetzni that had been heard previously. The characterization was far from matured ; but the vocal difficulties of the part were splendidly encompassed. It was afterwards explained that she had contracted a cold on her way to America, but had said nothing about it, fearful that the management might postpone or cancel her debut. She had undoubtedly done greater injury to her American career, temporarily at least, by the course she pursued. Pinza's Marke was beautifully sung, though the size of his voice did not convey the

impressiveness that can be found in Marke's 'Lament.' Althouse, Doe, and Schorr were also in the cast, and Riedel conducted.

A Wagnerian soprano as little known as any that had come to the Metropolitan in its history — and from whom very little was expected, since she was only a replacement for the reluctant Leider — made her debut on 2 February in *Die Walküre*. In 1934 the name of Kirsten Flagstad meant as little to Continental Europe as it did to America, though she had sung Ortlinde in *Die Walküre* and the Third Norn in *Götterdämmerung* during the Bayreuth festival of 1933, as well as Sieglinde and Gutrune in the same works in 1934. Attention had been directed to her by an article in *Musical America* by Oscar Thompson, written during the summer of 1932. He had heard Flagstad in Oslo as Isolde, in a performance of *Tristan* with Kipnis, of Berlin, Graarud, of Vienna, and Tibell, of Stockholm. Curiously, Thompson's mentor in Oslo had apologized to him because of the appearance of Flagstad, saying she was 'no Larsen-Todsen.'[16] Fortunately, she was not ; but, instead, a singer of quite extraordinary abilities. Her American debut as Sieglinde pronounced her to be all of that ; and her subsequent progress through the Wagnerian repertory conveyed to the younger generation of music lovers an understanding of what was meant by 'the Golden Age of Song.' Flagstad demonstrated a vocal excellence and an artistry comparable to the legendary qualities of a Nordica, a Lehmann, or a Ternina.

[16] Larsen-Todsen had been scheduled to appear, but was unable. Flagstad had been singing in Oslo and other Scandinavian cities for twenty-five years, after making her debut at eighteen. She was on the verge of retiring permanently from the stage when she received a letter asking her to make an appearance before Gatti-Casazza and Bodanzky in St. Moritz. They were searching for a singer to replace Leider. The audition pronounced Flagstad an able singer, but not one of especial impressiveness, as the small room, heavily carpeted, had disguised the true qualities of her voice. Not until she sang her first rehearsal, full-voice, at the Metropolitan, were its executives aware of the great asset they had stumbled upon. Actually, Otto Kahn had heard her in 1927, singing in *Tosca*, and advised investigation of her qualities. Accordingly, Eric Simon, European agent for the Metropolitan, had written to her. Flagstad did not reply, regarding this merely as an inquiry from another manager. She was not invited to an audition, but was asked merely to send material about her career, repertory, press notices, etc. Her news-

Her extraordinary repertory encompassed, in the eight weeks remaining of the season, these roles : on 6 February, Isolde in a performance of *Tristan,* with Melchior, Schorr, Olszewska, and Hofmann ; her first appearance anywhere as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* on the 15th, with Müller, Branzell, Althouse, Hofmann (Wotan), and List — an uncut performance, in the *Ring* cycle ; also for the first time in her career, Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung,* in the cycle, on the 27th, with Melchior, Branzell, Schorr, List (Hagen), and Fleischer (Gutrune) ; Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* on 15 March, with Melchior, Branzell, Schorr, and List (Landgraf Hermann) ; Elsa in *Lohengrin* on 18 March, with Melchior, Branzell, Schorr, and Hofmann ; [17] and the first Kundry of her career in a post-season performance of *Parsifal* on 17 April, with Melchior, List (Gurnemanz), Schorr, and Schützendorf. Her preparation of the last role is said to have occupied but eighteen days. While in New York, she prepared the three Brünnhildes and Kundry, none of which she had ever sung publicly before. Her appearance as the Brünnhilde of *Siegfried* was scheduled for 22 February, but Flagstad was unable to sing, and Kappel replaced her. The indisposition continued through the 25th, when Flagstad was to have sung Isolde again, and Kappel substituted once more. In all, however, Flagstad made twenty-three appearances in New York and on tour — in Boston and Rochester — during her first brief season with the company. Following her initial Isolde, and the rapturous press it earned, she was greeted on each subsequent appearance by an overflowing audience. The house was also sold out for the two performances for which she was announced but could not sing. Flagstad's services in this season cost the management a comparatively small fee and contributed substantially to the health of the season's balance sheet. Not alone the magnificent freshness of her voice, but the skill with which it was used and her great attractiveness on the stage contributed to the impression created by the new artist. Though she is hardly the most intense of actresses, Flagstad possesses the enviable ability to win completely for her characterizations the credulity of her audience.

For the opening of the Wagner cycle on 8 February, the largest audience that had attended a performance of *Das Rheingold* during Gatti's directorship was present, to hear Schorr, Clemens (Loge), Kappel (Fricka), Olszewska (Erda), Schützendorf, Manski (Freia), List (Fasolt), and Wolfe (Fafner). The prospect of hearing Flagstad brought unusually large audi-

paper clippings were all in Norwegian, and she did not feel inclined to translate them into German.

[17] Her first Elsa in America was sung at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on 5 March.

ences to the other performances of the *Ring* dramas, for she was scheduled to appear in all of them. The *Siegfried* of the 22nd, in which Kappel replaced Flagstad, marked the hundredth performance of the title role by Melchior (see p. 339). His associates in the cast were Hofmann (Der Wanderer), Branzell (Erda), and Windheim (Mime). For the first time since the establishment of the Wagner cycle at the Metropolitan, *Parsifal* was included in the series, on 7 March, with List making another appearance as Gurnemanz. Kappel, Melchior, Schorr, and Schützendorf were the other principal singers. The cycle was concluded on the 14th, with a performance of *Die Meistersinger* in which were Lehmann (Eva), Althouse (Walther), Hofmann (Sachs), List (Pogner), Schützendorf (Beckmesser), Clemens, and Branzell (Magdalena). Althouse's first Walther had occurred earlier in the season, on 4 February, with Müller, Doe, Schorr, Hofmann (Pogner), Schützendorf, and Clemens. Another performance of *Die Meistersinger* offered Windheim for the first time as David, on 1 March, with the previous cast save for List in place of Hofmann. Both these alterations produced admirable results, though neither Althouse nor Windheim has yet exhausted the possibilities of the roles. Althouse also sang his first Tannhäuser in this season, in a performance on 23 February, with Ljungberg (Elisabeth *), Manski (Venus), Tibbett (Wolfram), and List (Hermann). The conducter was Riedel.

A welcome restoration to the Metropolitan's German repertory, particularly because it introduced a number of characterizations new to the house, was the return of *Der Rosenkavalier* on 4 January. It had been absent for nearly five years, the last previous performance having been on 15 January 1930. There was the attraction not only of the inimitable score, but also of the Marschallin of Lotte Lehmann, the Octavian of Maria Olszewska, and the Baron Ochs of Emanuel List, all seen for the first time in New York on this occasion. With them were Schützendorf (Faninal), Manski (Marianne), Bada (Valzac-

chi), Doe (Annina), Fleischer (Sophie), and Tedesco (The Singer). Bodanzky conducted. The production remained that of Kautsky, in use since the season of 1922–1923. For reasons perhaps too subtle to seek, Lehmann's Marschallin was less its superfine self on this afternoon than it has been elsewhere at other times ; and Olszewska's Octavian was dominated by that love for the centre of the stage which is this singer's great weakness. List's Baron Ochs, though lacking the ultimate refinement of Mayr's creation, was finely sung and vivid in its broad way. A later performance on 14 January offered the same cast ; and a second repetition, on the 30th, a cast altered by the presence of Kappel as the Marschallin, for the first time in the Metropolitan. Her usual intelligence and fine artistry were present, but it is not a role which becomes her physically. Lehmann returned for the final performance on 19 February, which — as the first of the revival — was a benefit. Thus only one subscription audience — Monday night — was privileged to see Lehmann in the role in which she has won her greatest celebrity. She also added Floria Tosca to her roles, on 21 March, when the work was given for the first time since the season of 1931–1932. With her were Martinelli — in place of Crooks, who was ill — and Tibbett (Scarpia *). Lehmann lacked the felinity of the essential Tosca, but she gave nevertheless, a vital impersonation, especially well composed in the second act. The foundations of an able Scarpia were apparent in Tibbett's performance, which was admirably sung. A repetition on the 28th, for which an enormous audience had assembled, was marred by the illness of Lehmann, her replacement, Clara Jacobo (Tosca *) being sadly inadequate. Jagel was the Cavaradossi of this performance, as Crooks was still in the hospital, and Martinelli was engaged in a *Lucia* with Pons, in Newark. Bellezza was the conductor for these, as he had been for the last performance previously — on 6 February 1932 — with Jeritza, Jagel, and Gandolfi (Scarpia *).

Also restored to the repertory was Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, on 23 February, with Bori again as Norina, as she had been in the last performances, under Toscanini, in 1913–1914. In the cast were Pinza (Don Pasquale), Schipa (Ernesto), de Luca (Dr. Malatesta), and Paltrinieri (A Notary). Panizza directed with fine ability. The work was presented as part of a double bill, which also provided the first performance in the Metropolitan of Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*. In this cast were Fleischer (Serpina), D'Angelo (Uberto), and Bada (Vespone). The work was conducted by Bellezza. Attractive stage settings for both were the creation of Jonel Jorgulesco, the use of an interior stage being a particular aid to the enjoyment of *Don Pasquale*. The double bill was, in all, one of the most excellent achievements of Gatti's last years.

Gatti's final salutation to American creative talent hardly indicated any significant progress since he produced *The Pipe of Desire* in his second season. The new work was a one-act soporific entitled *In the Pasha's Garden* by a composer previously unknown to fame, John Laurence Seymour, a native of California. Despite the palpable failure of the work at the world *première* on 24 January, the composer was presented with a medal indicative of some uncertain accomplishment, on behalf of a Chicago society for the advancement of American culture. Henry Hadley made the presentation. Seymour responded with a lavish speech, wholly irrelevant in the circumstances. As the Pasha, Tibbett performed much better than the music warranted, actually rendering intelligible most of the badly set lines. His associates were Helen Jepson (Helene, debut), Jagel (Etienne), Windheim (Zumbul Agha), and Anderson (Shaban). The conductor was Panizza. 'Projected scenery' devised by Frederick J. Kiesler made its first appearance in the Metropolitan. Interesting and provocative in itself, the setting was altogether distant from the prosaic character of the score, and the conventional content of the text. At the first performance, *La Bohème* was linked to the *Pasha's Garden*. On 13 February the American work was offered in a triple bill with *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*, Jepson appearing as Nedda * in the latter.

Much was expected of Dino Borgioli, Italian tenor, who made his debut on 31 December as Rodolfo, in *La Bohème*, with Bori, Morgana, and Bonelli. However, the vocal qualities that had marked his career in Italy and with the Chicago Opera Company were rarely apparent in his Metropolitan appearances. He was heard as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* on 18 January, with Ponselle, Fleischer, Müller (Elvira), Pinza, Lazzari, and Rothier. The features of this performance were Pinza's steadily maturing Don, and Panizza's conducting — the best the revival had yet enjoyed. Despite the large attendance for *Don Giovanni* and the excellences of the Metropolitan production, there was but one other performance in this season, on 9 February, with Schipa (Ottavio), List (Il Commendatore), and the others in the cast as before. Borgioli also sang in a performance of *Manon* (des Grieux), on 24 January, with Bori de Luca, and Rothier.

Other newcomers with the company in this season were Kathryn Meisle, who made her debut on 28 February in *Aïda* (Amneris), with Rethberg, Martinelli, Tibbett, and Pinza ; and Myrtle Leonard, also an American contralto, whose first appearance was on 23 March, in *La Gioconda* (La Cieca). The scheduled debut of Mary Moore in *Rigoletto* on 8 February, was deferred because of an indisposition, the singer finally making her first appearance at a Sunday night concert on 17 March. On this occasion she displayed a small voice and no exceptional skill in the use of it. There was more interest in the performance, on the same programme, of two excerpts from *Tristan* — the love duet and the 'Liebestod' — sung by Flagstad, Branzell, and Althouse. John Charles Thomas was nominally a member of the company again, but he was kept in California by illness during the Metropolitan season.

Despite the high levels achieved by the Metropolitan in the majority of its performances of Wagner, in *Don Giovanni*, in the *Tosca* with Lehmann, in *Der Rosenkavalier*,[18] and in a few

[18] The achievements in the 1934–1935 season represented a comparatively high level to resident New Yorkers, which makes even more interesting the comments of Dr. Paul Bekker, the distinguished German critic, as recorded in *Musical America* for August 1935. After a season as critic for the New York *Staats-Zeitung*, Dr. Bekker expressed his impressions of the Metropolitan's German productions thus : 'The ancient staging, the small circuit of the repertoire and other defects (like the overburdening of the orchestra) all these were not unknown to me. . . Neverthe-

other performances, the conventional repertory showed deficiencies that were not reconcilable with the 'high artistic standards' that had been so much publicized in recent years. A performance of *Roméo et Juliette,* on 26 January, with Norena, Hackett, de Luca, Rothier, and Swarthout found only the last of these singers in vocal condition befitting the Metropolitan of before the war; *Manon,* on 11 February, with Mario (Manon *), de Luca, Schipa, and Rothier was scarcely better; an afternoon performance of *La Sonnambula,* on 2 March, with Pons in poor voice, was given with Tedesco as Elvino, and Lazzari (Count Rodolfo), in place of Schipa and Pinza, who were ill. Besuner, Bourskaya, D'Angelo, and Paltrinieri completed the cast of this performance, which was broadcast nation-wide. The *Tosca* with Jacobo and Jagel has been mentioned.

Attention to these unhappy events was diverted by the quality of the more pretentious offerings in the repertory, and by the expressions of regret at the approaching departure of Gatti. On 19 March a gala for the retiring director enlisted many of the company's prominent members, as follows:

Lucia Act II, Scene 2

Morgana, Vettori, Martinelli, Borgioli, Pinza, and Tedesco.
Conductor, Setti.

Otello Act IV

Rethberg, Vettori, Melchior, Gandolfi, D'Angelo, Paltrinieri, Picco.
Conductor, Bellezza.

Norma Act III

Ponselle, Swarthout, Falco.
Conductor, Panizza.

less, I was flabbergasted at most of what I saw in the German opera. . . What I have missed in the first place is ensemble work. . . In New York each performer sings and acts as he likes at the moment. The frequent changes in cast, the lack of sufficient rehearsals, above all, the non-existence of a superior spiritual leadership, such defects are worse than the inequalities among the soloists. With all this, there was sometimes quite a cruel mutilation of the works. No German provincial stage of the second rank would offer to its audience such cuts as are common here in *Lohengrin, Die Meistersinger,* or *Der Rosenkavalier.*'

Pagliacci Prologue

Tibbett.
Conductor, Bellezza.

Manon Act IV

Bori, Clark, Falco, Petina, Crooks, de Luca, Rothier, Bada.
Conductor, Hasselmans.

Die Walküre Final Scene

Flagstad, Schorr.
Conductor, Bodanzky.

That the proceeds were ear-marked for a 'Save the Metropolitan Fund' — Gatti refused to accept the money as the directors of the past had — indicates that the perturbations of the past three years concerning the future of the Metropolitan had not been quieted.[19] On 13 February Paul Cravath announced : 'The directors of the Metropolitan Opera Association have decided that it is not feasible to give opera at the Metropolitan Opera House next season on the basis of continuing to incur the large deficits of the last five seasons.' It was further stated that a plan was in preparation for reducing the cost of opera and increasing subscriptions. On 20 February news reached the public that Trade Ways, Incorporated, had been retained by the Metropolitan to make a survey of its books to determine which operas were most popular and what length of season most advantageous. The reasoning was, apparently, that if *Rigoletto* drew 4200 persons on 6 February 1912, with Tetrazzini, Caruso, Renaud, and Homer, it should still draw the same number on 17 January 1935, with Norena, Martini, de Luca, and

[19] Mayor Fiorello La Guardia made investigations during the winter of 1934–1935 looking towards the utilization of the Metropolitan as the nucleus for a municipal art center. It was the hope of the Mayor that the studios in the Metropolitan's building could serve as the basis for a municipal high school of music, with the auditorium in use all year ; also, that the co-operation of the city would result in lower prices for tickets, and longer seasons. However, the division of organization of the Metropolitan — the ownership and operating companies — together with the estate problem involved in the Real Estate Company's affairs (see page 376) made so logical and simple a solution impossible. He has continued his efforts for such a centre, but not for utilizing the present building.

Swarthout. That the opera-going public of New York was fortunately to be spared a season organized on this basis was made known on 7 March, when previous rumours were now officially confirmed that the Juilliard Foundation would contribute a large sum toward the underwriting of the 1935–1936 season of Metropolitan Opera.

The news was communicated to the public in this manner : 'A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Opera Association, Inc. was held yesterday afternoon at the office of Mr. Myron C. Taylor. In the absence of Mr. Paul D. Cravath, Chairman of the Board, Mr. Cornelius N. Bliss, Chairman of the Executive Committee presided.

'Mr. Bliss informed the Board that for several weeks negotiations had been going on between the Metropolitan Opera Association, Inc., the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company and the Juilliard Musical Foundation. These conferences had resulted in a letter from the Juilliard Musical Foundation to the Metropolitan Opera Association, signed by Mr. George Davison, Vice-President. The letter reads as follows :

"You have presented to the Juilliard Musical Foundation the situation in which the Metropolitan Opera Association finds itself at the present time. For the past few years, we understand that Opera has been conducted at costs which averaged deficits of about $300,000 a year. Such deficits were at first met by accumulated reserves of previous years, but for the last two years friends of the opera have contributed about $250,000 a year. As far as this season is concerned it is almost certain that there will be no sums left to carry forward to another year. Under these circumstances, you applied to the Juilliard Musical Foundation for financial aid which might enable the Metropolitan Opera to continue during the next season. While the Juilliard Foundation has power by its charter, in the discretion of its Board of Directors, to give aid to the Metropolitan Opera, the Directors would certainly be remiss in their duties if they undertook such obligation as would risk injuring the activities to which they are already committed. Not long after its organization the Juilliard Foundation offered to be of assistance to the Metropolitan Opera Company (the business corporation predecessor to the present Association), but at that time the Opera was operating at a profit and there seemed to be no appropriate method by which the

Juilliard Foundation, within the terms of its charter, could aid the Opera. Since then the Juilliard Foundation inaugurated the Juilliard Graduate School of Music, which later consolidated with the Institute of Musical Art to form the Juilliard School of Music. To the support of this organization the Juilliard Foundation is definitely committed and to it it grants annually all but a comparatively small part of its income, the balance having been appropriated for other worthy musical activities. In the year 1933, the Juilliard Foundation appropriated $50,000 to the Opera, and in 1934, the sum of $40,000.

We appreciate as deeply as do you the importance of opera to the musical life and interests of this City and of the country. The long and distinguished career of the Metropolitan has placed it among the half dozen great Opera Houses of the world. It would, we believe, be a calamity if it would be compelled to close its doors. We appreciate, however, that the problem of financing in these days is an extremely difficult one and that it can only be successfully solved by the earnest efforts and cooperation of all those interested in its continuance as well as those directly concerned, and this includes the artists, the employees and the public. In considering possible plans for the future of opera certain principal considerations should be borne in mind :

The budget of the Opera should be planned on a basis which would have every promise of operating without deficit. It is obvious that this cannot be accomplished unless the attendance at opera is substantially increased. Any hope of continuing opera must be conditioned on a substantial increase in the subscriptions for the next season.

We appreciate that it has been the policy of the Metropolitan to introduce American singers in the casts whenever their abilities warranted it. We share your desire to increase the opportunities for American talent to show its ability and to gain the reward of its efforts. Many brilliant young Americans have had to acquire a European reputation before being acknowledged by their own country. We do not mean by this that the great foreign singers should be displaced for the Metropolitan audience has always enjoyed and should continue to enjoy the world's greatest artists no matter of what nationality. Our suggestion on this point is that the Metropolitan should sponsor a season supplemental to each regular season. Such seasons should be at very reasonable prices, not over $3.00 for the best seats. While not confined to Americans, the opportunity so far as artistic productions would permit should be given to young Americans to win their spurs. In this way if great talent were discovered it should have its opportunity in the regular season. We believe, however, that only by giving the opportunity of preliminary training, can the true value of our American talent be brought out. Such a supplementary season, we believe, could be conducted on a very modest budget and if well directed should have popular support and should not show any deficit.

Undoubtedly the combined enterprise of a regular season and the supplementary season is something of an experiment and should not be undertaken without financial backing.

In order to give the plan a fair trial during the season 1935–36, the Juilliard Foundation is prepared to join in the sum of $150,000, in a total underwriting of $250,000, upon certain understandings which have already been discussed with you, as follows : —

1. The Association to obtain an underwriting for the season of Grand Opera and the supplemental season of $100,000, the total underwriting of $250,000 to be set aside, first, to take care of any deficits in the 1935–1936 season of Grand Opera, and, second, to underwrite the supplementary season.
2. The Association to conduct a vigorous campaign for increased subscriptions. Unless this campaign results in an increase of at least 10% more than the subscriptions of the current season, the Juilliard Foundation's agreement to underwrite will not be effective.
3. The supplementary season is to be conducted by a new corporation, the title of which is to include the word 'Metropolitan.' On the Board of this new corporation there shall be practically equal representation of the Metropolitan Opera Association and the Juilliard Foundation. Should the supplementary season result in a profit, such profit will be available for the coming Grand Opera season.
4. Every effort should be made to adopt a budget for the Grand Opera season which has a promise of breaking even. Should there be a deficit, however, the $250,000 underwriting shall be used pro-rata to make up this deficit, the balance to be used to underwrite the supplementary season. Should there be a profit in the Grand Opera season of the Metropolitan, such profit shall be applied to the use of the supplementary season before any of the underwriting shall be called upon." '

In addition, it was stipulated that John Erskine, Ernest Hutcheson, and John M. Perry should be added to the directorate of the Metropolitan Opera Association, as representatives of the Juilliard. Furthermore, Giulio Gatti-Casazza's successor as director of the Metropolitan was announced to be Herbert Witherspoon, formerly a member of the Metropolitan company, recently director of the Chicago Opera Company, and still more recently an instructor in the Juilliard School of Music. His associates were to be Edward Ziegler, for nearly a score of years Gatti's assistant, and Edward Johnson, whose duties were to centre particularly on the supplementary season. On 9 May

Felix Warburg was added to the directorate, bringing the number of Juilliard representatives to four.

As his final presentation on 30 March, Gatti offered an afternoon performance of *Lakmé*, with Pons, and an evening *Meistersinger*, with Rethberg, Doe, Althouse, Schorr (Sachs), List, Windheim, and Schützendorf. A week earlier, during the final broadcast of the season — a performance of *La Bohème*, with Rethberg, Jagel, de Luca, Picco, Pinza, and Morgana — Gatti spoke his public farewell to the country which had been the scene of his activities for twenty-seven years. He spoke in barely distinguishable English. At the 'Surprise Party,' which concluded the official season on 31 March, Emanuel List appeared in the guise of Gatti — but the departing executive was characteristically retiring and did not appear before the audience.

Following the brief tour, there were post-season performances of *Tristan* and *Parsifal*, one of the former on 8 April, and two of the latter, on the 17th and 19th. In all three Flagstad was the prominent participant, with Melchior, Branzell, Schützendorf, and List, in *Tristan*; Melchior, List (Gurnemanz), Schorr, and Schützendorf, in *Parsifal*. On 24 April Flagstad left America for Europe carrying with her the only contract then actually signed by a member of the next season's company. Her original stipend was said to have been substantially increased. A definite agreement was also said to have been reached with Melchior, but the majority of the other contracts were still 'under negotiation.'

On the eve of announcing plans for the first season under his direction, Herbert Witherspoon died of a heart attack in the Metropolitan Opera House, on 10 May. For the preceding six weeks his exertions in formulating plans for the 1935–1936 season, conducting auditions of new singers, and discussing contracts with union officials, singers, conductors, etc., had kept him at his desk for an average of nine or ten hours a day. His collapse and death occurred a day before he was to leave on a

European vacation. When the succession of Edward Johnson to the post of general manager was announced on 15 May — Ziegler remained assistant manager, and no other executive was appointed to care especially for the supplementary season — it was accompanied by an outline of the new season as conceived and prepared by Witherspoon. Johnson further declared his intention of adhering to the main lines of the new organization as set forth by Witherspoon. Some consternation was caused by the announcement of a tentative roster for 1935–1936, for many of the most prominent members of the organization were not included. It was later emphasized that, with a number of them, negotiations were still in progress. On 24 May the establishment of an Opera Management Committee, consisting of John Erskine, chairman, Lucrezia Bori, Cornelius Bliss, and Allen Wardwell — to work with Johnson — was made known. Miss Bori was later made a director of the Metropolitan Opera Association, thus becoming the first active member of the company to be also a member of the executive group.[20]

The intention of the Association to make use of the auditorium for a supplementary season in May and June had aroused a certain curiosity about the utility of the Metropolitan during these months, a time when it had never previously been used for performances. An announcement from the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, on 30 May, did not disclose plans for an air-conditioning apparatus, as had been anticipated. There was, instead, the information that two hundred thousand dollars had been appropriated, from the amount authorized for alterations in the preceding year, for a system to circulate air through the auditorium. This, it was believed, would correct a serious deficiency ; but it would not, however, condition the air. A number of other repairs, mostly of minor character, were also to be included in the summer's operations. These

[20] At her first appearance of the 1934–1935 season, on 27 December, in *Manon*, with Crooks, and de Luca, Bori had been formally congratulated by the directors for her part in 'these two great achievements in the history of music' — the raising of the guaranty funds.

included the installation of new seats in the upper portions of the house — including padded chairs in place of the plain wooden seats that had long been supplied for the family circle patrons — the enlargement of the foyer on the grand tier, etc.

With Gatti-Casazza had also retired his wife, Rosina Galli, presupposing an alteration in the ballet which she had formerly directed. On 8 August Director Johnson announced the engagement of the American Ballet, bringing also to the Metropolitan the youthful and accomplished George Balanchine, who had been associated with that group since its organization in 1934. For the promised revival of the ballet at the Metropolitan the presence of Balanchine is auspicious, and should yield valuable results if he is permitted the latitude he requires. To bring his forces of twenty-seven to the sixty-five he plans to use at the Metropolitan, Balanchine has selected an additional thirty-eight dancers, both from the recent personnel of the Metropolitan ballet and elsewhere. As assistant director and *premier danseur,* Balanchine later announced the engagement of Anatol Vilzak. Whether the group was sufficiently equipped to take its place in the Metropolitan's routine was another matter, however.

On 22 August the formation of a Metropolitan Opera Guild, to promote the sale of subscriptions and to build an auxiliary group of supporters, was announced. The organization is guided by an executive committee, with the following officers : Mrs. August Belmont, Chairman ; Mrs. Myron C. Taylor, Vice Chairman ; Mrs. Herbert Witherspoon, Secretary ; and Harvey D. Gibson, Treasurer. By 8 December, when the Guild held its first public assembly — a reception at the Metropolitan — its membership totalled over two thousand persons.

EPILOGUE

IN the discussions following the two earlier periods in the directorship of Gatti, appraisal could be confined to the one aspect of artistry in production and presentation of opera. In

the last period — from 1921 to 1934 — this consideration remains fundamental, of course ; but the difficulties of the last several years introduces a consideration of economic factors, and the end of the regime invites an appraisal of the period as a whole. Because these years are nearer at hand — and because of certain internal factors — analysis of them becomes a more delicate undertaking than it was earlier. The internal factors are these : during the years from 1931–1932 to 1934–1935 the opera was conducted at an annual loss of about three hundred thousand dollars ; the public was repeatedly informed of the shame it would be to permit the institution to perish ; the figure of Gatti-Casazza 'gallantly' carrying on under extreme difficulties was firmly impressed upon the public mind ; most of all, criticism of the institution was uniformly held in abeyance, till the immediate difficulties of the company and its general manager should abate. All of this, it is apparent, was hardly conducive to the establishment in the public mind of a realistic appraisal of the last fourteen years of Gatti's directorship, or a consideration of its contributions to the future of opera in New York.

The primary quality of those years was a willingness on the part of the management to permit the operatic machine to run along on its own momentum, with only such occasional re-fueling as would be provided by the stipulated number of 'novelties' and revivals yearly. There was, to be sure, the replacement of certain parts now and then in the machine (singers and conductors) ; but whether they matched precisely the former specifications or not seemed hardly of importance, so long as the mechanism did not break down completely.

Though the death of Caruso marked the passing of the figure who gave to the Metropolitan's conventional repertory the vitality it had possessed in the years preceding, there was no disposition to revise the institution's approach to these works. There was, instead, an effort to interest the public through the substitution of four personalities for one, by the engagement of Amelita

Galli-Curci, Titta Ruffo, Maria Jeritza, and Feodor Chaliapine. Gatti thus solved very well the immediate problem of 'selling' the Metropolitan to the public on a purely commercial basis. However, the basic problem was merely intensified. When these artists had gone their way, the public needed to be titillated by phenomena of like celebrity, if of lesser artistic qualities. Thus, then, Marion Talley, Mary Lewis, the greater liberties allowed to Bohnen in emulation of Chaliapine, etc. Gigli and Lauri-Volpi were suggested as replacements for Caruso on the basis of nothing in their equipment. Meanwhile the German repertory of the house languished, with criticism of the singers on the roster being met with the contention that they were the 'best available.' Nevertheless, when Frida Leider, Lotte Lehmann, Maria Olszewska, Gertrude Kappel, and, finally, Kirsten Flagstad were at length brought before the New York public, it was apparent that the qualities which had earned four of them international repute for a decade before were still valid in New York.

None of this was indicative of a long-range policy which had for its objective the establishment of the Metropolitan as a truly contemporary theatre. While the public possessed the money to spend, the attitude during all of this period was to give as many performances of opera as it would pay to see, to crowd into twenty-four weeks as frequent performances as there were customers to make them profitable. Whether this was a policy that over a period of time would contribute the greatest benefit to the theatre and the art it purported to serve was, apparently, not considered. The objective was always the one nearest at hand ; the gain inevitably the temporary one. When the public was forced to retrench in its expenditures for entertainment, it constituted little hardship for it to forego opera performances that offered as little as many given by the Metropolitan during this period. Under such conditions of mass-production and performances by rote, it was obviously impossible to achieve any revision of the attitude towards opera that had obtained in

the theatre during the score of years before. Though simplified scenery and modern lighting had become a commonplace abroad, the Metropolitan continued its traditional policy of lavish, pretentious productions, and its disregard for any lighting save the most primitive.

Such experimentation as was made was wholly confined to the substitution of one score for another. In approximate conformity to the contemporary trend, Korngold supplanted Blech or Humperdinck ; Respighi appeared in the place of Wolf-Ferrari ; Pizzetti was substituted for Puccini ; Deems Taylor or Louis Gruenberg for Frederick Converse, Horatio Parker, or Henry Hadley. The introduction of *Pelléas* was a notable triumph for Gatti ; but it had been no less a triumph for Hammerstein years before. The exploration of the Russian repertory was equally praiseworthy ; but the level of quality declined in these latter years — after the production of *Boris, Prince Igor,* and *Coq d'Or* — leaving so outstanding a work as *Khovanshchina* wholly silent. *Boris* was permitted to become merely a vehicle for a star, Chaliapine, because the public would pay to see his performance regardless of what the quality of the production was otherwise.

As for the novelties of Gatti's entire directorship, between 1908 and 1934 he presented one hundred and ten works which had never been heard at the Metropolitan before. Of these, no less than fifty-three, or practically fifty per cent, were not heard after the season of their first occurrence. In addition, there were twenty-seven which were heard in only two seasons. In all then, eighty works, or well over two-thirds of the 'novelties' of this era were failures. To be sure, this argues a laudable desire for variety in the repertory ; on the other hand, it indicates little discrimination as well. Comments upon the present conservative repertory of the Metropolitan for the season of 1935–1936 — they appeared in New York papers the same day — served to illuminate sharply the two sides of the contention. On 16 December 1935 Olin

Downes said : [21] 'Mr. Gatti-Casazza . . . gave under quite as bad financial handicaps . . . a repertory far more inclusive and modern in texture.' For the other view, Lawrence Gilman [22] declared : 'It may be safely assumed that he [Mr. Johnson] is incapable of inflicting upon the Metropolitan public novelties so appallingly worthless as many of those that have been given sanctuary in that long-suffering house.' There was courage expressed in Gatti's production of *L'Amore dei Tre Re* after it had been a failure in Italy, and discernment reflected in the impression that its intrinsic quality was high. Yet the same discernment applied to *Giovanni Gallurese* or *La Notte di Zoraima* would certainly have argued against their production. It is reasonable to suppose that if the number of novelties had been halved, and the amount of money expended on their preparation devoted to restorations within the standard repertory — particularly in these later years, when vast progress was being accomplished in other branches of the theatre — the eventual gain to the institution would have been far greater.

Not only did these 'novelties' consume funds which were, in a sense, replaceable ; they also consumed time, for preparation, which was *not* replaceable. Even when stage directors of contemporary ideas and proved ability — such as Hans Niedecken-Gebhard, Alexander Sanine, or Dr. Ernst Lert — were eventually engaged, they found themselves hopelessly balked by a schedule of operations which left them bereft of the rehearsal time necessary to make their ideas effective. In addition, the general pressure of giving at least seven performances on five operating days resulted in frequent presentations, previously noted in these pages, that were utterly unworthy of an operatic enterprise even of the second class, and much less worthy of an international organization with the pretensions of the Metropolitan. The effect of such a schedule on the orchestra — were its human material twice as able as that of the Metropolitan

[21] *Times.*
[22] *Herald Tribune.*

during this period — is too obvious to require comment.

During the portion of its history under the direction of Gatti — two seasons more than half the entire period of Metropolitan Opera — there were recorded certain important advances over previous procedures. The progress towards internationalism that had begun with Grau, and that was perpetuated by Conried, culminated in this period with the presentation of all works, save Russian and Czech, in the language of their origin. There were infrequent deviations from this policy, few of them significant. Gatti's repertory was of much wider range than any other known in New York to that time, though the details of that scope may be questioned. Many of the most musically valuable innovations, moreover, were abandoned after brief trials, so that the eminently worth-while restoration of *Euryanthe*, for example, has had no more place in the experience of New York opera-goers than the presentation of *Le Villy*, or *Anima Allegra*. Mozart was heard only at rare intervals, and one of the most enjoyable of recent compositions — Weinberger's *Schwanda* — was given in but one season. Gatti maintained a consistently good singing chorus ; through his skill in organizing a season and in administering the details, opera unquestionably had greater stability during this period than ever before. It must be recognized, however, that this stability eventually became inertia.

Contrary to the common opinion, American singers from the time of Eames, Nordica, and Homer to the present day have enjoyed considerable prominence in the Metropolitan's organization. Since the war many minor singers were given Metropolitan opportunities which they did not improve, either through want of ability or of patience. If their capacities at all suggested the power to fill larger roles, the opportunity was not lacking ; occasionally before the singers' abilities had matured to the necessary stature. There are a number of examples of outstanding American artists who reached the Metropolitan only after their ability had been securely established elsewhere —

such as John Charles Thomas, Richard Bonelli, Paul Althouse (as a Wagnerian tenor) — but the number of these is no larger than the number of important *foreign* artists whose Metropolitan debut was curiously delayed, or never consummated at all.

Whether under other circumstances Gatti-Casazza would have demonstrated inclinations not revealed during his directorship ; or whether, with another manager, the attitude of the Metropolitan Opera Company in certain fundamental matters previously described would have been otherwise, are matters outside the scope of the present inquiry, which can take for its materials only the achievements as they stand on the record. By serving a total of twenty-seven years, Gatti-Casazza demonstrated his general contentment with the position he held and the record he achieved ; and by granting him periodic renewals of contract, his employers unquestionably indicated approval for those achievements. Let us hope that those now in the command of the Metropolitan, since they are responsible to a group which, in its foundation, is consecrated to the public good, will have larger objectives in the future.

THE FLAGSTAD SEASONS

1935–1936

THERE were more than a few occasions during the twenty-seven years from 1908 to 1935 when an opera lover would have been pardoned for believing that only the presence of Giulio Gatti-Casazza made possible the performance of opera at the Metropolitan. Certainly during the years after Caruso's death, it was the tendency of the organization more and more to emphasize the exceptional powers of the Italian director, by the subtle expedient of calling attention to his reticence, his avoidance of the spotlight, his unwillingness under any circumstances to appear on the stage of 'his' theatre. It was an excellent scheme for directing atten-

tion away from any one singer, who might thereafter demand a wage in keeping with his celebrity.

Nevertheless, on the evening of 16 December 1935, with Gatti far away on the banks of Lago Maggiore, a performance of *La Traviata* was given at the Metropolitan, thus initiating its fifty-first season of opera. Save for the eye-assuaging qualities of new, bright, and flimsy scenery by Jonel Jorgulesco, and the caperings of the new American Ballet ensemble, it was a performance hardly to be distinguished from a dozen others of the seasons immediately preceding. Lucrezia Bori, Lawrence Tibbett, and Richard Crooks were its principal singers. A plump secondary singer, Thelma Votipka, began a long series of uneventful services as Flora (d). As on fifty similar occasions in the past, the house was crowded. Some new faces were in the orchestra that responded to the baton of Ettore Panizza, but there was little opportunity, in this opera, for the players to assert their quality. More than figuratively, Director Edward Johnson was carrying on where his predecessor had left off.

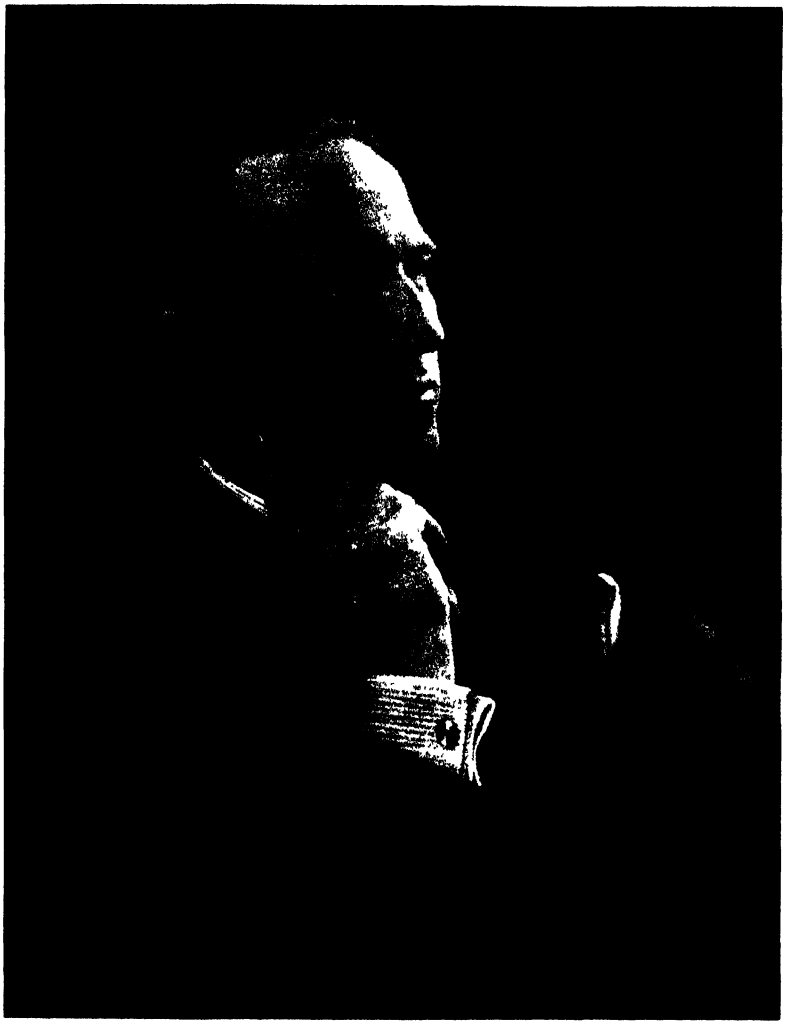
In a sense this was to be credited to the efficiency of the system that Gatti had established. But it was also partially owing to the conservative season that Johnson had undertaken after Witherspoon's death, in which there was scheduled no single novelty or revival, no addition whatsoever to the company's repertory. The director had given the clue to his immediate plans when he said in a press conference before the season began : 'Opera depends for its prosperity on Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini.'

Had Johnson been gifted with prescience, he might reasonably have reversed the order of the first two composers' names. This became apparent on 30 December, when *Tristan und Isolde* and Kirsten Flagstad returned simultaneously to the Metropolitan, before the largest audience since that of the opening night. There was a stir, a breathlessness in the house that had been absent during the two weeks before. In its early days (see p.66) Henderson had suggested that the theatre might be better known as the *Faustspielhaus* ; some years later Sanborn observed the changing

times and offered to dub it the Carusel, in tribute to its most popular artist. Today there is excellent cause, in consideration of the first legitimate successor to such prominence, to name it the Flagstadium. Even with Gertrud Wettergren as a new Brangaene on this occasion (together with other such familiar singers as Melchior, List, and Schorr), and a bit of unorthodox direction by which Leopold Sachse, the company's new stage director, brought Melot onto the boat at the end of the first act (to the confusion of the best Wagnerian scholars) the evening was Flagstad's.

Wettergren, of Swedish birth, was one of two important additions to the German forces of the company to make her debut in the early season. The other was Marjorie Lawrence, also non-Germanic (she was Australian in origin). To indicate that she was to be considered not only a German singer, Wettergren made her debut on 20 December, as Amneris in a performance of *Aïda* that introduced Chase Baromeo, an American singer, as a stolid Ramfis, with Martinelli, Rethberg, and John Charles Thomas (Amonasro). The weight of Wettergren's voice was judged too slight to win her classification as a true contralto, but there was vitality in her acting and compulsion in her manner on the stage. Her other roles of this season included a Venus in *Tannhäuser* on 26 December, the Brangaene mentioned above, and, of all things, *Carmen* on 16 January, with Pinza, Mario, and Charles Kullmann. By singing the role in Swedish, Wettergren contrived to restore bilingual opera to the Metropolitan, at least for a night ; and by loosing a shoe, knocking the hats from the heads of half a dozen soldiers, and otherwise flaring temperamentally, she found her performance a subject for mention on the front pages of the next day's morning papers. These accounts were more glowing than those in which the focus was purely musical.

Similarly, Lawrence made her most substantial impression on an audience with an equally unorthodox *coup* on 11 January, when she managed not merely to mount the back of Grane after singing Brünnhilde's Immolation in the afternoon's performance of *Götterdämmerung,* but also to ride the beast from the stage. However, there were other values in this Brünnhilde than the equine, her good appearance lending credibility to the cast of Melchior, Schorr, Meisle, Hofmann, Habich as Alberich * and Manski. There was also the youthfulness, the ebullience of manner that had distinguished her introductory Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* on 18 December, with Melchior, List, Rethberg, Schorr, and Meisle. (This also had new scenery by Jorgulesco, emphasizing billboard 'modernism' and a limited imagination.) It was plain that Lawrence had much to learn about the use of her voice, but there was an impact in her tones, and a good surge of spirit in her use of them. The brightness of their



EDWARD JOHNSON

colour, together with the limitations of her range, offset the dramatic virtues of her Ortrud in *Lohengrin* on 21 December, with Lehmann, Melchior, Schorr, and List ; and her Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* on 3 January spoke more of promise than of fulfilment. Perhaps her most substantial accomplishment was reserved for her final appearance of the season on 20 January, when she demonstrated her excellent French schooling (most of her pre-Metropolitan experience was in Paris) in *La Juive.* There was less of the forcing that had marred her singing of Wagner, consequently more opportunity for the sturdy qualities of the voice to assert themselves. The other singers of this brief restoration were Martinelli, Pinza, Hans Clemens (Leopold), and Queena Mario (Eudoxia). The conductor was Pelletier.

One of the most important tendencies of the present-day Metropolitan was set forth with enviable succinctness by the late W. J. Henderson in writing of the debut of Susanne Fisher as Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* on 26 December.

> In estimating the value of such impersonations [he wrote in the following day's *New York Sun*] it is necessary to keep constantly in mind the radically changed character of the Metropolitan Opera House. There was a time when a debut at this theatre meant the climax of a career developed upon steadily growing artistic success. But this is no longer the case. The Metropolitan is not now simply an arena for the introduction of world-famous singers. Hereafter a few such artists will be heard, while young Americans will be brought forward and permitted to begin their careers on the stage of 'the greatest opera house in the world.'

This has been a characteristic of every season since then and doubtless will continue to be one in seasons to come. In retrospect, the singer who inspired this comment has been far from the least worthy of those who have followed her. The Fisher voice is at least well controlled and capable of growth. There have been others of which this could not be said. Subsequently, on 18 January, Fisher was heard in a neat, fluent performance of Marguerite in *Faust,* with Jagel, Pinza, and Bonelli ; as Micaëla in *Carmen* on 1 February (with Ponselle, Kullmann, and Pinza), and in *Manon* on 5 March with Crooks and Bonelli. Despite her temperamental limitations, Fisher's subsequent career has shown her to be the best equipped young native singer (female) to be introduced by Johnson in his first season.

Of more experienced singers, however, Johnson was most to be applauded for his enterprise in bringing Dusolina Giannini to the attention of Metropolitan opera-goers, as Aïda on 12 February. It seemed hardly believable that nearly thirteen years had elapsed since Giannini had first attracted attention to herself by substituting brilliantly for the indisposed Anna Case at a Schola Cantorum concert in Carnegie Hall on 14 March 1923. Yet there was her substantial record of accomplishment in European opera houses to emphasize the fact. This service was also evident in the worn shrillness of some of the tones she produced in her pungent, vital singing on this occasion (with Martinelli, Bampton, Tibbett, and Baromeo) ; but it hardly diminished the pleasure that was to be found in her intense conception of the role, her assured delivery of the music.

Giannini was heard in no other roles in this season, though there was a plan to restore *Norma* for her. A date, 26 February, was even assigned for the performance, but it was actually occupied by *La Bohème*, coupled with the announcement that Giannini was ill. From other sources, however, there were rumours that disagreements at the rehearsals were actually responsible for cancellation of the plans. Giannini has sung a variety of roles here in the three seasons since, but she is still to be heard for the first time in *Norma*.

As Giannini's was the most auspicious debut of the season, so the most discussed new impersonation of the season was also to be credited to an American, Rosa Ponselle, whose Carmen was seen for the first time on 27 December. It had been preceded by elaborate accounts of the serious study that Ponselle had devoted to the role ; but when it was finally performed, her Carmen was excessively wilful and flagrantly unmusical. With its distorted chest tones and disobedient rhythms, Ponselle's musical conception was at its best when she danced, which she did with little agility but with excellent style.[23] Indeed, the finest element of

[23] Of her performance, the late Paul Bekker remarked: 'According to accounts, Miss Ponselle has consulted all the French authorities, overlooking only the most important one — Georges Bizet.'

the performance was the splendid farandole designed for the fourth act by George Balanchine, one of the few efforts by the American Ballet to reflect the presence at its head of this brilliant choreographer. The supporting singers were Hilda Burke (as Micaëla), Martinelli, and Pinza, but they did little to embellish the occasion.

Ponselle appeared in no other role during this season, confining herself to several repetitions of *Carmen*, which were eventful only for variations in the cast. The first of them, announced for 1 January, was postponed owing to her indisposition (it was not said whether this was owing to singing or to reading). On 6 January, her Don José was Charles Kullmann, who used his small voice with much intelligence. Fisher sang her first Micaëla with Ponselle and Kullmann on 1 February ; and René Maison succeeded Kullmann on 12 February. In the final performance of the season on 14 March, the Escamillo was Huehn.

Handicapped though he was by the limitations of his budget and the circumstances by which he had succeeded to the direction of the company, Johnson managed to diversify his season by retrieving several of Gatti's productions from the warehouse, and peopling them with new casts. Musically, the most admirable of these was Beethoven's *Fidelio*, heard on 7 March for the first time since 29 January 1930. The reason for this restoration was to be found in the presence of Kirsten Flagstad as Leonore, suggesting how much more fortunate it was for New Yorkers that such a singer was their current enthusiasm, requiring the production of such a score, rather than a Jeritza and *La Fanciulla del West*. There was much that was magnificent in Flagstad's projection of the music, and it is not likely that the present generation has heard a more honest performance, vocally, of the 'Abscheulicher' scene. But there is an aloofness in Flagstad's manner that reduces the tragic stature of the role, a lack of the essential womanliness that the part demands. There were many excellences in the production, beginning with the conducting of Artur Bodanzky, and continuing with the Florestan of Maison, the Rocco of Emanuel List, the Marzelline of Editha Fleischer,

and the Minister of State of Julius Huehn. Hofmann was the Pizarro and Clemens the Jacquino.[24]

Also in deference to a singer was the production of Puccini's *La Rondine* on 17 January, after an absence from the repertory of five seasons. The singer was Lucrezia Bori, whose retirement at the season's close had just been announced. It was a gracious gesture to grant her a final opportunity in a role which she had created for her Metropolitan admirers ; and this indeed was the principal merit of the production of Puccini's frothy score. To Bori's spirited Rondine there was the best foil in Nino Martini's well sung but poorly acted Ruggero *. Also skilful were Fleischer's Maid and Marek Windheim's Poet, with D'Angelo as Rambaldo. Bori's other operas in her last Metropolitan season included the opening night *La Traviata*, *La Bohème* on 16 December, *Mignon* on 4 January, and *Manon* on 10 January. In all of them her art was impressively sustained, though her vocal equipment, plainly, had deteriorated. A sentimental plan to present Bori and Johnson in a final *Pelléas* on 21 March was deferred for three days because of her indisposition, and finally abandoned when her health remained uncertain. In consequence, her last appearance in opera was in *La Rondine* on 21 March. She was the guest of honour at a formal farewell concert on Sunday night, 29 March, when the artists participating included Tibbett, Martini, Rethberg, Pinza, Flagstad, Melchior, Ponselle, Martinelli, Crooks, and Rothier. Bori joined the last two of these in the St. Sulpice scene from *Manon*.

There was sounder reason if no greater reward in the season's other restoration, for it represented the first effort of the Metropolitan to experiment with opera in English, conditioned by no other impulse than pure lingual curiosity. The work selected for the test was Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, a likely choice if one considers its amusing plot and the constant interest of its text. Also there was a competent singing translation available by Percy Pitt. However the production was not more than moderately successful, for only Tibbett (Schicchi), Bentonelli (Rinuccio), and Baromeo (Simone) demonstrated a reasonable command of English enunciation. Moreover, Tibbett's conception of his role was hardly short of burlesque and the rascality of the part was much over-played. For La Vecchia, with her frequent passages of exposed dialogue, there was the absurd choice of the Russian singer Ina Bourskaya ; while the others in the cast on 27 January — Gandolfi, Burke,

[24] For those familiar with her reputation, it has been a cause of steady curiosity that Lotte Lehmann has never been granted the opportunity to appear in *Fidelio* at the Metropolitan. The expression of that curiosity finally prompted Director Johnson to state, at one of his press conferences, that Mme. Lehmann did not wish to sing the part after it had been interpreted, at its present revival, by another singer. He also hinted his doubts that she could manage the notes of the arduous role. This, however, was never a salient virtue of Lehmann's Leonore.

Votipka (La Ciesca), D'Angelo (Marco), and Windheim (Gherardo) — were only comparatively more understandable. As a final embarrassment, the production was directed and coached by Gennaro Papi, whose English is somewhat less than Oxonian.

The evidence of the Juilliard Foundation's new interest in the affairs of the Metropolitan was manifested even before the first spring season (specified in the terms of its agreement with the company) began. Three of the American singers — Charles Kullmann, Josephine Antoine, and Julius Huehn — to make their debuts in this season were products of this institution, although Kullmann had served a considerable apprenticeship abroad.

Though much of this experience had been in German opera houses, Kullmann was presented for the first time, on 19 December, in *Faust,* for which both his voice and style were palpably unsuited. With him in this performance were Edith Mason (Marguerite), returned to the Metropolitan after many seasons' absence, Pinza, Bonelli, and Helen Oelheim (d., Siebel). The qualities of the performance prompted Henderson to write in the *Sun :* 'Many years ago this commentator made a German joke about *Faust.* Today *Faust* is no joke.'

As the season progressed, however, Kullmann had other opportunities to establish his abilities. He was listed to appear as the Duke in *Rigoletto* on 28 December, but an illness compelled the substitution of Jagel. He recovered to sing Alfredo in *La Traviata* on 4 January, with Norena and Tibbett ; and was later heard in *Rigoletto* on 9 January, with Antoine and Tibbett ; in *Carmen* on the 16th, with Wettergren and Pinza ; in *La Bohème* on the 27th, with Norena, Gleason, and Morelli ; and in various repetitions of these roles later in the season. His José was a carefully studied, intelligently sung performance ; his Rodolfo a poet as well as a tenor. However, his voice is small for the Metropolitan and liable to be engulfed by any other than the most considerate orchestration.

There was a considerable effort made to establish Josephine Antoine as a singer of importance (her debut was made on a Saturday afternoon, with benefit of radio), but there was little justification for this in the qualities she manifested as Philine in this *Mignon* on 4 January (with Bori, Crooks, Oelheim and

Pinza). Later she was heard with Tibbett and Kullmann in *Rigoletto* on 9 January. This was a somewhat more composed achievement than her Philine, but in both the small scope of her voice as well as the immaturity of her manner were serious handicaps.

Curiously, the American singer of this season whose talents have been the most useful to the company made his beginning in the humble role of the Herald in *Lohengrin* on 21 December. This was Julius Huehn, a baritone of robust voice and stalwart presence. He was content with repetitions of this role for the next month, but within the space of a week early in February he increased both his repertory of roles and the public's esteem for him considerably. On the 3rd he made his first appearance as Kothner in *Die Meistersinger ;* on the 6th he was Donner in *Das Rheingold,* on the 8th, Kurwenal in *Tristan,* and on the 10th, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly.* To these he later added the title role in *Gianni Schicchi,* on 29 February, and Escamillo in *Carmen* on 14 March. In several of these he overreached the limits of his experience, but all of them were thoroughly studied, indicative of a promise that has steadily developed.

In rather absurd contrast was the furore that attended the engagement of Joseph Bentonelli (born Benton) to replace Richard Crooks for a performance of *Manon* on 10 January. It was announced, with much elaboration, that he had appeared suddenly in Johnson's office when the manager had despaired of finding a substitute for the ailing Crooks, and was immediately assigned to the role. However Bentonelli's slight voice and intimate manner were no more suitable for Des Grieux than if he had been engaged before the season began. Bori's Manon provided the musical pleasure of the evening, though Bentonelli was lavishly applauded. He was later heard in *Gianni Schicchi* on 27 January, and as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* on 1 February (with Burke * and Bonelli) without materially altering the impression of his first performance.

It was said to be in consequence of Witherspoon's association with the Chicago Opera Company that René Maison (who made his American debut with that group) was brought to the Metropolitan. Adventitious or not, this was an engagement that has

been a considerable comfort to Johnson, providing him with a singer both versatile and talented. His debut was made as Walther in *Die Meistersinger* on 3 February, following which his roles included Loge in *Das Rheingold* on the 6th, Don José in *Carmen* on 12 February and Lohengrin on the 28th. Though Maison's voice has no remarkable warmth, it is invariably well used ; and his musicianship was sufficient to win him equal credit with Flagstad when he sang Florestan in *Fidelio* on 7 March.

Also a choice of Witherspoon was Eduard Habich, who was added to the company to sing the roles formerly the property of Gustav Schützendorf. The first was Peter in *Hänsel und Gretel,* in which he made his debut on 20 December. In sequence he was heard in the classic list of dramatic baritone roles in the German repertory — Telramund in *Lohengrin* on the 28th, in which Paul Althouse sang the title role for the first time, with Rethberg, Lawrence, and List ; Alberich in *Siegfried* on 3 January, the same character in *Götterdämmerung* on the 11th, Kurwenal in *Tristan* on the 31st, Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger* on 3 February, Alberich in *Das Rheingold* on the 6th, and Klingsor in *Parsifal* on 20 March. There was respectable merit in all of these, though his artistry was hardly inflammatory. He had his smallest success as Beckmesser, reviving an old-fashioned, overdrawn treatment of the part that had not been seen in the house for years.

The other important new singer of this season is difficult to classify either as native or imported, for it was the contralto Bruna Castagna. Indisputably Italian in origin, Castagna had enjoyed a distinguished career at the Hippodrome during the 'popular price' seasons sponsored there by Alfredo Salmaggi. In fact there was some hesitation in engaging her for the Metropolitan as there were those in the management who felt that this background might be prejudicial to her acceptance by the public. However, her first Amneris on 2 March (in an *Aïda* with Rethberg, Martinelli, and Morelli as Amonasro *) was sung with a lusciousness of voice, a solidity of style not possessed by many singers whom the management has presented without such trepidation. In the limited remaining weeks of the season she had the opportunity to be heard as Maddalena in *Rigoletto* on 9 March, and as Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* on the 12th.

Some traces of vulgarity in her singing, a weakness for exhibiting her chest tones unnecessarily have become less prominent in the last three seasons.

In the *Rigoletto* mentioned above, John Charles Thomas was heard for the first time as the lachrymose Jester, thereby matching the most recent achievement of Lawrence Tibbett, who sang his first Metropolitan Rigoletto on 28 December. There was more cultivated style in the Thomas performance, if less bulk of voice. Tibbett poured forth an abundance of tone, but marred his interpretation with much needless dramatic detail, not well organized. Another American singer to add an important role to his repertory was Richard Crooks, who appeared as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with Lehmann and Tibbett on 30 January. Between the powerful personalities of this Tosca and this Scarpia, Crooks vacillated uncertainly. However, there was lyric freshness in his singing, especially of 'Recondita Armonia.' George Cehanovsky contributed some moments of confusion by appearing in the first act as the rebel Angelotti, and in the second act as his own pursuer, Sciarrone. The return of Grace Moore as Mimi in *La Bohème* on 14 March filled the house with cinematic devotees, some of them apparently uncertain whether or not this 'personal appearance' included a showing of her latest film.

Both for artistic and commercial reasons, it was to be expected that the new management would continue the series of special *Ring* cycles that had been initiated by Gatti. This it did with a performance of *Das Rheingold* on 6 February, in which the participants were Maison (Loge), Habich (Alberich), Kappel (Fricka), Branzell (Erda), Manski (Freia), Hofmann (Fasolt), List (Fafner), Schorr (Wotan), Windheim (Mime), and Clemens (Froh). Artur Bodanzky was the conductor, as he was for all the remaining performances. Flagstad was the Brünnhilde on 11 February in *Die Walküre*, with Kappel, Melchior, List, Hofmann (Wotan), and Branzell ; in *Siegfried* on 19 February the Brünnhilde was Kappel, with Melchior, Windheim, Schorr, Habich, List, Branzell and Fleischer ; but Flagstad was present again for *Götterdämmerung* on the 27th, with Melchior, Branzell, Schorr, and List. The other dramas of the cycle were *Die Meistersinger* on 5 March, with Hofmann (Sachs), Rethberg, Branzell, Maison, Habich, List, Huehn, and Clemens ; and *Tannhäuser* on 12 March, in which Pinza made one of his infrequent appearances in German opera as the Landgrave, with Lehmann, Branzell, Melchior, Schorr, and Fleischer. There was also an evening cycle of the Nibelungen dramas, beginning on 15 February, in which Flagstad sang only the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde. However, Easton returned to the company on 29 February, to sing Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, with Althouse, List, Kappel, and Hofmann.

First Spring Season

THE feat of carrying to a successful conclusion a season that he had not planned himself would no doubt have won Johnson a larger measure of praise if there had not stretched before him another season, for which he was more personally responsible. This was the much discussed spring season, designed to provide young singers (and particularly Americans) with an opportunity for displaying their talents. It could not properly be described as an opportunity for training, as few of the new singers were heard more than once. There was the hope, too, that the performances would attract a new segment of the public, which would respond to the lure of opera in the Metropolitan (if not Metropolitan opera) at a top price of three dollars.[25] A tentative two weeks was announced, with the hint that the season would be extended if the patronage warranted it.

What was to constitute excellence for this season was demonstrated by the opening performance of *Carmen* on 11 May, in which the admirable Castagna's Carmen and the polished José of Armand Tokatyan were paired with the throaty Toreador of Carlo Morelli and the *petit-point* Micaëla of Natalie Bodanskaya. A reduced chorus and orchestra collaborated with Papi, whose relief in escaping the Ponselle Carmen was manifest in the spirit of his conducting. When the season resumed two nights later (the performing schedule omitted Thursday as well as the usual Tuesday) it was with a *Rigoletto* in which only Morelli, as the Jester, had sung his role in the Metropolitan previously. Bentonelli was heard as the Duke, and the cast included Emily Hardy (Gilda), John Gurney (Sparafucile), Anna Kaskas (Maddalena), Jarna Paul (a Page), and Norman Cordon (Monterone). Among them Kaskas, Gurney, and Cordon were invited to con-

[25] That this was a distinction recognized by the management was reflected in its decision not to consider an appearance in this season an official Metropolitan debut, or to permit the singers to use the commercially valuable 'of the Metropolitan Opera Association' beside their names.

tinue their association with the Metropolitan, and the last named has laid the foundations for a substantial career.

There were only two productions during the season in which the interests were more substantial than a mere succession of untried and generally inept singers. They were antithetical, both in substance and quality. The good one was an Englished version of Smetana's *Die Verkaufte Braut* ; the other, a production of *Orfeo ed Eurydice* presented by the American Ballet Ensemble. Though there was an inclination to vulgarize the healthy peasant humour of Smetana, the combination of fortunate casting and a spirited production preserved the early performances of this version from injustice. Aside from some dubious witticisms, the translation by 'Graham Jones' (a pseudonym for Madeleine Marshall, aided by several members of the cast) was both literate and singable. Muriel Dickson, from the D'Oyly Carte company, was introduced as a light-voiced, pretty-faced Marie on 15 May, Louis D'Angelo showed a remarkable aptitude for buffo singing as Kezal, and Mario Chamlee was rescued from the radio to sing Hans. However, the conspicuous success of the evening was earned by George Rasely, a singer largely of concert experience, whose merits as the stuttering Wenzel were humorous as well as musical. The others of the well-balanced cast included Kaskas (Agnes), Gurney (Micha), Cordon (Springer), Wilfred Engelman (Kruschina), Lucille Browning (Kathinka), and Bodanskaya (Esmeralda). Pelletier was the conductor.[26]

Its history of repetitions was not duplicated by the *Orfeo* production, which found the ballet enacting the drama on the stage, with a company of singers contributing their share from the pit. The production had been designed by Balanchine and Paul

[26] There was more than slight carping in the press at the activities of the ballet, especially for their apparent ineptness in the *Polka*. Of this, Lincoln Kirstein has written in his *Blast at Ballet*, New York, 1938: '. . . the ballet found, to its grief, that the orchestral score had cuts made in it from a previous production, which were not restored for the present one. The rehearsing had been done in the studio to save money. When the dancers were approaching their climax on the stage, the orchestra stopped suddenly. The conductor had forgotten about the cuts. . .'

Tchelitchev (in three weeks' time, it was later disclosed). It was described by one commentator as 'a curiosity of a chilly spring.' He had no way of knowing that its sponsors saw 'Hell as a concentration camp, with flying military slave-drivers lashing forced labor ; the Elysian Fields as an ether dream, a desiccated bone-dry limbo of suspended animation, and Paradise as the eternity we know from a Planetarium arrayed on the astronomical patterns of contemporary celestial science.' [27] All the uninitiated could observe was recondite choreography interpreted by Lew Christensen (Orfeo), Jeanne Pengelly (Eurydice) and William Dollar (Amor), ill matched with the unclassic singing of Kaskas (Orfeo) and Maxine Stellman (Eurydice). The unsuggestive scenery was painted by Joseph Novak, and Edward Warburg, a sponsor of the ballet, shared the cost of the whole venture. Richard Hagemann returned to the Metropolitan after many years' absence to conduct the performance. (Hagemann's presence was due in part to a plan to produce his *Caponsacchi* in this season, but it was held over for the next winter.) There was but one repetition.

The other interests of this season were wholly vocal, with scarcely any performance lacking at least one debut. Since the Metropolitan categorized these singers separately, a catalogue of their names will suffice for this record. Joseph Royer sang Escamillo in *Carmen* on 16 May at a matinée, and Nicholas Massue was the Duke of a *Rigoletto* on that evening. Rosa Tentoni, a singer of considerable vocal endowment and dramatic intensity, was the Santuzza in a *Cavalleria Rusticana* that shared the evening with *Orfeo* on 22 May. Sydney Rayner sang José in *Carmen* on 23 May.

If there was one positive evidence of this spring season, it was that the Metropolitan was not suitable for performances in warm weather. Its patrons discovered that the 'ventilating system' installed during the last orgy of renovation was that and nothing else ; it merely drew the air (warm or cold, as it happened) from the street and circulated it through the theatre. If the manage-

[27] *Ibid.*

ment had been able to draw its air supply from the lobby of one of Broadway's refrigerated movie theatres, its patrons would no doubt have been much more comfortable. It was also made plain that there was no substantially larger audience for inferior opera at $3 than there was at $7. Indeed, in some respects it was smaller, since there was as much social prestige for attendance at popular priced opera as there was in living on Park Avenue above 96th Street. There was both artistic merit and entertainment in the vernacular *Bartered Bride*. Its popular success was, one suspects, at least partially due to its quality.

1936–1937

AN encouraging aspect of the first Johnson season, beyond the ephemeral merits of this cast or that, had been the effort expended to improve the constant, permanent features of the company's strength — the engagement of the sober and scholarly Sachse to oversee the German productions, the substantial changes in the orchestra personnel. Proceeding along similar lines, Johnson in this second season added the talented Herbert Graf as stage director for the new French productions, moved again to increase the efficiency of the orchestra,[28] and added a new conductor to ease the burden on Artur Bodanzky.

Graf came to the Metropolitan with a curiously mixed background — a reputation for undisciplined 'modernism,' won for himself in Germany and in his direction of *Carmen* and *Der Rosenkavalier* (with revolving stages) for the Philadelphia Orchestra's opera season in 1934–35 ; and also with the encomiums of Toscanini for his direction of *Die Meistersinger* at the Salzburg festival of 1935. Though the situation in which Graf found

[28] The amount of renovation that could be imposed on this body was limited by the necessity for preserving stability in the organization. According to the director, the rule of procedure was not to change more than one man at a desk (the technical term for the pairing of players) in a single season. After four seasons, the efficiency of the group has been enormously heightened. It is now practically on a par with the orchestra of the Radio City Music Hall.

himself at the Metropolitan was unlike any in his experience, he demonstrated an adaptability that has steadily extended the latitude originally granted to him.

It would seem a reasonable supposition that a company acquiring a creative director of Graf's abilities would seek to make his first effort an auspicious one, by joining it to an opera of fine dramatic possibilities. However, Graf's first assignment on 26 December was to produce, of all things, *Samson et Dalila*, which is not an opera, in a dramatic sense, but was originally written as an oratorio ! That he nevertheless managed to infuse life into its leisurely action and actually made of the first act, in the words of Henderson, 'one of the memorable achievements of the Metropolitan' was testimony both to his ingenuity and his resourcefulness. Graf handled his choral groupings well, striving to make each member of the ensemble a participant in the drama rather than merely a member of Local 752 wearing a Philistinian costume for the evening. He had the theatric talent of Wettergren, as Dalila, to assist him ; also an imposing Samson in Maison and the fine High Priest of Pinza. This performance also saw the introduction of Maurice de Abravanel as conductor. There was approbation for his youth and his vigour, but some little dissatisfaction with his aversion for subtlety. It was suggested that there might be more evidence of this when he was more familiar with the auditorium.

There was abundant opportunity for this in the schedule of his later activities, which included *Lakmé* on 30 December, *Lohengrin* on 11 January, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* on 14 January, *Manon* on 13 February, and *Tannhäuser* on 19 March, but little occasion for an alteration of opinion. At best de Abravanel was a competent *routinier*, more often less than that. If his engagement was by choice, the selection was amazing, considering the gifts of a native conductor such as Alexander Smallens. If it was based on other reasons, they were never disclosed. All the remaining *Samsons* were conducted by de Abravanel, and the variations in cast included the appearance of Chase Baromeo as the High Priest on 9 January, Julius Huehn in the same role on 18 January, and Martinelli as Samson on the 28th.

The steady procession of American operas which Gatti had offered in his last years (beginning in 1930, they included *Peter Ibbetson, Emperor Jones,* and *Merry Mount*) had come to an end with *In the Pasha's Garden* in 1934. The reluctance of the new management to continue this downward progression was an understandable one, but there was also its obligation to the public to be considered. Thus when the rehearsals of Hagemann's *Caponsacchi* (which had a record of performance in Germany) for the first spring season showed that it was a more ambitious project than had been surmised, its *première* was withheld for the winter season.

When that finally occurred on 4 February, its elaborate ballets, involved libretto (based on Browning's *The Ring and the Book*), and several changes of scenery suggested that there were valid production reasons for charging the higher price for it. However, its musical distinctions were eminently modest. They included a charming Lullaby in the manner of the composer's drawing-room songs, and some other passages of gracious melodic writing. But its generous eclecticism, its lack of individuality, either in writing or scoring, were no encouragement for the partisans of American opera. Tibbett roared, rather than sang, his way through the leading male role, with Jepson as a decorative Pompilia, and Chamlee as Caponsacchi. The best accomplishment was the Pope of Norman Cordon. One frank commentator reported, flatly, that the composer had 'missed his vocation.'

The day was a busy one at the Metropolitan, for in the afternoon it brought back to attention *Le Coq d'Or,* not as the ballet-pantomime of Gatti's production, but as pure opera. Lily Pons danced as well as sang in her performance of the Queen, without suggesting that she had found a new career, and Thelma Votipka struggled dutifully with the music of the Cockerel. However, the production had one redeeming merit — the burlesque caperings of Pinza as King Dodon, a richly humorous achievement worthy to be ranked with his Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* Papi was the conductor. This salient virtue was more than could be found in another of the season's restorations, the Graf production of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann.* The director had apparently discovered

that the Metropolitan stage contained a full assortment of trapdoors, which thereafter played a leading, and misguided, part in his scheme. Tibbett undertook the four roles of Lindorf, Coppelius, Dappertutto, and Dr. Miracle, filling them with sneering laughter and an abundance of overacting. At the first performance, on 14 January, Stella Andreva made a debut to sing the Doll in a thin, acidulous voice, with Margaret Halstead as Giulietta, Petina as Niklausse, Rayner as Hoffmann, Burke as Antonia, and D'Angelo as Spalanzani and Crespel. There were better qualities in the performance of 23 January, in which Bovy sang all the important female roles capably, and Maison brought his fine abilities to the music of Hoffmann. Another re-arrangement of personnel brought Jepson to sing Giulietta for the first time on 8 February with Norena as Antonia and Andreva again as the Doll. Tibbett and Rayner were the principal male singers on this occasion. De Abravanel conducted all the performances as if it were *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

For those, however, who preferred such conducting in its appropriate place, there was a restoration of Wagner's early opera on 7 January, for the best of possible reasons : the Senta of Kirsten Flagstad. It is doubtful if New Yorkers had ever heard such a performance of Senta's Ballad, to which Flagstad imparted not only majestic vocal quality but a dramatic intensity that vitalized the whole opera. She was, moreover, favoured by the cooperation of an excellent cast, in which the only weakness was the small-scale Erik of Charles Kullmann, with Schorr again as the Dutchman, List as Daland, Kerstin Thorborg (Mary), and Hans Clemens (the Steersman). This primary deficiency was repaired on 27 January, when Maison sang his first Erik in the Metropolitan, with Doe replacing Thorborg, and Laufkötter as the Steersman. The vital direction of Bodanzky was a valuable factor in all the performances of the score.

The integral place of Flagstad in the company's scheme was reflected not only in the choice of *Die Walküre* for the opening night performance on 21 December, but also in the *Tristan* presented on the second night, 23 December. In the first, her joyous Brünnhilde even diverted the attention of the box-holders from each other to the stage ; and in the second, her Isolde 'rose to heights which have not been excelled at the Metropolitan,' said Henderson. In both performances there were contributions of quality by another of the fine singers who have enriched the Metropolitan from Scandinavia — the contralto Kerstin Thorborg. Both

her Fricka and her Brangaene were expressive of a cultivated artistry, a fine-grained conception of the roles that transcended the limited richness of her voice. She was seen later as Mary in *Der Fliegende Holländer* on 7 January, as Erda in *Siegfried* on 22 January, and as Venus in *Tannhäuser* on 25 January. In the *Tristan* mentioned above, Karl Laufkötter, a lyric tenor aspiring to a place the Metropolitan had not truly filled since the departure of George Meader, made his debut as the Shepherd. There was competence but no startling quality in his early efforts, but he performed with genuine artistry as Mime in the *Siegfried* of 22 January, elaborating his good delivery of the text with many relevant dramatic details.

There were two other additions to the Metropolitan's German singers in this season, who began at extremes of prominence and progressed diametrically to the opposite pole. Irene Jessner, who was modestly introduced as the successor to Editha Fleischer as Hänsel, in *Hänsel und Gretel* on 24 December (with Habich, Mario, and Doe) has endured to become one of the most versatile members of the company. The other, Gertrud Rünger, began at the high point of Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* on 3 February (with Rethberg, Thorborg, Schorr, List, and Melchior) and thereafter declined steadily. The hard-working Jessner was not averse to service as a Walküre or a Rhinemaiden, and her sound musicianship as well as her adaptability have carried her to increasingly more important assignments. Rünger, however, was a contralto of reputation in Europe who aspired to a career as a dramatic soprano. Her voice was not apt for this purpose, and she was embarrassed not only by the high standards set for Brünnhildes in New York by Flagstad, but also by the loss of her helmet at the climax of the second act and a vain effort to retrieve it as she chaperoned Sieglinde from the stage. Later she was heard as Fricka in *Das Rheingold* on 9 February, as Ortrud in *Lohengrin* on 3 March, and as Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung* on 20 March. In the last of these, she was an emergency replacement for Flagstad. When her vocal equipment was not too severely pressed, as Ortrud or Fricka, Rünger asserted her right to serious consideration as a well-equipped singer. However, even in these roles, she was below the quality of the Metropolitan's established singers.

The Metropolitan's search for a soprano to share the heavy Italian repertory with Ponselle (who had virtually retired from that field) and Rethberg (who was never suited to it) brought the portly figure of Gina Cigna to prominence as Aïda on 6 February. The evidences of her Italian experience were plain in the firm outline and dramatic conception of her singing. However, there was also a thin edge of wear on her tones, and a

prominent tremolo that would never have pleased American taste, even if the condition of the voice were healthier. With her were Martinelli, Castagna, Morelli (Amonasro), Pinza (Ramfis) and Cordon (the King). Panizza conducted. There was greater satisfaction with her Leonora in *Il Trovatore* on 11 February (with Castagna, Martinelli, Lazzari, and Morelli), possibly because there were fewer exposed passages, a more accessible outlet for her emotionalism.

Apparently the director and his advisers were optimistic of her success, for both *La Gioconda* and *Norma* were returned to the repertory on her behalf. There was little of the vocal virtuosity to make the first of these palatable when it was produced on 18 February, with Martinelli, Castagna as Laura, Doe as La Cieca, Morelli, and Lazzari ; and the second suffered by Cigna's lack of vocal control and Martinelli's indisposition when it was introduced on 20 February. However, Castagna's Adalgisa and Panizza's conducting (for both) were to be remembered. Before Cigna concluded her brief engagement, *La Gioconda* was presented again, on 24 February with Bampton as Laura.

Though Johnson was blessed by the presence of Flagstad (much as Gatti had inherited Caruso from Conried, and Conried the same singer from Grau) he had lost an integral strength of the company when Bori retired at the close of his first season. However, the debut of Bidu Sayao in *Manon* on 13 February provided the company with a more acceptable addition than any one had dared to hope for. Brazilian in origin, Sayao had been heard by New Yorkers both in recital and with the Philharmonic (in Debussy's *La Damoiselle Élue*) without arousing rapture. Her Manon, however, was a remarkably stageworthy creation, and well enough sung to suggest that her slight figure and carefully inflected voice were, essentially, the materials of an operatic career. Her associates were Rayner (Des Grieux), Bonelli (Lescaut), and Baromeo (Comte des Grieux).

The girlish charm of her Manon also lent an extra-vocal appeal to her singing of Violetta's music in *La Traviata*, on 6 March, with Kullmann and Brownlee (Germont *). Its style was hardly in the tragic mould of Sembrich or Bori, but there was both fluency and neatness in her singing. The same fragility ornamented her Mimi in *La Bohème* on 22 March,

with Kullmann, Brownlee, Cehanovsky, Pinza, and Stella Andreva (Musetta). The last named of these was engaged for service in the French, German, and Italian repertory (together with Jessner, she was to replace the absent Fleischer), but neither her Doll in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* on 14 January, in which she made her debut, her Forest Bird in *Siegfried* on 22 January, her Shepherdess in *Tannhäuser* on 25 January, nor the Musetta entered above gave evidence of such quality. There was a residue of musicianship in all of these, but her voice and her style were dwarfed by the expanses of the Metropolitan.

This was also a detriment to the singing of Vina Bovy, who made her debut as Violetta in *La Traviata* on 24 December, with Tibbett and Martini. She had excellent command of her light rather penetrating voice, though there was no remarkable personality in her singing. Bovy was more gracious than well advised in attempting to replace an indisposed colleague as Gilda in *Rigoletto* on 28 December, for the role was not for her. However, she was highly commended for her part in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* of 23 January (in which she sang the three principal female roles) especially for her Antonia. The other new female singer in leading roles of this season was the American Marion Bruce Clark, who nevertheless chose to identify herself as Franca Somigli, the name by which she was known in Italy. Aside from a marked tremolo, there was knowledge in her singing as Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* on 8 March (with Jagel, Huehn, Petina, Engelman, and Cordon). But this vocal deficiency also was prominent in her Mimi in *La Bohème* on 12 March, and was apparently a permanent trait of her vocal method. A final variation from the female personnel of the seasons immediately preceding was provided by the reappearance of Gladys Swarthout, now a celebrity of the films and the radio. Her first role was Mignon on 13 March. She sang the music in the original low key, and delivered a pleasant, well-planned and quite unmoving performance of the role. The others of this Saturday broadcast were Antoine (Philine), Hackett (Meister), Oelheim (Frédéric), Pinza, Bada, and Cordon. Pelletier was the conductor. Swarthout was heard again in the same role on 26 March.

A singer of quality, destined for a sustained career at the Metropolitan, was the Australian John Brownlee, who made his debut, on 17 February, in a role he has rarely sung since then — the Jester in *Rigoletto* (with Antoine, Oelheim, Jagel, Baromeo, and Cordon). The rather dry quality and the restricted power of his voice (which have kept him from recognition as one of the great artists of the day) were particularly evident in this undertaking. Also, this part did not permit his considerable musical intelligence and his substantial artistry their full scope.

There was more evidence of Brownlee's basic abilities in his Henry Ashton in *Lucia* on 27 February (with Pons, Jagel, and Pinza) ; in his Germont in *La Traviata* on 6 March (with Sayao and Kullmann) — although his tone did not caress the Verdian melodic line as one would prefer — and particularly in his Lescaut in *Manon* on 11 March, with Sayao and Maison. That such character roles were his *forte* was emphasized by his believable Marcello in *La Bohème* on 22 March.

Also of British origin was the tenor Arthur Carron, who had sung in the spring season. He was granted further opportunities both because of the imposing size of his voice and the company's lack of accomplished tenors. Carron's official debut was made on 2 January as Canio in *Pagliacci*, with Burke and Tibbett. Near the end of the season an indisposition of Martinelli allowed Carron to appear as Rhadames in *Aïda* on 15 March, with Giannini, Bampton, Thomas, and Pinza. In both roles there was evident the scope and good metal of Carron's voice, but neither quality had been completely developed. Also, he was hampered by his background in English opera, his slight familiarity with Italian.

The Metropolitan's astonishing success with its Englished *Verkaufte Braut* in the spring season prompted not only the retention of that production for the winter, but also an endeavour to duplicate its appeal with a vernacular version of Domenico Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto.* Neither was conspicuously successful. Though Smetana's masterpiece was presented on Christmas night with the cast of the spring performance, there was a broadening of comic business and a further divergence from the simplicity of the original that offended those who valued the composer's genius more than the singers did. As for Cimarosa's *jeux d'esprit,* it attracted attention principally because Natalie Bodanya,[29] as the Sister, lost an intimate article of clothing in a moment of dramatic tension. Muriel Dickson (also of the spring season) was but a small-scale Carolina, while neither Petina as the old maid nor Rasely as Paolino were adept in the style of the music. D'Angelo was the Geronimo, Huehn

[29] This was the singer introduced in the spring season as Bodanskaya. Her name was changed in order to avoid confusion with the conductor Bodanzky.

the Count Robinson, and Panizza conducted. A translation made for the Juilliard School five years before was utilized, but the recitative moved slowly and there was little sparkle in the singing. There was, in all, no basis for comparison with such productions of Gatti's final year as *Don Pasquale*, with Bori and Pinza, or *La Serva Padrona* with Fleischer.

The addition of numerous American singers in the preceding season necessarily resulted in a number of impersonations new to the Metropolitan (often to the singers as well). Among these were Jepson's Marguerite and the Faust of Crooks in Gounod's opera on 1 January. Both were vocally prepossessing, though Crooks' familiar timidity in the use of his top register was needlessly prominent. Jepson sang fluently and with pleasant accuracy, but left her sketch of Marguerite's character largely undetailed. With them in the cast were Pinza (Méphistophélès) and Morelli (Valentin). Julius Huehn added Telramund to his list of Wagnerian impersonations on 11 January, in a *Lohengrin* with Flagstad, Melchior, Lawrence, and Hofmann. Vocally, this performance had several good qualities, but Huehn was yet to develop dramatic subtlety. For Charles Kullmann, the season was a memorable one for his first Walther in *Die Meistersinger* on 12 February, and, oppositely, his first Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* on 18 March. Curiously, there was more to admire in the tenor's treatment of the more difficult assignment. His Walther had the benefit of study with Toscanini for a Salzburg performance, and it was attractively youthful and impulsive, the music sung with a good deal of feeling for the melodic line. Too often, however, Kullmann was a visible but inaudible member of the ensemble. Also in this cast were Lehmann, Schorr, Branzell, Habich, List, Huehn, and Laufkötter, whose David * had many points of resemblance to Kullmann's Walther. As Pinkerton the American was plausibly nautical, but his is not a voice to challenge the sounds produced by the long line of Italian tenors to sing this role at the Metropolitan, even in the company of Fisher's Cio-Cio-San.

The year's Wagner cycle began on 9 February, with the traditional opening of *Das Rheingold* sung by Schorr, Hofmann (Fasolt), Habich, Maison, Rünger (Fricka *), Branzell, Huehn, Manski, Clemens (Froh), List and Laufkötter. Flagstad was the Brünnhilde in the three succeeding dramas, an admirable policy not often enough encountered. In *Die Walküre* on 17 February her associates were Melchior, Schorr, Rethberg, and List ; in *Siegfried* on 22 February, Melchior, Schorr, Laufkötter, Habich, List, and Branzell ; and in *Götterdämmerung* on 2 March, Melchior, Hofmann, Schorr (Gunther), Habich, Branzell, and Manski. To quote the most qualified observer : 'Flagstad's singing of the Love Duet in *Siegfried* was one of the most flawless pieces of pure vocal technic ever

heard on the stage of the Metropolitan.' Added to the *Ring* were *Die Meistersinger* on 12 March, with Lehmann, Branzell, Schorr, Kullmann, Habich, Laufkötter, and List ; and a final performance of *Der Fliegende Holländer* on 18 March with Flagstad, Doe (Mary), Maison, Schorr, and List (Daland). Bodanzky conducted all the performances. The evening cycle duplicated the cast above for *Das Rheingold* on 20 February, but Rünger was the Brünnhilde for *Die Walküre* on 27 February, with Lehmann, Meisle (Fricka), Althouse, Hofmann, and List. *Siegfried* was given on 13 March with Flagstad, Melchior, Doe, Hofmann, Habich, List, and Andreva ; and though Flagstad was scheduled to sing the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde on 20 March, she was indisposed and replaced by Rünger. This hardly added distinction to a cast that otherwise offered Althouse as Siegfried, Huehn as Gunther *, Hofmann, Jessner (Gutrune), Branzell, and Habich. Bodanzky led the entire cycle.

A dubious practice that had first manifested itself at the house during Gatti's regime returned in this season, and with a persistence that suggested it had become a definite policy. This was the selection of some of the outstanding events of the operatic calendar for presentation as benefits — that is, outside the regular subscription series. There was no obligation, of course, for the management to consider its subscription patrons in this matter at all, since the only responsibility was to present a different opera on each subscription night. However, the choice of the first *Fliegende Holländer* with Flagstad for a benefit (on 7 January), and also the first *Coq d'Or* with Pons and Pinza (on 4 February) was hardly a pleasure to those subscribers who regard such privileges to be a part of their subscription investment. Granted that such attractions had considerably more salability for the benefit's sponsors, it was nevertheless an evasion of the company's debt to its primary patrons — the subscribers — to eliminate these functions from the stipulated series.

Second Spring Season

WHETHER for one reason or another [30] (several were suggested), Johnson relinquished his position as director of this spring sea-

[30] The announcement, early in March, of his and Edward Ziegler's re-engagement for two years may have been one of them.

son to the pianist Lee Pattison. This was a source of no little mystery, for Pattison, though generally admired as a competent performer and an able teacher, was not known to possess any operatic experience. As a gesture toward civic participation, the formation of an Advisory Committee, of musicians, 'educators,' and theatre people was made known, but no evidence of their collaboration was apparent in the season itself.

There was again a procession of young, inexperienced singers, some of them equipped for an appearance on this stage, some of them not. The most elaborate venture of the season was the production of Walter Damrosch's *The Man Without a Country* on 12 May, with the Edward Everett Hale story rendered into a libretto by the poet Arthur Guiterman. This was a score utterly without distinction, regarded with a good deal more serious attention — because the name signed to it was Damrosch — than it would have been in any other circumstance. The music was thoroughly derivative, competently put together, orchestrated with a heavy, inelastic hand. At the *première* Damrosch made a speech in which he cited an absurd comparison of himself and the Verdi of *Falstaff* made by Deems Taylor,[31] merely because of their similar venerability. The composer conducted the performance himself, and enjoyed the benefits of an excellent performance of the principal female role (Mary Rutledge) by the well-endowed Helen Traubel. Arthur Carron was a robust but unromantic Philip Nolan, and the remainder of the long cast included Joseph Royer (Aaron Burr), John Gurney (Col. Morgan), George Rasely (Blennerhasset), Louis D'Angelo (Com. Decatur), and Donald Dickson (a Negro Boatman and Midshipman Denton).

The last of these, a virile-voiced and stageworthy baritone, was one of the more able singers presented in this season. He was a member of the opening night cast, on 3 May, in which the 'youth season' was inaugurated with a cast for *Faust* that included Leon Rothier (Méphistophélès) and Hilda Burke (Marguerite), Rayner, Dickson as Valentin, and Robert Nicholson (Wagner). At a subsequent *Faust* on 9 May, Ruby Mercer

[31] It will not be forgotten that Taylor's *Peter Ibbetson* was dedicated to Damrosch.

was the Marguerite, with Rothier and the others of the previous cast. Another aspiring soprano was Lucy Monroe, who revealed a hoydenish conception of Musetta when she first appeared in *La Bohème* with Tokatyan, Tentoni, Morelli, Cordon, and Cehanovsky on 10 May. Perhaps the most ill-equipped singer to be introduced in this season was youthful Thomas Thomas, winner of the Metropolitan's radio competition (sponsored by a famous paint company), who was heard as Silvio in *Pagliacci* on 16 May. There was quality in his voice, but only the most elementary sense of its use, and virtually no stage presence. The Tonio of this performance was the experienced Robert Weede, who found that the audience of the Metropolitan was no more immune to his robust singing of the Prologue than that of the Radio City Music Hall, where he had performed more frequently. Mercer (Nedda) and Rayner (Canio) were also in the cast. In the associated *Cavalleria*, the singers were Tentoni, Kaskas (Lola), Chamlee, and Royer (Alfio).

Mindful of the success of the *Bartered Bride*, the management hopefully presented it on the fourth night of the season (with Burke as Marie instead of Muriel Dickson) and also invested in an English translation of Rabaud's *Marouf* by Madeleine Marshall and George Meade. The first performance on 21 May was enlivened by Chamlee's understandable and suavely sung Marouf (a reversion to the specifications of the composer, who had authorized the use of a transposition when de Luca was presented as Marouf in 1917). However, the essence of popularity was not in this score, for all its pleasant tunes and rhythmic diversion. Nancy McCord made her debut as the Princess, singing well and posturing prettily. The others of the cast were D'Angelo (Sultan), Norman Cordon (Vizier), and George Rasely (Fellah). Pelletier conducted and Balanchine designed one of his better ballets for the second act.

From a vocal standpoint, the most interesting enterprise of the season was the presentation of Rose Bampton, listed as a contralto since her debut in 1932, as a dramatic soprano in *Il Trovatore* on 7 May. This, however, was no mystifying, overnight transition, for Bampton's tendencies to the higher range had been remarked on many occasions before, and it was merely the completion of a natural evolution of her voice. Her Leonora was carefully studied and securely sung, though not remarkable for

its dramatic impact. This aspect of the performance was left to Castagna as Azucena and Morelli as di Luna, somewhat less to Carron as Manrico. However, it was an effort in a direction that may eventually be to the benefit of both the singer and the Metropolitan.

Also of more than usual 'spring season' quality was the singing of Jennie Tourel, a French-Canadian, in *Mignon* on 16 May. She had been soundly schooled in Paris, a preparation that was evident in her delivery of Mignon's music. Actually, with Antoine as Philine, Tokatyan (Meister), Rothier (Lothario), Maria Matyas (Frédéric), and Cordon (Antonio) in the cast, it was a performance to compare favourably with those of the winter season. Later Tourel was heard as Carmen on 23 May, with Rayner, Morelli, and Charlotte Symons (Micaëla), though her abilities were hardly dynamic enough for this part. She has not appeared at the Metropolitan since then, nor has Margaret Daum, who made a promising debut as Musetta in *La Bohème* on 5 May, with Tentoni, Tokatyan, Morelli, Engelman, and Cordon.[32]

The spring season ventured into Wagner for the first time on 19 May, when *Lohengrin* was presented with Agnes Davis as Elsa. There was little integration in the cast that laboured diligently under the direction of Karl Riedel, and Davis in particular was overwhelmed by the surroundings. Dimitri Onofrei sang his Lohengrin with an engagingly Italian vocal quality, but also with a superfluity of Italian vocal mannerisms, with Ernst Fischer (an Austrian baritone) as an energetic but throaty Telramund, Margaret Halstead as Ortrud and Cordon a musicianly King. The audience was asked to consider the dramatic plausibility of sets designed by Kautsky and in use before 1914.

There was also dubious value (from an economic standpoint) in the *Carmen* that presented a Hippodrome cast of Castagna, Rayner, and Royer (Escamillo), with Bodanya as Micaëla, on 14 May. To be sure, there was a part of the Metropolitan orchestra, its chorus, and the Urban

[32] Daum had previously commended herself to New Yorkers with her skilful singing as Amelia in *Amelia al Ballo*, when Gian-Carlo Menotti's comedy was introduced at the New Amsterdam Theatre as a benefit for the Henry Street Settlement on 11 April, 1937. The cast included William Martin and Edwina Eustis, with Fritz Reiner conducting this and the performance of Milhaud's *Le Pauvre Matelot* that shared the bill. The Curtis School of Music was responsible for the original production.

sets to compensate for the $3 top price, but one could not avoid a recollection of the same principals in the same opera at one-third of the price but scarcely a quarter of a mile away. Also, when Rocco Pandiscio took the his large, ill-schooled voice for the first time in this house, as Amonasro on 26 May, it was in the comforting presence of Castagna and Rayner whose history of *Aïdas* included many at the Hippodrome. Burke was the Aïda in this performance (with a good deal of vocal discomfort) and Cordon the King. Here, too, an ancient set of curtains and drops was excavated for use from the warehouse, apparently a reflection of the thought that the audience had not paid the fee entitling it to inspect the more recent (but nevertheless threadbare) investiture by Rota and Rovescalli.

1937–1938

ALTHOUGH the baronial lavishness of production that had characterized most of the Metropolitan's twentieth-century history did not reappear in this season (nor has it yet, for that matter) there began to be apparent a planned economy of operatic enterprise that promised well. It was decided to risk not only a season two weeks longer than the fourteen that had been constant during the depression years, but to begin the season on 29 November, challenging the pre-Christmas slump invariably observed in the theatrical business. To this boldness, Johnson added the further daring of scheduling two new productions — Verdi's *Otello* and Gian-Carlo Menotti's *Amelia al Ballo* — and restoring to the repertory the three greatest operas of Richard Strauss, together with the indispensable *Don Giovanni*, the representative *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Roméo et Juliette*.

There was no one of these productions that one could hold forth as an example of the highest achievement in stagecraft, singing, or production ; all of them had their weaknesses, and several of them were thoroughly mediocre. But in virtually every instance the attitude expressed in their choice was a revolutionary one for the Metropolitan. Instead of producing the operas suitable to the singers at hand, Johnson apparently decided upon the scores that were necessary for the health of the repertory, thereafter seeking to find the singers suitable to the operas. There

were many shortcomings in the execution of this approach, but it was unquestionably a move in the proper direction.

As an immediate benefit were two of the most valid individual interpretations that had been seen at this house in years. One was an importation — the Elektra of Rose Pauly. The other sprang directly from the roster of the company itself and was (in consideration of the singer's background) an even more impressive accomplishment. This was the Otello of Giovanni Martinelli. The production may have been a gesture of official recognition for the singer's services to the company for over a quarter of a century ; but it is certain that Martinelli had done nothing in the preceding twenty-four years that will endure as long as this impersonation of his twenty-fifth season.

Partially this was owing to the character of the music Otello sings, as vocal suavity (which Martinelli no longer possesses) is only a lesser requisite for it. But he had appraised the tragic essence of the character perfectly, re-enacting it with a dramatic potency that was altogether believable. If there was not the ideal trumpet quality in his voice for the embittered 'Sangue! Sangue !' there was a sufficing approximation of it. In contrast to the mannerisms in which Tibbett immersed his artificial and stagy Iago, Martinelli's creation was worthy of a Salvini. Tibbett sang his music effectively, though his voice was taxed by the climaxes of the role. There was a constant difficulty with the Desdemonas in this production. Cigna was indisposed, and unable to take part in the final rehearsals for the first performance. In consequence, Norena sang the dress rehearsal, but it was Rethberg who was smothered when the opera was finally given on 22 December. In the smaller roles were Massue (Cassio), Moscona (Lodovico), Votipka (Emilia), Paltrinieri (Roderigo), Cehanovsky (Montano), and Engelman (a Herald). Panizza controlled the performance with excellent discretion. The garish and unconvincing *décor* was the work of Donald Oenslager.

It was expected that Cigna would make her first appearance as Desdemona on 15 January, but again a substitute was necessary, this time

the capable Jessner displaying a surprising aptitude for Italian opera. She was also heard on 5 February, when Carron was the vigorous but inexperienced Otello. In the eighth performance (the most for the opera in a single season at the Metropolitan) Jessner and Martinelli shared the stage with Carlo Tagliabue, whose rough but intense projection of Iago's music was a more stirring experience than Tibbett's. This performance marked the return to activity of Martinelli after a lengthy indisposition that came upon him suddenly during a Saturday *matinée* performance of *Aïda* on 26 February. He barely completed his 'Celeste Aïda' before staggering from the stage in apparent distress. For one of the few times in the Metropolitan's history, the curtain was dropped while an opera was in progress. The opera was not resumed until a replacement (Jagel) had been hurriedly summoned. As a further complication, the performance was being broadcast nation-wide, causing much distress in radio circles. Eventually it was announced that Martinelli's ailment was acute indigestion. However, he returned for the final *Otello* on 18 March, and was in excellent condition for the observance of his silver jubilee on 20 March. There were gifts and felicitations, and the guest of honour (who did not hesitate to announce his age as 53) sang excerpts from *La Bohème* (with Rethberg), *Otello* (with Tibbett), and *La Juive* (with Rothier). Also participating in the concert were Flagstad, Melchior, Schorr, Crooks, Fisher, Jepson, Swarthout, Pinza, Antoine, and Jagel.

Pauly's Elektra, though less an occasion for pride in a home-grown product, was a triumph of bitter eloquence, a lacerating study in sheer emotional fury. She came to the Metropolitan somewhat inadvertently, in consequence of her magnificent singing at a concert performance of *Elektra* by the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra on 18 March 1937. Previously Pauly had been virtually unknown in America. Against the glowering background of Urban's impressive setting and with Thorborg's Klytemnestra and Jessner's Chrysothemis as complementary distinctions, Pauly made her debut an impressive one on 7 January. The other principals were Schorr (Orestes) and Althouse (Aegisthus). There were some dissident opinions concerning the merits of Graf's direction, but the carefully worked-out groupings, in the manner of a Greek frieze, were a definite contribution to the drama, if slightly self-conscious. Bodanzky's conducting of the score had its familiar impact and definition. He also di-

rected the other performances of this season, save the final one on 3 March, which was taken over by Erich Leinsdorf. This performance also saw the only change of cast, Enid Szantho replacing Thorborg as Klytemnestra. There was an intention to present Pauly as Ortrud in *Lohengrin* on 13 January, but her place was taken by Lawrence, for the usual, but no less mystifying reason, of 'indisposition.'

For the first time in its history, the Metropolitan presented three works by Strauss in a single season, when *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Salome* and *Elektra* were heard in rotation. The first returned to the repertory as early as the second night of the season, on 1 December, with Lehmann again as the Marschallin and List as Ochs. However, there was a new Octavian, Kerstin Thorborg, singing the music well, but treating the dramatic action a little ponderously. Fisher was a vocally timid Sophie and Schorr a completely absurd Faninal, in effect transforming his household into a suburban Valhalla. Bodanzky conducted. Marita Farell, a singer of small voice and slight ability, was the Sophie in the performance of 20 December, but the level of singing in this role remained low. The *Salome* production remained the one of the last production (by Oenslager) somewhat altered by the use of an interior proscenium to frame the stage setting. Marjorie Lawrence was a more than ordinarily good-looking Salome, but her dramatic action was self-conscious and almost prim. However, hers was unquestionably an improvement on the Metropolitan's previous Salome — Göta Ljungberg — though well short of the best performance seen by New Yorkers since that of Mary Garden : the Salome of Erica Darbo at the Lewisohn Stadium in the summer of 1937. In the cast with Lawrence was Maison, singing a splendid Herod, Huehn as an uncommonly imposing Jochanaan, and Branzell an excellent Herodias. In the smaller roles were Laufkötter (Narraboth), Cordon (First Nazarene), and Lucille Browning (a Page). Another unfamiliar feature was the incisive conducting of Ettore Panizza. As for Graf's production, it was the most unified he had achieved at the Metropolitan, even if Lawrence did appear in an ostentatious and almost comical head-dress. In the performance of 14 March, Manski replaced Thorborg as Herodias.

The only opera wholly new to the Metropolitan to be presented in this season was Menotti's *Amelia al Ballo* (in the English version used, *Amelia Goes to the Ball*) which had its first performance in the house on 3 March. A bright performance by Muriel Dickson as Amelia, a broadly comic one by Chamlee as

the Lover, and a neat characterization by Brownlee as the Husband were all aids in establishing the effectiveness of Menotti's ingenious little work. As the first work of a composer still in his twenties (nominally an American despite his Italian birth, because he had been trained at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia), there was much to admire in the sureness of the orchestration, the skill with which the dialogue was handled.[33] However, the suggestions of Wolf-Ferrari were as prominent as the absence of any traits to be identified as Menottian. The production was the one by Oenslager designed for the Curtis performances,[34] adapted for the Metropolitan by the use of an inner proscenium and a raised stage. The others of the cast were Cordon (Police Chief), Symons (a Maid), and Browning (a Cook) with Panizza conducting. At the *première*, it was followed by *Elektra* ! However, it later had the more suitable companionship of *Le Coq d'Or* on 9 March, and *Salome* on 14 March.

The other additions to the repertory in this season had less to commend them in actual performance, though two of them at least — *Don Giovanni* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* — belong in the schedule of every opera house of pretension. For those who believe that an inferior *Giovanni* — granted that the orchestra at least can play the undying score faithfully — is better than no *Giovanni* at all, its revival on 1 January was an occasion for rejoicing. The weakness in the female roles that had plagued this production since its first presentation half a dozen years before was still in evidence. Giannini's Donna Anna *, however, was more equitable in style than any that had preceded her, even though the voice was shrill, the outline of the sustained phrases occasionally misrepresented. As for Cigna (Elvira *) and Farell (Zerlina *), each singer was insufficient in her own way — the first for her misconception of the music, the second for her lack of a satisfactory voice. Also new was the Ottavio of Richard Crooks, properly reticent in acting but too often stilted in the

[33] Menotti wrote his libretto in Italian and set it in that tongue, from which it was translated into English (by George Meade) for its local production.

[34] See p. 514

formation of the vocal line. A distressing tendency to burlesque marred Lazzari's formerly acceptable Leporello, and though Pinza's Don continued to develop, its limitations are thoroughly defined by the character of his voice. List was the Commendatore, and Panizza conducted.

A repetition on 17 January found Hackett an uncommonly knowing Ottavio, though his voice was no longer equal to the demands of the music, especially in the sustained phrases. John Brownlee's suave and insinuating Giovanni was seen for the first time on 17 March, but his excellent fidelity to the sense of the role was minimized by the size of the house and his limited vocal sonority. In this performance, Bampton made a valiant but insufficiently spirited attack on Donna Anna's music, with Jessner as Elvira (she had first sung the role on 9 February), Crooks, Farell, Lazzari, and Cordon (Il Commendatore *). Both Jessner and Cordon were worthwhile additions to the cast of this revival.

As the focus of another revival, there was the Figaro of John Charles Thomas when *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* was returned to the repertory on 22 January. Some of the music was brilliantly sung, but Thomas took many liberties with the score, and also tended to be more sedate in his acting than mercurial. The excellences of this performance were the splendid Basilio of Pinza, and the satirical caricature of the maid (in the Commedia dell'Arte spirit) of Irra Petina. To her acceptable singing of Rosina's music, Pons added Dell'Acqua's 'Villanelle' and an aria of Constanze from Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail.* The slight-voiced Almaviva was Bruno Landi, with Malatesta as Bartolo. Brownlee had an opportunity to exhibit his conception of Figaro on 28 February, displaying an intelligent comprehension of the part, and a lively sense of its comic possibilities. However, there was too little *bravura* in his tones to complete the conception in Brownlee's mind. Pons was again the Rosina (substituting the Proch 'Variations' for the Mozart aria she had previously sung in the Lesson Scene), with Lazzari as Bartolo, and the others in their accustomed places. In all the performances of this season, Papi's direction was a ponderable liability.

Perhaps the enterprise of least distinction in this season was the production of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* on 16 December. Sayao's Juliette was succeeded by Bovy's on 14 January, without materially altering the quality of the performance afforded by Crooks, Brownlee (Mercutio), Cordon (Capulet), and Browning (Stephano). On the first occasion, the Laurent was Pinza ; on the second, Rothier. De Abravanel conducted, much as he had conducted *Tannhäuser* and *Manon.* But in any circumstances, the Metropolitan did not possess the singers with the style to give a satisfactory account of this score.

In a long view, the most important acquisition of the Metropolitan in this season will no doubt prove to be Erich Leinsdorf, the first conductor since Bodanzky's advent in 1915 to indicate a flair for the Wagnerian repertory. (This excludes Serafin, whose efforts in this direction were limited.) Neither Riedel nor de Abravanel, who had been granted similar opportunities, demonstrated musical qualities to compare with those of Leinsdorf. He made his debut on 21 January as conductor of *Die Walküre*, with Flagstad, Rethberg, Thorborg, Hofmann, Althouse, and List. Of immediate evidence were his assured technique, his firm grasp of the performance, and his impressive energy. There were some sluggish moments in the first act, and the whole interpretation adhered closely to the lines defined by Bodanzky, a natural consequence of Leinsdorf's brief association with the company. He later directed *Elektra* on 3 March, performances of *Die Walküre* on the third and tenth, and a *Parsifal* on 13 April. Two days later, he relieved Bodanzky after the first act of *Parsifal*, thereafter completing the performance. In all of these there was evidence of genuine capacity, though no positive indication of Leinsdorf's personal inclinations as an interpreter. There could be no doubt, however, that the company had acquired its first truly qualified associate for Bodanzky.

The consciousness of another lack was manifest in the appearance of Jan Kiepura, Polish tenor, to sing Rodolfo in *La Bohème* on 10 February. For half a dozen years (since the departure of Gigli and Lauri-Volpi) the Metropolitan had been forced to rely on a limited group of tenors — Martinelli, Jagel, Hackett, Crooks, Maison, Kullmann, even Rayner and Carron — for the Italian and French repertory. There was monotony as well as inadequacy in this situation. Though Kiepura's vocal gifts were by no means astonishing — his unsensuous voice was generally hard-driven and subtleties were exceptional — there was a fervour and conviction in his impersonations that were not to be disregarded. However, this search for dramatic plausibility frequently ex-

tended to such extremes as a self-satisfied smirk and a brisk rubbing of hands when he heard Mimi's knock at the door in *La Bohème*, or a busy — and distracting — contemplation of the background when Carmen was delivering a solo aria in the third act scene at the smugglers' camp. With him in *La Bohème* were Sayao, Bodanya, Tagliabue, Cordon, and Cehanovsky.

His other roles in this season included Don José in *Carmen* on 14 February, with Castagna, Mario, and Pinza (who became hoarse in the third act and sang his fourth-act music *sotto voce*) ; the Duke in *Rigoletto* on 16 February, with Pons and Tibbett ; another Rodolfo on 18 February (in which Kiepura and Moore exchanged obviously arranged amenities after the first act, permitting each to take a bow alone) ; and another Duke in *Rigoletto* on 25 February, with Sayao and Tagliabue.

Some attempt was made to give flavour to the debut of Zinka Milanov, Yugoslavian soprano, by surrounding her engagement with an aura of mystery. Actually her name was not included on the list of new singers that was publicized before the season began, though several newspapers discussed her engagement as a confirmed fact. There were considerable expectations aroused by the reports of performances in which she had participated abroad with Toscanini, and some of them were fulfilled by the power and range of her voice when she made her debut in *Il Trovatore* on 17 December. However, there was a constant threat of unsteadiness in her singing, a disappointing lack of control. Had she the security of Castagna, who sang Azucena in a cast that included Tagliabue (di Luna *) and Jagel (Manrico), Milanov would have been an important acquisition despite her bulky physique and the restrictions it placed on her stage movements. Her other role in this season was *Aïda* (which she sang on 2 February, with Martinelli, Tagliabue, Cordon, Moscona, and Castagna) marred by the same weaknesses as her Leonora.

None of the other additions to the company's Italian personnel in this season was of striking quality. The most useful of them has been Carlo Tagliabue, possessor of a bullish voice and conventional interpretative ideas, who made his debut as Amonasro in an *Aïda* of 2 December. He

subsequently ranged through a generous list of baritone roles, both dramatic and lyric (di Luna in *Il Trovatore* on 17 December, Germont in *La Traviata* on 18 December, Marcello in *La Bohème* on 15 January, Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* on 22 January with Cigna * and Jagel, Rigoletto on 29 January, and Iago in *Otello* on 18 March). All of them were substantial, well-routined performances, but of little individuality and no great vocal distinction. An impressive bass voice was brought to the company by Nicola Moscona, of Greek background, who made his debut as Ramfis in *Aïda* on 13 December. Aside from appearances in this role and as Lodovico in *Otello* (the first on 22 December), Moscona did not further his career greatly in this season, possibly for lack of roles in his repertory. No such condition hampered Bruno Landi, a tenor of diminutive voice and size, who made his first appearance as the Duke in *Rigoletto* (with Sayao *, Tagliabue, and Pinza) on 12 January. He carried himself well and sang his music intelligently, but his attributes were not suited to the house. Of his other endeavours, he achieved the best results as Almaviva in *Il Barbiere* on 22 January. Previously he had been heard as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* on 15 January, and later sang Alfredo in *La Traviata* on 24 January.

There were few persons who were aware that the newest interpreter of German tenor roles at the Metropolitan this season was not wholly an unfamiliar artist, but had actually sung with another company in New York a half dozen years before. This was Carl Hartmann, the Siegfried in that music drama on 3 December, whose history included a previous trip to America in a company headed by Gadski. As the events of the season attested, Hartmann was a singer with a singular virtuosity in the music and action of the young Siegfried. In none of his later endeavours (Tannhäuser on 9 December, Tristan on 23 December, or Siegmund on 10 January) did Hartmann again reach the level of his Siegfried, though intelligence and good musical sense were evident in all of his impersonations.

With Hartmann in the cast of *Siegfried* in which he made his debut was an excellent new baritone, Adolf Vogel, as Alberich. He had considerably more voice than the usual interpreter of such roles, and a willingness to sing his music rather than merely to shout or declaim it. What might be sacrificed in dramatic impact was more than replaced by the pleasure of hearing Wagner's patterns as he designed them. There was little test of other abilities in his appearance as Biterolf in *Tannhäuser* on 27 December, but he delivered a thoroughly competent Beck-

messer in *Die Meistersinger* on 14 January, in which Thorborg sang Magdalena for the first time with excellent results. There was still absent the keen satire of Schützendorf's Beckmesser, but this is a role in which experience is a highly important factor. Vogel's Alberichs in *Das Rheingold* on 9 February and in *Götterdämmerung* on 1 March were highly commended, as was also his Klingsor in *Parsifal* on 18 March. There was also good vocal quality in the singing of Enid Szantho, who made her debut as Fricka in *Die Walküre* on 17 February, but little theatrical excitement. Her virtues of tone quality and phrasing were not sufficiently animated by dramatic fervour to carry off the Klytemnestra she attempted in *Elektra* on 3 March.

Despite the sceptical tone of the press for *The Man Without a Country* when it was introduced in the spring season, it was given again during the winter. However, there was little alteration in the reaction of either the public or the press. In the cast of the first performance, on 17 February, Traubel, Carron, and Rasely repeated their previous roles. Glenn Darwin, a Juilliard-trained bass-baritone, made his debut to sing Aaron Burr, and performed creditably. The songs formerly sung by Donald Dickson were divided between Daniel Harris and George Cehanovsky. In place of the composer, Pelletier conducted.

Perhaps the most striking new impersonation by an American singer in this season was the Santuzza of Giannini in *Cavalleria Rusticana* on 3 February. There was an enviable intensity in her manner, a boldness of approach, and a security in the singing of the music that inclined some listeners to recall the Santuzzas of Calvé and Destinn. Her singing flamed so strongly that it communicated fire to her collaborators — Jagel, Petina, and Tagliabue. There was also substantial progress in this season for Jessner, who beside her Desdemona, sang Elsa in *Lohengrin* for the first time on Christmas Day, with Melchior, Huehn, Lawrence, and Hofmann. This, and her Eva in *Die Meistersinger* on 11 February, testified again to the musicianship of the singer.

The beginning of a new tradition in operatic training was suggested in the first appearance of Jepson as Violetta in *La Traviata* on 24 February. Formerly American singers perfected their roles at La Scala or the Opéra Comique. Jepson, however, introduced the tradition of the *atelier*

Goldwyn, having sung a substantial part of the role in a film entitled the *Goldwyn Follies* before attempting it in the Metropolitan. Her acting was hardly dynamic, but she sang the music cleanly, and with a good sense of its style. An unintentionally comic note was provided by Landi's Alfredo, the little tenor spending most of the performance looking up to Jepson and Tibbett (Germont). Some of the most sumptuous singing that Castagna has done in the house was to be heard in her Dalila * on 8 December, and there was also a pleasant spriteliness in the Musetta * sung by Dickson two days before. Less could be said of Brownlee's Escamillo * in *Carmen* on 6 January, for the music was no more suitable for him than it is for the average baritone.

The steady improvement in the playing of the Metropolitan's orchestra was a particular enhancement of this season's Wagner cycle. For the first time since these performances were initiated, the virtues of the several casts were not offset by untoward utterances by the brasses and reeds. Suavity replaced strain in the sounds produced by the strings, and even the solo viola passage during Walther's first interview with Eva in *Die Meistersinger* sounded less like a clarinet badly played.

The *matinée* cycle began on 3 February, with a performance of *Tannhäuser* in which Jessner replaced Lehmann (who was indisposed) as Elisabeth. In the cast were Branzell, Melchior, Tibbett, and Hofmann, with de Abravanel conducting. An immature Erda * by Anna Kaskas marred *Das Rheingold* on the 9th, but there was solid virtue in Vogel's Alberich, and a familiar standard of quality in the singing of Schorr, Branzell, Hofmann, List, Maison, Laufkötter, Althouse (Froh), and Huehn. Flagstad made her first appearance in the series on 17 February, as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* with Rethberg, Szantho (Fricka, debut), Melchior, List, and Schorr. Bodanzky conducted, as he did the remaining performances of the cycle. They were *Siegfried*, with Flagstad, Melchior, Schorr, Branzell, Laufkötter, Vogel, List, and Bodanya on 24 February ; *Götterdämmerung* on 1 March, with Flagstad, Melchior, Hofmann as a beardless Hagen, Huehn (Gunther), Branzell, Jessner, and Vogel (Alberich) ; and *Die Meistersinger* with Jessner, Branzell, Kullmann, List, Huehn, Schorr, and Vogel on 9 March. Kaskas was again the Erda in *Das Rheingold* on 26 February, when the evening cycle began, but there was a further liability in the Loge of Hans Clemens, as substitute for an ailing Maison. The cast was otherwise as it had been. Perhaps in atonement, the management presented Flagstad as the *Walküre* Brünnhilde (even though she had sung Isolde the night before) when Lawrence was unable to appear. Leinsdorf conducted the performance

(in which the additional singers were Rethberg, Althouse, Meisle, Hofmann, and List), receiving a reception that belied his brief career with the company. In *Siegfried* on 12 March, Flagstad was the Brünnhilde, with Melchior, Hofmann, Vogel, List, Doe, and Laufkötter ; but Lawrence completed the series on 19 March as the Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung*, with Melchior, Huehn, Branzell, Manski, and Vogel.

The collaboration of the American Ballet and George Balanchine (see p. 482) for which there had been so many high hopes when it was announced, terminated in the spring of this year, after three seasons of mutual sufferance. The exchange of acrimonious comments (each side contending that *it* had initiated the separation) after the fact became known, was merely a surface show of the ill-feeling that had steadily worsened since the *Orfeo* fiasco. Whether it was better to suffer the vivacious blunders of a youthful inexperienced ballet, or the unanimated accuracy of a well-schooled venerable group, was a problem for the management to solve. But it was plain from the outset that there were both physical and ideological difficulties to invalidate the possibility of true harmony in this collaboration.[35] What Balanchine could give to an opera company when his talents flourished at their best was evident in his superb *divertissement* for *Carmen*. But there were many other works in which his individuality came sharply into conflict with the Metropolitan's system of routine performances, without yielding a result that was brilliant as ballet or unified as operatic production. Too often the intentions of the choreographer were widely at variance with the whole spirit of the Metropolitan's performance, say, of *Aïda* or *La Juive*. This is not to defend the quality of those performances, but merely to point out the friction that was inevitable in the circumstances. Balanchine endeavoured to make the ballet a fresh and vital element of the Metropolitan's productions ; it is doubtful that the management desired anything quite so aggressive.

Among the works the ballet produced at the Metropolitan,

[35] There is an eloquent exposition of this whole situation in Lincoln Kirstein's *Blast at Ballet*.. The point of view naturally is the ballet-sponsor's, but the documentation is suggestive.

independent of its participation in the routine operatic performances, were : *The Bat* (to music of Johann Strauss), *Serenade* (to music of Schubert), and *Apollon Musagètes* (to music of Stravinsky).[36]

1938–1939

How much a single singer can influence the repertory of an opera house was exemplified in the season preceding this, when *Tristan* and Kirsten Flagstad appeared together eight times, a larger total than had been amassed for this score in the seasons of 1924, 1925, and 1926 combined. However, there is hardly a similar explanation for the phenomenon that the opera with the second largest total of performances in the season of 1937–38 was not *Aïda, Pagliacci,* or *Faust,* but the supposedly dour and forbidding *Otello.* For this the credit must be Johnson's ;[37] and the indication that it was a conscious policy rather than a fortuitous happening was contained in the additions to the repertory announced for his fourth season (1938–39). *Falstaff* was to be added to the Verdian revival that began with *Otello* (*Simon Boccanegra* was also brought back during this season) ; another attempt was to be made with *Orfeo,* this time as a traditional singing performance ; and *Boris* was to be retrieved from the silence in which it had lingered since the last Chaliapine performance. The French list was to be amplified by the addition of *Louise* and *Thaïs,* and the German one with *Fidelio.*

In proportion to the season's length (again set at sixteen weeks) this policy assured the subscriber a larger percentage of representative operas than had been his pleasure in any season within

[36] This was first given by the American Ballet at a Stravinsky evening on 28 April 1937, when the composer was present to conduct *Apollon, Le Baiser de la Fée,* and his new *Card Party.* It was expected that all would be included in the following season's repertory of the Metropolitan, but *Apollon* alone was presented. According to Kirstein, this was because it required only a string orchestra, whereas the others would have necessitated a number of rehearsals by the full orchestra. (The original performances were played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra.)

[37] In all this discussion the credit and discredit alike have been assigned to Johnson as nominal head of the company, though both Edward Ziegler and Earle Lewis (who was raised to a status of assistant manager in this season) have a voice in determining policies.

memory. For each of the revivals there was excellent musical and historical reason. Taken together with the three Strauss scores still in the repertory, the steady presentation of *Don Giovanni*, the always substantial Wagner list, and the revivals of the preceding year, traditional opera at least was handsomely represented in the Metropolitan repertory.

As a production, this year's *Orfeo* established a level of casting and presentation that is the highest yet attained by Johnson in his four seasons. As a basic virtue (when the production was seen for the first time on 26 November) was the handsome and consistently noble Orfeo of Kerstin Thorborg. Against a background of impressive and imaginative settings by Harry Horner, Graf elaborated a production that was elegiac in temper, and that actually possessed that rarest element in Metropolitan productions — a mood. Horner conceived a particularly fine treatment for the entrance to Hades — a long flight of stairs sloping toward the audience, and covered with the figures of the damned. His first scene, at the tomb of Eurydice, was also excellent, but the decidedly chilly Elysian Fields were suspiciously similar to those of the American Ballet's spring season production, perhaps in the interest of economy. Unfortunately, Thorborg's splendid Orfeo was immeasurably superior to the rest of the cast, for Jessner was no more than a passable Eurydice, and Marisa Morel (Amor) and Farell (Un' Ombre Felice) did not merit even this expression. As for the ballet (a new group organized under the direction of Boris Romanoff, a choreographer schooled in the Diaghileff tradition) its contribution was flat and inconsequential. Bodanzky made no additions to the score, and continued the custom of omitting the overture. Both his discriminating tempi and the smooth playing of the orchestra were a pleasure for the fastidious. The same cast was heard in all of the five performances given this season.

For the first time since 1909–10, both masterpieces of Verdi's glowing old age were heard at the Metropolitan this year, a conse-

quence of the revival on 16 December of his *Falstaff*. Aside from a preposterous make-up and a continuation of his tendency to overdraw dramatic effects, Tibbett's Falstaff had many points of merit. The music was sensitively sung, and there was no lack of robustness in his characterization. For Tibbett, this was the completion of a cycle : for it was as Ford, in the *Falstaff* revival of 1924–25, that he had first attracted public atention to his abilities. In the present production, that role was admirably sung by Brownlee. There was also an excellent Dame Quickly (Castagna), a capable Mistress Ford (Caniglia), and an agreeable if small-voiced Fenton by Charles Kullmann. In the subsidiary roles were Petina (Mistress Page), Morel (Nanetta), Cordon (Pistol), de Paolis (Bardolph), and Paltrinieri — the only survival from the previous production aside from Tibbett — as Caius. Graf's lively action was supplemented by the spirit of Panizza's adroit conducting. The *décor* of the previous revival was retained. For the performance of 7 January, Tibbett appeared in a modified and more sightly make-up ; and another change from the first performances was Jessner as Mistress Ford on 18 January. Apparently the Metropolitan did not consider such a work as this the proper field for experimentation with an English text (although its derivation, libretto, and action are highly suitable for it). As a study in consistency, it may be pointed out that the first performance was a benefit, and not in the subscription series.

Though *Boris* was given only twice, its revival must be recorded as one of the major accomplishments of the Johnson regime. Here a virtue was made of necessity, and advantageously ; for, lacking a singing-actor of Chaliapine's particular characteristics, this *Boris* reverted to the spirit of the earlier production with Didur, in which the chorus and orchestra were wrought into a unit with the principals. Pinza's *Boris* profited by the singer's fine physique, the plasticity of his movements, and also, of course, by the musicality of his singing (his voice was not

in its best shape at the first performance, on 7 March).[38] There was a fine Pimenn by Cordon, a capable Marina by Thorborg, and the young American singer Leonard Warren drew attention to himself with a spirited performance as Rangoni. This was a character not previously seen in Metropolitan productions of *Boris*, for it occurred in the first Polish scene, hitherto omitted. To contribute further novelty, a section of music in the Czar's apartment was also included. Among the others in the long cast were Kullmann (Dmitri), Lazzari (Varlaam), Petina (Theodore), Kaskas (the Nurse), Farell (Xenia), Doe (the Innkeeper), de Paolis (Schouisky), and Witte (the Simpleton). Golovine's classic designs were used again, repainted by Novak. Panizza conducted, and the language used was, once more, Italian.

The attempt that had been made to revive the French repertory in the previous season, with slight success, was continued this year with restorations of Charpentier's *Louise* and Massenet's *Thaïs*. There was a particular curiosity about the first of these when it was presented for the first time on 28 January, for the most recent revival (with Bori in 1930) had been disappointingly unsuccessful. However, the comparatively few years that had intervened had nevertheless been enough to alter the perspective of the audience. *Louise* was no longer a realistic representation of a social problem, but a period piece, to be judged on its merits as music and drama. Aids to this judgment were the Louise of Grace Moore (her most mature accomplishment in the house) and Pinza's Father, the finest since Gilibert's. Moore's dramatics were sometimes overstressed, but there was conviction in her performance and knowledge in her singing. Pinza drew a warmly coloured characterization in his role, and though Maison's Julien was hardly a romantic figure, the authenticity of his style was an adornment to the production. Doe was satisfactory as the Mother, and the action in the sewing-room scene was particularly

[38] The late date suggests that the management had in mind one of Gatti's policies. He frequently presented a novelty or revival close to the end of one season, to have it as a fresh production for most of the subscribers in the next year.

well contrived. Urban's settings were used, freshened by the Novak brush. Panizza's versatility (which this season embraced *Otello, Falstaff, Aïda, Don Giovanni,* and *Boris*) also extended to Charpentier's score. The only significant change of cast occurred on 17 February, when Kullmann replaced Maison as Julien, though in the performance of 23 February, Morel was heard in place of Maxine Stellman as Irma.

In contrast with the freshened facets of *Louise* was the small interest of *Thaïs,* which had its first performance on 10 February. Though Jepson was a svelte and well-sounding Thaïs, she was hardly a courtesan, nor was there convincing sensuality in her tones. Similarly, the Athanaël of John Charles Thomas was more absorbing for its vocal gold than it was for its dramatic fervour. The most suggestive singing in this production was done by Tokatyan as Nicias (he had sung the same role in the Jeritza revival) and by Cordon as Palemon. Of lesser distinction were Farell (Crobyle), Kaskas (Albine), Browning (Myrtale), and Morel (the Enchantress). There was mediocre dancing by the ballet at the 'Feast of Nicias,' and neither Pelletier's conducting nor the stage direction of Graf was an effort to be remembered. This scenery was also Urban plus Novak. On 2 March Lawrence finally was heard as Thaïs (which she had been scheduled to sing at the revival) and delivered a performance of potent melodrama, though the music is somewhat high for her voice. Brownlee sang a typically well-considered Athanaël on 6 March, without triumphing over the inherent limitations of his voice. The strengths of the *Fidelio* given in this season (aside from Beethoven's majestic score) were again Flagstad's Leonore and the Florestan of Maison. Schorr's Pizarro reflected the increasing degeneration of this fine artist's voice, while Laufkötter (Jacquino), Farell (Marzelline), and Gabor (Minister of Justice) were equally inadequate. List's Rocco, though a little ponderous, was strongly sung. The performance gained much by the substitution of Nissen for Schorr as Pizarro on 20 January. Bodanzky was the conductor. To amplify further the representative works of Verdi in the repertory *Simon Boccanegra* was restored on 13 January, a move that permitted Tibbett to present again the performance which is, as a rounded accomplishment, his finest at the Metropolitan. Caniglia was the indifferent Amelia, with Pinza (Fiesco) and Martinelli (Gabriele) repeating the roles they had created on 28 January 1932. Leonard Warren (who had made his debut at a Sunday night concert earlier in the season) sang his first stage role (Paolo) and delivered his music well. However, his acting was elementary. On 21 January Rethberg also took a familiar place in the cast, as Amelia. Panizza was the conductor.

Since tenors are hardly less important to an opera house than is a proscenium curtain, and the Metropolitan's endowment of tenors for the Italian roles had not been importantly augmented for a decade, much of the activity in this season was directed to that end. To the credit of the management, it may be said that it did not content itself with obscure prodigies, but imported the two singers of whom — in their class — there had been the most widespread discussion. One was Jussi Bjoerling, the young Swedish singer, and the other was Galliano Masini.

For a singer still in his mid-twenties (approximately the age at which Martinelli came to the Metropolitan in 1913) Bjoerling's debut as Rodolfo on 24 November was an occasion for congratulations. His is a brilliant voice, with an ample top, consistent through its range. There was a tendency to the forcing dear to all tenors, but the musicianship of Bjoerling's phrasing was an unusual experience in this role. The Mimi of this performance was Mafalda Favero, and the Musetta was Marisa Morel,[39] both new to the house. Favero's pleasant lyric voice was the material for a satisfactory Mimi, but Morel's Musetta was shrill and petulant. Bjoerling's fellow Bohemians were Brownlee, Cordon, and Cehanovsky, completing an unusually believable quartet. The young tenor was later heard as Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, a role for which his voice is not yet sufficiently expansive.

Though *Lucia di Lammermoor* is scarcely a tenor's opera, Masini almost contrived to make it so at his debut on 14 December. Edgardo is apparently a speciality of Masini's, for he sang the music with impressive assurance and dramatized the role with unremitting intensity. His style was plainly that of the old-fashioned gallery-shouting Italian tenor, but he could also spin a soft phrase (as he did not neglect to demonstrate in the last act) and there was unquestionable temperament in his performance. Pons was the Lucia (improving steadily after a poor beginning, to sing the 'Mad Scene' splendidly) with Tagliabue (Ashton), Pinza

[39] She had sung in New York the winter before with the Salzburg Opera Guild, under the name of Marisa Merlo.

(Raimondo), and de Paolis (Arturo). Masini's reputation for variability was sustained by his Cavaradossi on 22 December, for his voice was measurably more free than it had been before and was used with greater restraint. There was also an authoritative Tosca by Caniglia, suffering a considerable abuse at the hands of Tibbett's boisterous Scarpia. These were Masini's best roles, for his Rhadames (on 18 and 29 December) was overweighted by the music, and he is a somewhat slight figure for an Egyptian warrior.

Surprisingly, Rhadames was also the means for reintroducing Beniamino Gigli (absent from the Metropolitan since his dispute with Gatti in 1932) on 23 January. Scepticism was prevalent among those who recalled the singer's legendary qualities, and it was not alleviated by the performance itself. Some of the Nile Scene was beautifully sung and there were phrases of splendid suavity through the performance, but the climaxes were attained only by pumping the tone unmercifully. One of the largest audiences in years was present to salute his return, and there was a steady surge of enthusiasm for Gigli and his associates — Rethberg, Castagna, and Tagliabue (Amonasro). These conditions were constant at each of his performances, and indeed they were honestly justified by his Cavaradossi in *Tosca* on 27 January (with Jessner an emergency Tosca * to replace Lawrence), his Edgardo in *Lucia* on 2 February, and his Duke in *Rigoletto* on the 8th. Gigli's return had been preceded by a series of negotiations in which the singer nettled the management by declaring his conditions publicly before the engagement had officially been approved. He celebrated his return to Italy late in February by a tirade against the management, the artists, and the public of the Metropolitan. Apparently Gigli had not been informed of the trans-Atlantic cable, for the reaction this blast aroused here will not soon be offset.

Since Kiepura also returned to the company in this season, and Crooks, Martinelli, Maison, Kullmann, and Jagel were again available, there was both greater quality and more diversity in the tenors that were heard than there had been for a decade. Kiepura repeated the repertory that he had introduced in the previous season and added to it a characterization of Des Grieux in *Manon*, on 15 February, which excelled anything he had done before. In contrast with most tenors, Kiepura did less well with 'Le Rêve' than he did with 'Ah ! fuyez, douce image,' which was truly dramatic. He also succeeded in making a personality of this vacillating creature, an accomplishment in itself. With Sayao, Rothier, and Bonelli (much improved as Lescaut) assisting, the cast was well above the Metropolitan average. There was an unexpectedly able Guillot by Alessio de Paolis, who joined the company in this season to sing the roles for-

merly the property of Angelo Bada. Whether inadvertently or not, the end of the latter's thirty years of splendid service to the Metropolitan was allowed to pass with no gesture of gratitude, formal or informal. It is true that Bada was conspicious only on rare occasions, but there have been 'jubilees' and 'testimonials' for singers who had a far less integral part in the Metropolitan's organization than Bada had.

In succession to Giannini, Cigna, and Milanov, Johnson this season presented Maria Caniglia as the latest interpreter of the heavier roles of the Italian repertory. She was honoured by an introduction on the opening night of the season, as Desdemona in *Otello* on 21 November. In choosing an outstanding revival of one season to open the next, Johnson again revealed his acumen as a student of certain of Gatti's methods. Caniglia was unquestionably a soundly routined artist, with a talent for dramatic singing. Her repertory for this season included *Aïda* on 24 November (in which the new ballet made an uneventful debut, with Maria Gambarelli of 'Roxy' celebrity as *prima ballerina*) ; Mistress Ford in *Falstaff* on 16 December, the title role in *Tosca* on 22 December, and Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra* on 13 January. Of these, Tosca was her best effort, especially when she avoided forcing her top tones. However, she is to be classified as a useful rather than a distinguished singer.

Of the female singers introduced in this season, there was the greatest promise in the abilities of Risë Stevens, a young mezzo trained at the Juilliard, and subsequently active in several European opera houses. The benefits of this experience were plain in her introductory *Mignon* on 17 December (with Crooks, Pinza, Antoine, Oelheim, de Paolis, and John Gurney as Jarno and Antonio). Both this impersonation and her Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* on 19 December were well dramatized as well as skilfully sung. However, the solid orchestration of Strauss weighed heavily on her voice, and she was similarly at a disadvantage in attempting Erda * in *Das Rheingold* on 9 February and Fricka in *Die Walküre* on 16 February. It is possible, however, that a natural growth, both of her voice and her authority, will establish her suitability for these roles as her career progresses.

Reference has been made previously both to Mafalda Favero and Marisa Morel, who were introduced simultaneously in *La Bohème* on 24 November. Curiously, the singer of lesser ability (Morel) was seen in the greater variety of roles, appearing as Amor in *Orfeo* on 26 November and Nanetta in *Falstaff* on 18 January. The other new female singer of this season was Lina Aimaro, who made her debut as Lucia on 2 February. There was surprising power and penetration in her small whitish voice, which Aimaro used with good vocal skill, save for the lack of a dependable trill. In this role and her Gilda in *Rigoletto* on 8 February, her acting was the essence of childishness, but the volume of applause was hardly conditioned by her lack of resemblance to Duse. Other variations from the casts of the seasons immediately preceding found Greta Stückgold again a member of the company, reappearing as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* on 25 January (she had previously been heard in this house as Octavian) ; and Philine Falco once more a useful interpreter of secondary parts.

That Friedrich Schorr's enviable reign of fifteen years as All-Father of the Metropolitan's Valhalla was approaching its inevitable end (even as did that of Wotan) was reflected in several events of this winter. One was the announcement that Schorr's status at the Metropolitan would be amplified to include the coaching of young Americans in the roles for which he was celebrated. Another was the debut of Hans Hermann Nissen as Wotan in *Die Walküre* on the second night of the season (23 November), and a third was the first appearance of Huehn as Wotan on 25 February. Also heard in some of the roles associated with Schorr was Herbert Janssen, who made his debut as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* on 28 January.

Both Nissen and Janssen had for years been admired by Americans who travelled abroad, either to Berlin, Munich, or London, or to the festivals. Nissen's Wotan was unquestionably a success (he had the comforting presence of a cast that included Flagstad as Sieglinde, Melchior, Lawrence, Thorborg, and List) ; as were also his Wolfram on 23 November, his Telramund on 7 December, his Kurwenal on 15 December, and his Wanderer in *Siegfried* on the 28th. In none of these was his voice exceptional for richness or colour, but each was carefully composed and honestly delivered. Nissen drew a particularly compelling portrait as a fine venerable Kurwenal, as much a philosopher as a warrior. The third act, however, taxed the top of his voice. Janssen's talents as a lieder singer were evident in the phrasing and the sense of melodic line that in-

formed his Wolfram on 28 January, his Telramund on 13 February, and particularly his Kurwenal on 18 February. The last was one of the most eloquent performances of the role that had been heard in the Metropolitan for a generation. It was followed by a distinguished Kothner in *Die Meistersinger* on 27 February. Huehn's Wotan (the first by an American since the days of Clarence Whitehill) directed attention to the singer's vocal limitations, but also spoke eloquently for his assiduousness, his capacity for study. It is a characterization that will undoubtedly broaden.

Also added for service in the German repertory was Herbert Alsen, a stalwart, heavy-voiced bass, and Erich Witte, a slight occasionally inaudible tenor. Alsen's tremulous singing of King Mark in *Tristan* at his debut on 16 January suggested that he was over-awed by the surroundings, but a similar deficiency in his Landgraf on 18 January (in *Tannhäuser*), in King Henry in *Lohengrin* on 17 February, in Pogner on 27 February, and as Fafner in *Siegfried* on 4 March placed the blame not on the occasion but on the singer's vocal method. Were this corrected he would be a desirable addition to the company, for he has a commanding presence and ample musicianship. Witte made a quiet entrance as Walther in *Tannhäuser* on 1 December, thereafter attaining increasing prominence as Mime in *Siegfried* on 10 December and as Loge in *Das Rheingold* on 18 February. In these larger roles there was admiration for his intelligent treatment of the action and his delivery of the text, less for the quality of his singing, especially in passages of rapid music. On 7 March he was heard at the Simpleton in the revival of *Boris*. Similarly commandeered for service both in the Italian and the German repertories was Douglas Beattie, who made his debut as Ramfis in *Aïda* on 11 February. He was an emergency replacement for Moscona, who left the country earlier than had been expected. Later Beattie was heard as Fafner in *Das Rheingold* on 18 February and as Titurel in *Parsifal* on 8 March. Beattie took his place in all of these with admirable competence, using his sonorous voice with good effect.

Not for years had there been a list of operas to delight the music-lover such as Johnson presented in this season. In the single week of 5–12 January, the schedule called for the following works : *Don Giovanni* (on the 5th), *Tristan* and *Aïda* (on the 6th), *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Falstaff* (on the 7th), *Lucia* (on the 9th), *Elektra* and *Amelia* (on the 11th) and *Fidelio* (on the 12th). Or, if it is suspected that the author has selected this particular week for some nefarious purpose of his own, consider the repertory of the next seven days : *Simon Boccanegra, Don Giovanni,*

Lakmé, Tristan, Il Barbiere, Tannhäuser, Falstaff, Elektra, and *Fidelio.* This account, incidentally, omits such other valid musical works of this season as *Orfeo, Boris, Louise,* and *Otello,* also all but two Wagner scores. In this respect, if no other, Johnson's influence on the company was apparent.

Of the season's new interpretations, possibly the one that prompted the most speculation was one that did not occur. This was the performance of *Tosca* scheduled for 27 January, with Marjorie Lawrence for the first time in the title role. However, it was considerately explained that Lawrence was indisposed, and Jessner took her place. But there might have been illumination in the notices she had received when she first sang the role in Philadelphia, a few days before. They were not rhapsodic. On 8 March John Charles Thomas added the role of Scarpia in this opera to his repertory, singing the music well, but treating much of the action awkwardly. Also of note in the Italian repertory this season was the first Almaviva in *Il Barbiere* by Martini on 17 January. It was not only gracefully sung, but also was acted with a good deal of zest, especially the scene of the Count's mock intoxication. Jepson's Desdemona in *Otello* on 31 December was another mark of progress for this singer. Her familiar lack of aggressiveness was actually an enhancement for this role, and the 'Salce' aria was beautifully sung. As for Rethberg's Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* on 5 January, there was evidence in it of a sound conception, but the limitations of voice that made her unsuitable for Elvira were not mitigated in the more difficult role. In the German repertory, John Gurney sang a plausible King Henry in *Lohengrin* on 26 November, impeded by the lack of dependable low tones. Hartmann's older Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung* on 12 December was intelligently conceived, though appreciably a more difficult task for him, vocally, than the young Siegfried. As the invisible Titurel in *Parsifal* on 5 April, Cordon accomplished a highly commendable performance. There was future promise in Arthur Carron's first efforts as a Wagnerian singer at the Sunday night concert of 12 February, in which he sang the Venusberg scene from *Tannhäuser* with Manski. This suggested, indeed, that such a career might be Carron's true *métier.* At another Sunday night concert, on 1 January, Erich Leinsdorf conducted his first full orchestral program at the Metropolitan, devoted wholly to the works of Wagner. Two weeks earlier, on 11 December, John Carter (who, with Leonard Warren, was co-winner of the previous season's radio auditions) made his debut at a Sunday night concert. He sang the first act duet of Des Grieux and Manon from Massenet's *Manon* with amazing assurance, a feathery lightness of tone and practically no vocal substance. Morel was the Manon.

This season concluded, as had several of those immediately preceding, with the *Götterdämmerung* of the evening *Ring* cycle. This was not exceptional, but the ovation that welled up from the audience at the drop of the final curtain was. The immediate object was Flagstad, the evening's Brünnhilde, but there were also cheers for Melchior as the inner curtain was dropped and raised twice. Apparently, however, he had departed after Siegfried's death in the first scene of the third act. List, Schorr, Jessner, and Branzell were the other principals. In the performance of *Das Rheingold* that began the cycle on 18 February, Witte was the Loge *, with Schorr, Thorborg, Stevens (Erda), Burke, Laufkötter, and Beattie (Fafner) in the cast. Lawrence was the Brünnhilde on 25 February, with Huehn as Wotan *, Rethberg, Branzell, Melchior, and Alsen (Hunding) in *Die Walküre*. Although Flagstad was the Brünnhilde of the afternoon's cycle *Götterdämmerung* on 3 March, she did not hesitate to sing the same role in the evening *Siegfried* on the following day, with Hartmann, Schorr, Witte, Vogel, Stevens, and Alsen (Fafner). Leinsdorf was the conductor.

The afternoon cycle began on 3 February with a performance of *Tannhäuser* in which Janssen was the Wolfram, with Melchoir, Jessner, Branzell, Vogel, and Besuner (Shepherd). In *Das Rheingold* on 9 February, Schorr was the Wotan, with Maison, Branzell, Stevens (Erda *), Laufkötter, List, Alsen (Fasolt), Witte, Burke, and Huehn (Donner). Flagstad was the Brünnhilde of the remaining performances : in *Die Walküre* on 16 February, with Rethberg, Melchior, Schorr, List, and Stevens (Fricka) ; in *Siegfried* on 22 February, with Melchior, Schorr, List, Laufkötter, Vogel, Branzell, and Bodanya (Forest Bird) ; and in *Götterdämmerung* on 3 March with Melchior, Thorborg, Huehn, List, Vogel, and Jessner. This cycle was concluded with a performance of *Parsifal* on 8 March, with Flagstad, Melchior, Schorr, List, Beattie (Titurel), and Vogel.

The formal season of opera was followed not only by a post-season, but also by a post post-season. Between them ensued one of the most elaborate tours in the company's recent history, in which the cities visited included Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, Rochester, Dallas, and New Orleans. During the post-season,

which began on 4 April, *Carmen* had its only performance of the winter, with Castagna, Martinelli, Pinza, and Burke. Unfortunately, a group of female singers was economically substituted for the usual boys' chorus in the first act. Otherwise the week offered *Parsifal* on the 5th, *La Bohème* on the 6th, *Parsifal* again on the 7th, and *Tristan* on the 8th, with familiar casts.

In consideration of the World's Fair, the Metropolitan presented an additional series of operas beginning on 2 May. The intention apparently was to establish the Metropolitan as a cultural adjunct to the exposition, but this might have been better served by a representative survey of the company's repertory than by the Wagner cycle that was heard. The first in the series was *Lohengrin* on 2 May, with Rethberg, Melchior, Thorborg, Schorr, and List in the principal roles. Included in the large audience were Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Ingrid of Denmark. On 4 May, a performance of *Die Meistersinger* permitted Gabor to demonstrate unsuspected ability as Beckmesser. With him were Rethberg, Schorr, Kullmann, List, Doe, and Laufkötter. A cycle of *Ring* dramas was begun on 7 May with Althouse an intelligent but vocally inadequate Loge in *Das Rheingold*. Jessner was heard for the first time as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* on the 8th. In addition to singing all the Brünnhildes, Flagstad appeared in two performances of Tristan, on 15 and 23 May, and in *Parsifal* on 17 May. A noteworthy feature of the *Tristan* on the 23rd was the considerable improvement in Doe's Brangaene since it had first been heard here. With the exception of *Götterdämmerung* and the *Tristans* and *Parsifal*, there were numerous empty seats at each performance.

More important, so far as the future of the institution was concerned, than any happening of the actual season was the surprising announcement on 19 July : 'The financial difficulties of operating the Metropolitan Opera House have become so serious recently that its owners, the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, decided at a special meeting yesterday to place before its stockholders a proposal for the sale of the famous old structure to the Metropolitan Opera Association.'[40] This was merely confirmation of the opinion expressed earlier that 'The interest of society in opera . . . has definitely ended.' Yet it was surprising that the showdown had come so quickly. There was

[40] *The New York Herald-Tribune*, 19 July 1939.

involved reference to the 'estate problem' and the difficulty of collecting the ordinary assessment from these impersonal entities. But it is plain that the principal burden reposed on the active boxholders, who had clearly reneged on their obligations.

In this impasse, it was proposed that the operating company secure an option on the building and property for $100 (merely a nominal sum), with the privilege of purchasing the property at a price of $1,500,000 (subject to a $470,000 first mortgage), payable $500,000 in cash and $1,000,000 in twenty-five year four per cent bonds, secured by a second mortgage on the house and a first mortgage on the warehouse. The option was to run until 31 May 1940, subject to a decision of the board of the ownership company, which was to act on this proposal at its meeting in September. (The month passed without further news.)

Obviously it was the intention of the operating company to produce no more than the $100 necessary to secure the option, thereafter placing upon the public the obligation of raising the slightly more ponderable half-million dollars. What gain there would be in the consummation of this plan was not divulged. The paying public would be no more comfortable in its obscure places, the difficulties of producing opera in these surroundings in no way alleviated. Plainly the keynote was to be an appeal to the 'civic pride' of the opera-going public, which had once before provided $300,000 to 'save' the opera. Now, however, the appeal was to be on the more sentimental basis of preserving not merely opera, but its traditional home in New York.

In all the palaver and 'negotiations' (a thin disguise for agreements already reached *in camera*) it was not pointed out that the ownership company had already twice refused the logical solution of its difficulties : once, when Otto Kahn had offered to build a new Metropolitan (see p. 366 *et seq.*), only to be rebuffed because of the social schism in the company's ranks ; and, again, when a commercial operator had entered a bid of $7,000,000 for the property (p. 366). Why the opera-going public should be required to step in and recoup the real estate company's lack of

foresight was not made public in its latest manœuvre for public sympathy.

From all these conflicting circumstances there emerged two realities : the disinclination of the owners to continue to meet the taxes and overhead of the property ; and the conviction that the public's gullibility would extend to still another assault on its pocketbooks. It is eminently possible that such a frontal attack could still be negotiated successfully, given the proper smoke-screen of communal pride, art-consciousness, and sentimentality. Nevertheless it is plain that the losers would be the subscribers to such a fund, who would be forced to endure for a period of unspecified length an opera house already long superannuated, indeed unsatisfactory from the first night's performance of *Faust.*

Epilogue

The earlier consideration in this chronicle of the several epochs in the Metropolitan's history was much simplified by a common fact : they belonged to the past, each was complete, irrevocably accomplished. However, Johnson's four years do not even fulfil his first 'Five-Year Plan' for opera, of which he spoke when he was installed. Some evidence of a philosophy and ideology have emerged in his last two seasons, but it must be recognized that they remain fluid, still subject to alteration and revaluation.

But it is possible to isolate certain definite developments as indicative of a new point of view in the Metropolitan's affairs, traceable (since he is the fresh influence) to Johnson himself. Though the fact has been little publicized, the personnel of the company has altered almost by fifty per cent in the four years of his directorship. Of the one hundred and ten singers and conductors now (1938–39) employed by the company, a few more than fifty represent the selection of Johnson and his associates. They are scattered impartially through sopranos, altos, tenors,

baritones, and basses, with almost equal representation in the German, Italian, and French groups.

Merely to isolate a few of the outstanding new singers of the last four years will indicate the extent to which Johnson has revised the company in four seasons : *sopranos :* Giannini, Lawrence, Milanov, Pauly, Sayao, Jessner, and Caniglia ; *altos :* Castagna, Szantho, Thorborg, and Stevens ; *tenors* (and here the gain has been most substantial) : Bjoerling, Kiepura, Masini, Kullmann, Laufkötter, and Maison ; *baritones and basses :* Cordon, Vogel, Huehn, Brownlee, Janssen, and Nissen. There have been more than a few additions of dubious quality — Morel, Antoine, Landi, Rünger, Farell, and the conductor de Abravanel, might be cited among them — but there has been little disposition to force a performer on the public simply because the management chose, for one reason or another, to sponsor his engagement. In most cases the ill-equipped singers have been eliminated.

Similarly, the reorganization of the orchestra has proceeded steadily, subject to the circumstances previously mentioned. It has remained a handicap to play two such operas as *Tristan* and *Das Rheingold* on a single day, or *Götterdämmerung* on one evening and *Don Giovanni* the following afternoon. A system of alternating wind and brass players to relieve the burden on those most severely taxed by such a schedule is yet to be adopted, and probably never will be. But if such a schedule is inseparable from the Metropolitan's scheme of operation, competent players will maintain a higher level of efficiency, even under these conditions, than those whose ability is dubious at the outset.

The engagement of Erich Leinsdorf to share with Artur Bodanzky * the heavy load of German opera (which the present company is best equipped to perform) was an evidence of enterprise, especially in the acknowledgement that neither Riedel nor de Abravanel was equal to such service. However, only the most obscure reasons can explain the retention of Papi as principal

* Artur Bodanzky died on 23 November 1939 on the eve of what would have been his twenty-fifth season.

conductor for half the Italian repertory. Not only *Tosca, Butterfly,* and *La Bohème* have been marred by his sluggish methods and lax discipline, but also such other, more valid scores as *Carmen* and *Il Barbiere.* There is doubtless a human problem in this situation, but it certainly could be solved more successfully than it has been.

That the comparative financial success of these four seasons (in which, at least, the company did not exceed its budget for a deficit) has been founded to a large extent on the superlative abilities of Kirsten Flagstad and her associates in the German division of the company is obvious. Yet it must be recognized that Johnson has utilized this strength as a means for rehabilitating the Italian and French repertory, with restorations of *Otello* and *Falstaff, Louise* and *Thaïs, Orfeo* and *Boris.*

To be sure, the novelties of Johnson's four seasons — Hagemann's *Caponsacchi,* Damrosch's *Man Without a Country,* and Menotti's *Amelia al Ballo* — have been uniformly conservative and, with the exception of the last named, of little promise for the future. So far as the Metropolitan repertory is concerned, opera in Europe ceased to be written with the completion of *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1910. This is indeed a mournful attitude for a company serving a public the size of the Metropolitan's. Moreover there are other Mozart operas than *Don Giovanni,* which the present company could deal with at least as well as it does with that masterpiece.

When one's gaze is turned from the purely musical picture, the view is considerably less inviting. Little has been done to restore the visual elements of the Metropolitan's productions to a respectable level. Of all the Wagnerian dramas, only *Die Walküre* has been redesigned, and there the 'modernism' was hardly more pronounced than any other elements of distinction. The *Otello, Samson, Falstaff,* and *Coq d'Or* were all set in prosaic and unattractive *décors,* and there has been little attempt to do the staggering job of restoration on the scenery for the standard repertory bequeathed to Johnson by Gatti. For all the talk of its

magnificent new control-panel, the lighting of the stage is still primitive and unimaginative. Remarkably enough, when such an organization as the Ballet Russe takes over the stage for a brief two weeks, it achieves infinitely more fanciful results, with the same basic equipment, than the company that inhabits the premises permanently.

Nevertheless, it is plain that some effort is being made to set the operatic house in order, that in several important respects — personnel, basic repertory, orchestra, staging — the retrogression of the previous decade has been arrested, that some energy has been consciously directed to reconstruction. For the first time in a dozen years the attitude is one of growth and expansion, rather than artistic retrenchment. In this sense, if in no other, the promise of better things is an evidence of a new era in the Metropolitan's affairs.

APPENDIX I

Casts of Novelties and Revivals Presented at the Metropolitan between 1907 and 1935 and not included in the text.

SALOME

Opera in one act by Richard Strauss — after the poem by Oscar Wilde. German translation by Hedwig Lachmann. Presented at the Metropolitan on 22 January 1907.

Salome ..... Olive Fremstad
Herodias ..... Marion Weed
Herodias' Page ..... Josephine Jacoby
Herod ..... Carl Burrian
Herod's Page ..... Marie Mattfeld
Jochanaan ..... Anton von Rooy
Narraboth ..... Andreas Dippel
Five Jews ..... Messrs. Reiss, Bayer, Paroli, Bars and Dufriche
First Nazarene ..... Marcel Journet
Second Nazarene ..... Mr. Stiner
Two Soldiers ..... Messrs. Mühlmann and Blass
A Cappadocian ..... Mr. Lange

The Dance of the Seven Veils was performed by Bianca Froehlich

Conductor, Alfred Hertz

TIEFLAND

Opera in three acts by Eugen d'Albert, after a play by Angel Guimera. Presented at the Metropolitan on 23 November 1908.

Marta ..... Emmy Destinn
Pepa ..... Rita Fornia
Antonia ..... Marie Mattfeld
Rosalia ..... Mary Randa
Nuri ..... Isabelle l'Huillier
Pedro ..... Erik Schmedes
Sebastiano ..... Fritz Feinhals
Tommasso ..... Allan Hinckley
Moruccio ..... Otto Goritz
Nando ..... Albert Reiss

Conductor, Alfred Hertz

LE VILLI

Opera in one act by Giacomo Puccini, book by F. Fontana. Presented at the Metropolitan on 17 December 1908.

Anna ..... Frances Alda
Roberto ..... Alessandro Bonci
Guglielmo Wolf ..... Pasquale Amato

Conductor, Arturo Toscanini

LA WALLY

Opera in four acts by Alfredo Catalani, the book by Luigi Illica. Presented at the Metropolitan on 6 January 1909.

Wally ..... Emmy Destinn
Afra ..... Elsa Ranzenberg
Walter ..... Isabelle l'Huillier
Giuseppe Hagenbach ..... Riccardo Martin
Vincenzo Gellner ..... Pasquale Amato
Stromminger ..... Giulio Rossi
Il Padrone ..... Giuseppe Campanari

Conductor, Arturo Toscanini

GERMANIA

Opera in two acts and an epilogue by Baron Alberto Franchetti, the book by Luigi Illica. First presented at the Metropolitan on 22 January 1910.

Giovanni Filipo Palm ..... Giulio Rossi
Frederico Loewe ..... Enrico Caruso
Carlo Worms ..... Pasquale Amato
Crisogono ..... Antonio Pini-Corsi
Jane ..... Emmy Destinn
Ricke ..... Christine Heliane
Lene Armuth ..... Marie Mattfeld
Jebbel ..... Leonora Sparkes
Stapps ..... Adamo Didur
Luigi Adolfo Guglielmo Lützow ..... Paolo Wulman
Carlo Teodore Körner ..... Lodovico Nepoti
Hedwig ..... Marie Mattfeld
Peters ..... Aristide Baracchi
Captain of the German Police ..... Eduardo Missiano
A Lady ..... Florence Wickham
A Youth ..... Rita Barillo

Conductor, Alfred Hertz

APPENDIX I

THE PIPE OF DESIRE

Opera in one act by Frederick Shepherd Converse, the book by George Edwards Barton. First presented at the Metropolitan on 18 March 1910.

Iolan ..... Riccardo Martin
Naoia ..... Louise Homer
The Old One ..... Clarence Whitehill
First Sylph ..... Leonora Sparkes
First Undine ..... Lillia Snelling
First Salamander ..... Glenn Hall
First Gnome ..... Herbert Witherspoon

Conductor, Alfred Hertz

LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

Opera in three acts by Giacomo Puccini, the book by C. Zangarini and G. Civinini after the play by David Belasco. World *première* at the Metropolitan on 10 December 1910.

Minnie ..... Emmy Destinn
Dick Johnson ..... Enrico Caruso
Jack Rance ..... Pasquale Amato
Nick ..... Albert Reiss
Ashby ..... Adamo Didur
Sonora ..... Dinh Gilly
Trin ..... Angelo Bada
Sid ..... Giulio Rossi
Handsome ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
Harry ..... Pietro Audisio
Joe ..... Glenn Hall
Happy ..... Antonio Pini-Corsi
Larkens ..... Bernard Bégué
Billy Jackrabbit ..... Georges Bourgeois
Wowkle ..... Marie Mattfeld
Jake Wallace ..... Andrea de Segurola
José Castro ..... Eduardo Missiano
A Postillon ..... Lamberto Belleri

Conductor, Arturo Toscanini

KÖNIGSKINDER

Opera in three acts by Engelbert Humperdinck, the book by Ernest Rosmer. World *première* at the Metropolitan on 28 December 1910.

The King's Son ..... Hermann Jadlowker
The Goose-girl ..... Geraldine Farrar
The Fiddler ..... Otto Goritz
The Witch ..... Louise Homer

The Woodcutter ..... Adamo Didur
The Broommaker ..... Albert Reiss
Two Children ..... Edna Walter and Lottie Engel
The Senior Councilor ..... Marcel Reiner
The Innkeeper ..... Antonio Pini-Corsi
The Innkeeper's Daughter ..... Florence Wickham
The Tailor ..... Julius Bayer
The Stable Maid ..... Marie Mattfeld
Two Gatekeepers ..... Ernst Maran and William Hinshaw

Conductor, Alfred Hertz

ARIANE ET BARBE-BLEUE

Opera in three acts by Paul Dukas, the book by Maurice Maeterlinck. First presented at the Metropolitan on 29 March 1911.

Ariane ..... Geraldine Farrar
Blue Beard ..... Léon Rothier
The Nurse ..... Florence Wickham
Selysette ..... Jeanne Maubourg
Ygraine ..... Leonora Sparkes
Mélisande ..... Rosina Van Dyck
Bellangère ..... Henrietta Wakefield
Alladine ..... Lucia Fornaroli
Three Peasants ..... Messrs. Bourgeois, Bégué and Ruysdael

Conductor, Arturo Toscanini

MONA

Opera in three acts by Horatio W. Parker, the book by Brian Hooker. World *première* at the Metropolitan on 14 March 1912.

Mona ..... Louise Homer
Enya ..... Rita Fornia
Arth ..... Herbert Witherspoon
Gloom ..... William Hinshaw
Nial ..... Albert Reiss
Caradoc ..... Lambert Murphy
Roman Governor of Britain ..... Putnam Griswold
Quintus ..... Riccardo Martin
An Old Man ..... Basil Ruysdael

Conductor, Alfred Hertz

APPENDIX I

BORIS GODOUNOFF

Opera in four acts by Modeste Moussorgsky, based on dramatic scenes by Alexander Pushkin. First presented at the Metropolitan on 19 March 1913. Given in Italian.

Boris Godounoff ..... Adamo Didur
Theodore ..... Anna Case
Xenia ..... Leonora Sparkes
The Nurse ..... Maria Duchène
Marina ..... Louise Homer
Prince Shouisky ..... Angelo Bada
Andrev Tchelkaloff ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
Brother Pimenn ..... Léon Rothier
The Pretender Dmitri ..... Paul Althouse
Varlaam ..... Andrea de Segurola
Missail ..... Pietro Audisio
The Innkeeper ..... Jeanne Maubourg
The Simpleton ..... Albert Reiss
A Police Officer ..... Giulio Rossi
A Court Officer ..... Leopoldo Mariani
Lovitzki ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian

Conductor, Arturo Toscanini

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Opera in four acts by Walter Damrosch, the book by William J. Henderson after the play by Edmond Rostand. World *première* at the Metropolitan on 27 February 1913.

Cyrano de Bergerac ..... Pasquale Amato
Roxane ..... Frances Alda
Duenna ..... Marie Mattfeld
Lise ..... Vera Curtis
A Flower Girl ..... Louise Cox
Mother Superior ..... Florence Mulford
Christian ..... Riccardo Martin
Ragueneau ..... Albert Reiss
De Guiche ..... Putnam Griswold
Le Bret ..... William Hinshaw
Two Musketeers ..... Basil Ruysdael and Marcel Reiner
Montfleury and A Cadet ..... Lambert Murphy
A Monk ..... Antonio Pini-Corsi
Cavaliers ..... Austin Hughes, Paolo Ananian, Maurice Sapio, and Louis Kreidler

Conductor, Alfred Hertz

DER ROSENKAVALIER

Opera in three acts by Richard Strauss, the book by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. First presented at the Metropolitan on 9 December 1913.

Princess Werdenberg ..... Frieda Hempel
Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau ..... Otto Goritz
Octavian ..... Margarete Ober
Faninal ..... Hermann Weil
Sophie ..... Anna Case
Marianne ..... Rita Fornia
Valzacchi ..... Albert Reiss
Annina ..... Marie Mattfeld
Commissary of Police ..... Carl Schlegel
Major-Domo of the Princess's Household ..... Pietro Audisio
Major-Domo of Faninal's Household ..... Lambert Murphy
A Notary ..... Basil Ruysdael
An Innkeeper ..... Julius Bayer
A Singer ..... Carl Jörn
Three Orphans ..... Rosina Van Dyck, Sophie Braslau and Jeanne Maubourg
A Small Negro ..... Ruth Weinstein

Conductor, Alfred Hertz

JULIEN

Opera in three acts by Gustave Charpentier. First presented at the Metropolitan on 26 February 1914.

Julien ..... Enrico Caruso
Louise, La Beauté, La Jeune Fille, L'Aïeule, La Fille .. Geraldine Farrar
L'Hiérophante, Le Paysan, Le Mage ..... Dinh Gilly
La Paysanne ..... Maria Duchêne
Les Filles du Rêve et Chimères ..... Rosina Van Dyck, Louise Cox, Vera Curtis, Marie Mattfeld, Sophie Braslau, Marie Duchêne, and Lila Robeson
Un Casseur de Pierres, Une Voix de l'Abîme, Un Camarade ..... Paolo Ananian
L'Acolyte ..... Albert Reiss
L'Officiant, Une Voix de l'Abîme ..... Lambert Murphy
Un Ouvrier ..... Angelo Bada
Un Bucheron ..... Pietro Audisio
Garçons de Café ..... Julius Bayer and Vincenzo Reschiglian
Trois Feés ..... Louise Cox, Vera Curtis, and R. Van Dyck

Conductor, Giorgio Polacco

APPENDIX I

MADAME SANS-GÊNE

Opera in four acts by Umberto Giordano, book by Renato Simoni after the play by Sardou and Moreau. World *première* at the Metropolitan on 25 January 1915.

Caterina Hübscher ..... Geraldine Farrar
Tonietta ..... Leonora Sparkes
Giulia ..... Rita Fornia
La Rossa ..... Sophie Braslau
Lefebvre ..... Giovanni Martinelli
Fouché ..... Andrea de Segurola
Vinaigre ..... Max Bloch
Conte di Neipperg ..... Paul Althouse
La Regina Carolina ..... Vera Curtis
La Principessa Elisa ..... Minnie Egener
Despréaux ..... Angelo Bada
Napoleone ..... Pasquale Amato
Gelsomino ..... Riccardo Tegani
Leroy ..... Robert Leonhardt
De Brigode ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
Roustan ..... Bernard Bégué

Conductor, Arturo Toscanini

PRINCE IGOR

Opera in four acts by Alexander Borodin, the book by the composer after a suggestion by Stassoff. Given without the third act in this presentation. First presented at the Metropolitan on 30 December 1915.

Yaroslavna ..... Frances Alda
Konchakovna ..... Flora Perini
Nurse ..... Minnie Egener
Prince Igor ..... Pasquale Amato
Prince Galitzky, Khan Konchak ..... Adamo Didur
Erochka ..... Angelo Bada
Skoula ..... Andrea de Segurola
Vladimir ..... Luca Botta

Conductor, Giorgio Polacco

IL TABARRO

Opera in one act by Giacomo Puccini, book by Giuseppe Adami, based on a French story "Houppelande" by Didier Gold. First presented at the Metropolitan on 14 December 1918 as part of a triple bill, all world *première* performances.

Giorgetta ..... Claudia Muzio
Luigi ..... Giulio Crimi
Michele ..... Luigi Montesanto

Il Tinca ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
Il Talpa ..... Adamo Didur
Venditore di Canzoni ..... Pietro Audisio
La Frugola ..... Alice Gentle
L'Innamorata ..... Marie Tiffany
L'Innamorato ..... Albert Reiss

SUOR ANGELICA

Opera in one act by Giacomo Puccini, the book by Giachino Forzano.

Suor Angelica ..... Geraldine Farrar
La Principessa ..... Flora Perini
La Zelatrice ..... Marie Sundelius
La Badessa ..... Rita Fornia
La Maestra delle Novizie ..... Cecil Arden
Una Conversa ..... Marie Tiffany
Altra Conversa ..... Veni Warwick
Suor Osmina ..... Marguerite Belleri
Una Novizia ..... Phylis White
Suor Genovieffa ..... Mary Ellis
Sorella Infermiera ..... Leonora Sparkes
Suor Dolcina ..... Marie Mattfeld
Prima Sorella Cercatrice ..... Kitty Beale
Seconda " " ..... Minnie Egener

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Opera in one act by Giacomo Puccini, the book by G. Forzano.

Gianni Schicchi ..... Giuseppe de Luca
Rinuccio ..... Giulio Crimi
Lauretta ..... Florence Easton
La Ciesca ..... Marie Sundelius
Nella ..... Marie Tiffany
La Vecchia ..... Kathleen Howard
Gherardo ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
Gherardino ..... Marie Malatesta
Marco ..... Louis D'Angelo
Betto ..... Paolo Ananian
Simone ..... Adamo Didur
Ser Amantio di Nicolao ..... Andrea de Segurc
Pinellino ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
Guccio ..... Carl Schlegel
Spinelloccio ..... Pompilio Malatesta

The three works conducted by Robert Moranzoni.

APPENDIX I

OBERON

Opera in three acts by Carl Maria von Weber, the book by J. R. Planché. First presented at the Metropolitan on 30 December 1918 in English.

Oberon ..... Paul Althouse
Sir Huon ..... Giovanni Martinelli
Puck ..... Raymonde Delaunois
Sherasmin ..... Albert Reiss
Rezia ..... Rosa Ponselle
Fatima ..... Alice Gentle
Harum Al Raschid ..... Louis D'Angelo
Babekan ..... Mario Laurenti
A Mermaid ..... Marie Sundelius
Almanzor ..... Carl Schlegel
Charlemagne ..... Leon Rothier
Abdallah ..... Paolo Ananian
Titania ..... Lillian Ogden
Mercur ..... Cesare Del Grande

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

PETROUCHKA

Ballet by Igor Strawinsky. First presented by the Metropolitan ballet on 6 February 1919.

Ballerina ..... Rosina Galli
Petrouchka ..... Adolph Bolm
The Moor ..... Giuseppe Bonfiglio
The Old Magician ..... Ottokar Bartik
The Merchant ..... Armando Agnini
Street Dancer ..... Regina Smith
Street Dancer ..... Florence Rudolph
Gypsies ..... Lillian Ogden and Jessie Rogge

Conductor, Pierre Monteux

L'OISEAU BLEU

Opera in four acts by Albert Wolff, the book by Maurice Maeterlinck. World *première* at the Metropolitan on 27 December 1919.

Mother Tyl and *Maternal Love* ..... Florence Easton
Grandmother Tyl ..... Louise Bérat
Grandfather Tyl ; Father Time ..... Leon Rothier
The Dog ..... Robert Couzinou
Mytyl ..... Mary Ellis
Tyltyl ..... Raymonde Delaunois
Father Tyl ..... Paolo Ananian
Joy of Understanding ..... Gladys Axman

Light ..... Flora Perini
Bread ..... Mario Laurenti
The Little Girl ..... Edna Kellogg
Two Little Lovers ..... Minnie Egener and Helena Marsh
Joy of Just Being ..... Margaret Farnham
Joy of Seeing What Is Beautiful ..... Cecil Arden
The Fairy and Mme. Berlingot ..... Jeanne Gordon
Night ..... Florence Ingram
The Cat ..... Margaret Romaine
Happiness ..... Mary Mellish
The Child and *Water* ..... Adeline Vosari
Sugar ..... Octave Dua
Fire ..... Angelo Bada
Children ..... Mesdames Belleri, Florence, Borniggia, White, and Manetti

Conductor, Albert Wolff

EUGEN ONEGIN

Opera in three acts by Peter Ilyitch Tchaikowsky, the book by Modeste Tchaikowsky after a story by Pushkin. First presented in the Metropolitan on 24 March 1919 in Italian.

Olga ..... Frances Ingram
Tatiana ..... Claudia Muzio
Larina ..... Flora Perini
Filipievna ..... Kathleen Howard
Onegin ..... Giuseppe de Luca
Lenski ..... Giovanni Martinelli
Prince Gremine ..... Adamo Didur
Triquet ..... Angelo Bada
Zaretski ..... Millo Picco
A Captain ..... Louis D'Angelo

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

LOUISE

Opera in four acts by Gustave Charpentier, the book also by the composer. First presented at the Metropolitan on 15 January 1921.

Louise ..... Geraldine Farrar
The Mother ..... Louise Bérat
The Father ..... Clarence Whitehill
Julien ..... Orville Harrold
Irma ..... Raymonde Delaunois
Gertrude ..... Flora Perini
Elise ..... Anna Roselle
Blanche ..... Alice Miriam
Suzanne ..... Marie Tiffany
Marguerite ..... Mary Mellish

Madeleine ..... Edna Kellogg
La Balayeuse ..... Gladys Axman
La Petite Chiffonier ..... Frances Ingram
La Gavroche ..... Mary Ellis
Le Noctambule ..... Rafaelo Diaz
Solo Danseuse ..... Florence Rudolph
Camille ..... Ellen Dalossy

Conductor, Albert Wolff

DIE TOTE STADT

Opera in three acts by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, the book by Paul Schott after the drama by Georges Rodenbach, *Le Mirage.* First presented at the Metropolitan on 19 November 1921.

Paul ..... Orville Harrold
Marietta ; the Apparition of Marie ..... Maria Jeritza
Frank ..... Robert Leonhardt
Brigitta ..... Marion Telva
Juliette ..... Raymonde Delaunois
Lucienne ..... Grace Anthony
Gaston ..... Armando Agnini
Victorin ..... George Meader
Fritz ..... Mario Laurenti
Count Albert ..... Angelo Bada

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

SNEGOUROTCHKA

Opera in four acts and a prologue by Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakoff, on a story by Ostrovsky. First presented at the Metropolitan on 23 January 1922 in French.

Snegourotchka ..... Lucrezia Bori
Lel ..... Raymonde Delaunois
Koupava ..... Yvonne D'Arle
Fairy of Spring ..... Marion Telva
Bobylicka ..... Kathleen Howard
The Faun ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
A Page ..... Grace Anthony
The Czar ..... Orville Harrold
Mizguir ..... Mario Laurenti
King Winter ..... Léon Rothier
Bobyl ..... Angelo Bada
Bermiate ..... Louis D'Angelo
Carnival ..... George Meader
Court Jesters ..... Pietro Audisio, Vincenzo Reschiglian

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

DER ROSENKAVALIER

Opera in three acts by Richard Strauss, the book by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Revived at the Metropolitan on 17 November 1922.

Princess Werdenberg ..... Florence Easton
Octavian ..... Maria Jeritza
Sophie ..... Marie Sundelius
Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau ..... Paul Bender
Faninal ..... Gustav Schützendorf
Marianne ..... Grace Anthony
Valzacchi ..... Angelo Bada
Annina ..... Kathleen Howard
Commissary of Police ..... Carl Schlegel
Major-domo of the Princess ..... Pietro Audisio
Major-domo of Faninal ..... Augusto Monti
Innkeeper ..... George Meader
Singer ..... Orville Harrold
Milliner ..... Muriel Tindal
Leopold ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
Animal Vendor ..... Raffaele Lipparini
Three Orphans ..... Laura Robertson, Grace Bradley, and Henrietta Wakefield
A Negro ..... Virginia Gitchell

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

ANIMA ALLEGRA

Opera in three acts by Franco Vittadini, the book by Giuseppe Adami. First presented at the Metropolitan on 14 February 1923.

Consuelo ..... Lucrezia Bori
Donna Sacramento ..... Kathleen Howard
Coralito ..... Queena Mario
Carmen ..... Grace Anthony
Mariquita ..... Myrtle Schaaf
Frasquita ..... Marion Telva
Pedro ..... Giacomo Lauri-Volpi
Don Eligio ..... Adamo Didur
Lucio ..... Armand Tokatyan
Tonio ..... Angelo Bada
Diego ..... Millo Picco
Ramirrez ..... Italo Picchi
A Singer ..... Rafaelo Diaz
A Gypsy ..... Paolo Ananian

Conductor, Robert Moranzoni

APPENDIX I

MONA LISA

Opera in two acts, a prologue and epilogue by Max von Schillings, the book by Beatrice Dovsky. First presented at the Metropolitan on 1 March 1923.

A Tourist (*Francesco*) ..... Michael Bohnen
His Wife (*Mona Fiordalisa*) ..... Barbara Kemp
A Monk (*Giovanni*) ..... Curt Taucher
Sandro ..... William Gustafson
Pietro ..... Carl Schlegel
Arrigo ..... George Meader
Alessio ..... Max Bloch
Masolino ..... Louis D'Angelo
Ginevra ..... Frances Peralta
Dianora ..... Ellen Dalossy
Piccarda ..... Marion Telva

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

LA HABAÑERA

Opera in three acts by Raoul Laparra, the book by the composer. First presented at the Metropolitan on 2 January 1924 as part of a double bill with *I Compagnacci*.

Ramon ..... Giuseppe Danise
Pedro ..... Armand Tokatyan
Their Father ..... Léon Rothier
Pilar ..... Florence Easton
A Young Girl ..... Phradie Wells
Comrades ..... Messrs. Paltrinieri, Gustafson, Gabor, and Audisio
Blind Beggars ..... Messrs. Ananian, Bada, and D'Angelo
Servant ..... James Wolfe
A Bridegroom ..... Pietro Audisio
A Middle-aged Man ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
A Boy ..... Louise Hunter
A Bride ..... Minnie Egener

Conductor, Louis Hasselmans

I COMPAGNACCI

Opera in one act by Primo Riccitelli, the book by G. Forzano.

Bernardo ..... Gustav Schützendorf
Anna Maria ..... Elisabeth Rethberg
Baldo ..... Beniamino Gigli
Venanzio ..... Adamo Didur
Noferi ..... Angelo Bada
His Uncle ..... Louis D'Angelo

His Aunt ..... Grace Anthony
The Grandfather ..... Paolo Ananian
The Grandmother ..... Henrietta Wakefield
Ghiandaia ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
Chief of Police ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
Leader of the Children ..... Louise Hunter
Noro, Notary ..... Pietro Audisio
Bernardo's Maid-servant ..... Nanette Guilford
A Herald ..... Lawrence Tibbett

Conductor, Robert Moranzoni

JENUFA

Opera in three acts by Leos Janacek, the German version of Gabrielle Preiss' book by Max Brod. First presented at the Metropolitan on 6 December 1924.

Grandmother Buryja ..... Kathleen Howard
Laca Klemen ..... Carl Martin Oehmann
Stewa Buryja ..... Rudolf Laubenthal
The Sexton's Widow ..... Marguerite Matzenauer
Jenufa ..... Maria Jeritza
The Mill Foreman ..... Gustav Schützendorf
The Village Judge ..... James Wolfe
His Wife ..... Laura Robertson
Karolka ..... Ellen Dalossy
A Maid ..... Grace Anthony
Barena ..... Charlotte Ryan
An Aunt ..... Marie Mattfeld

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

GIOVANNI GALLURESE

Opera in three acts by Italo Montemezzi, the book by Francesco d'Angelantonio. First presented at the Metropolitan on 19 February 1925.

Giovanni Gallurese ..... Giacomo Lauri-Volpi
Maria ..... Maria Müller
Nuvis ..... Giovanni Martino
Rivegas ..... Giuseppe Danise
Bastiano ..... Angelo Bada
A Spanish Officer ..... Millo Picco
José ..... Adamo Didur
Tropeá ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
Don Pasquale ..... Pompilio Malatesta
A Shepherd's Voice ..... Merle Alcock

Conductor, Tullio Serafin

APPENDIX I

LA CENA DELLE BEFFE

Opera in four acts, by Umberto Giordano, the book by Sem Benelli. First presented at the Metropolitan on 2 January 1926.

Giannetto Malespini ..... Beniamino Gigli
Neri Chiaramantesi ..... Titta Ruffo
Tornaquinci ..... Louis D'Angelo
Gabriello Chiaramantesi ..... Angelo Bada
Calandra ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
Fazio ..... Millo Picco
Trinca ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
The Doctor ..... Adamo Didur
Lapo ..... Max Altglass
Ginevra ..... Frances Alda
Lisabetta ..... Ellen Dalossy
Laldomine ..... Merle Alcock
Fiammetta ..... Grace Anthony
Cintia ..... Henrietta Wakefield

Conductor, Tullio Serafin

THE KING'S HENCHMAN

Opera in three acts, by Joseph Deems Taylor, the book by Edna St.-Vincent Millay. World *première* at the Metropolitan on 17 February 1927.

Eadgar ..... Lawrence Tibbett
Aethelwold ..... Edward Johnson
Aelfrida ..... Florence Easton
Ase ..... Merle Alcock
Maccus ..... William Gustafson
Dunstan ..... George Meader
Ordgar ..... Louis D'Angelo
Gunner ..... Max Altglass
Cynric ..... George Cehanovsky
Brand ..... Joseph Macpherson
Wulfred ..... Millo Picco
Oslac ..... James Wolfe
Thored ..... Arnold Gabor
Hwita ..... Max Bloch
In minor roles ..... the Mmes. Wakefield, Anthony, Lerch, Flexer, Egener, and Bonetti ; Messrs. Ananian and Vajda

Conductor, Tullio Serafin

FRA GHERARDO

Opera in three acts by Ildebrando Pizzetti, the book also by the composer. First presented at the Metropolitan on 21 March 1929.

Gherardo ..... Edward Johnson
Mariola ..... Maria Müller
A Gentleman ..... Everett Marshall
A Fairwoman ..... Aida Doninelli
The Notary ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
Squint-eye ..... Louis D'Angelo
The Blind Man ..... Paolo Ananian
An Old Woman ..... Ina Bourskaya
An Angry Voice ..... Henrietta Wakefield
A Woman's Voice ..... Phradie Wells
Two Soldiers ..... Millo Picco, Fred Patton
A Man ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian
Frate Guido Putagio ..... Pavel Ludikar
Frate Simone ..... Angelo Bada
A Young Friar ..... Marek Windheim
A Mother ..... Julia Claussen
An Old Man ; the Podesta ..... Ezio Pinza
An Unbeliever ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
The Bishop ..... Mario Basiola
The Podesta's Assessor ..... George Cehanovsky
A Mother ..... Merle Alcock
The Red-haired Man ..... Louis D'Angelo
A Youth ..... Arnold Gabor
A Guard ..... Vincenzo Reschiglian

Conductor, Tullio Serafin

BOCCACCIO

Opera in three acts by Franz von Suppé, the book by F. Zell and Richard Genée. First presented at the Metropolitan on 2 January 1931.

Boccaccio ..... Maria Jeritza
Pietro ..... Walther Kirchhoff
Scalza ..... George Meader
Beatrice ..... Nina Morgana
Lotteringhi ..... Marek Windheim
Isabella ..... Dorothee Manski
Lambertuccio ..... Gustav Schützendorf
Peronella ..... Marion Telva
Fiammetta ..... Editha Fleischer
Leonetto ..... Hans Clemens
Tofano ..... Max Altglass
Majordomo of the Palace ..... William Gustafson

A Bookseller ..... Alfredo Gandolfi
Checco ..... James Wolfe
Filippa ..... Dorothea Flexer

Commedia dell'Arte

Pantalone ..... Gustav Schützendorf
Columbina ..... Nina Morgana
Pulcinella ..... Ludwig Burgstaller
Arlecchino ..... George Meader
Narcisino ..... Hans Clemens

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

PETER IBBETSON

Opera in three acts by Deems Taylor, the book by Constance Collier and Deems Taylor from the novel by George du Maurier. World *première* at the Metropolitan on 7 February 1931.

Peter Ibbetson ..... Edward Johnson
Colonel Ibbetson ..... Lawrence Tibbett
Mary, Duchess of Towers ..... Lucrezia Bori
Mrs. Deane ..... Marion Telva
Mrs. Glyn ..... Ina Bourskaya
Achille ..... Angelo Bada
Major Duquesnois ..... Léon Rothier
Chaplain of Newgate Prison ..... Louis D'Angelo
Charlie Plunkett ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
Guy Mainwaring ..... Millo Picco
A Footman ..... Marek Windheim
Diana Vivash ..... Phradie Wells
Madge Plunkett ..... Grace Divine
Victorine ..... Philine Falco
A Sister of Charity ..... Minnie Egener
Manservant ..... Alfredo Gandolfi
Prison Governor ..... George Cehanovsky
A Turnkey ..... Alfredo Gandolfi

People of the Dream

Pasquier de la Marière ..... Claudio Frigerio
Marie Pasquier ..... Santa Biondo
Madame Seraskier ..... Aida Doninelli

Conductor, Tullio Serafin

ELEKTRA

Music drama in one act, by Richard Strauss, the book by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. First presented at the Metropolitan on 3 December 1932.

Klytemnestra ..... Karin Branzell
Elektra ..... Gertrude Kappel

Chrysothemis ..... Göta Ljungberg
Aegisthus ..... Rudolf Laubenthal
Orestes ..... Friedrich Schorr
Fosterfather ..... Siegfried Tappolet
The Confidant ..... Grace Divine
A Train-bearer ..... Pearl Besuner
A Young Servant ..... Marek Windheim
An Old Servant ..... Arnold Gabor
Overseer ..... Dorothee Manski
Servants ..... Doris Doe, Ina Bourskaya, Philine Falco, Helen Gleason, and Margaret Halstead

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

SALOME

Music drama in one act by Richard Strauss, the German text by Hedwig Lachmann. Revived at the Metropolitan on 13 January 1934.

Herod Antipas ..... Max Lorenz
Herodias ..... Dorothee Manski
Salome ..... Göta Ljungberg
Jochanaan ..... Friedrich Schorr
Narraboth ..... Hans Clemens
The Page of Herodias ..... Doris Doe
Nazarenes ..... Emanuel List, Hans Clemens
Five Jews ..... Marek Windheim, Giordano Paltrinieri, Angelo Bada, Max Altglass, and James Wolfe
Soldiers ..... Louis D'Angelo and Arnold Gabor
A Cappadocian ..... Alfredo Gandolfi
A Slave ..... Helen Gleason

Conductor, Artur Bodanzky

MERRY MOUNT

Opera in three acts by Howard Hanson, the book by Richard L. Stokes. World *première* (in dramatic form) at the Metropolitan on 10 February 1934.

Faint-not-Tinker ..... Arnold Gabor
Samoset ..... James Wolfe
Desire Annable ..... Irra Petina
Jonathan Banks ..... Giordano Paltrinieri
Wrestling Bradford ..... Lawrence Tibbett
Plentiful Tewke ..... Gladys Swarthout
Praise-God-Tewke ..... Louis D'Angelo
Myles Brodrib ..... Alfredo Gandolfi
Peregrine Brodrib ..... Helen Gleason
Love Brewster ..... Lillian Clark

APPENDIX I

Bridget Crackston ..... Henrietta Wakefield
Jack Prence ..... Marek Windheim
Lady Marigold Sandys ..... Göta Ljungberg
Thomas Morton ..... George Cehanovsky
Sir Gower Lackland ..... Edward Johnson
Jewel Scrooby ..... Millo Picco
Puritans ..... Max Altglass, Pompilio Malatesta

Conductor, Tullio Serafin

APPENDIX II

Compilation of Works Presented at the Metropolitan Opera House during the Regular Subscription Seasons — 1883–1935
In order of their appearance in the repertory.

Work	Faust	Lucia di Lammermoor	Il Trovatore	I Puritani	Mignon	La Traviata	Lohengrin
1883	6	3	3	1	4	4	6
1884							9
85	5						4
86	3						4
87	4						6
88	4		5				2
89			3				5
90							7
91	8	2	2		2		3
93	8	3				1	5
94	7	3	3		1	1	5
95	8	2	2			2	6
96	10	1	2			3	6
98	7	2				2	7
99	9	2	3		1	2	7
1900	5						6
01	5					1	4
02	7		1			4	7
03	4	3				3	5
04	4	3				4	6
05	5	5	4			2	5
06	4	4				3	5
07	6	1	6		5	6	2

APPENDIX II

Work	Faust	Lucia di Lammermoor	Il Trovatore	I Puritani	Mignon	La Traviata	Lohengrin
1908	7	2	5			5	
09	6		6			3	6
1910	4	6	4			3	6
11	3	3	4			2	5
12	4		4			3	3
13	1	1				5	6
14			6			5	5
15		4	4			2	5
16		2	5			2	5
17	6		3	4		3	
18	6	1	2			3	
19	6	4	2				
20	4	3	3				7
21	5	4	2			3	7
22	4	2	2			6	3
23	5	2	1			6	5
24	4	5	1			4	6
25	5	6	1			6	4
26	6	6	2		4	4	5
27	6	2	3		4	4	5
28	4	3	5		2	6	5
29	3		4		3	6	7
30	6	4	3		3	5	6
31	3	4	4		4	5	5
32	5	5	3		1	5	4
33	3	4	2		1	5	2
34	3	2	1		2	4	4
Performances	232	102	119	5	37	144	238
Seasons	45	34	37	2	14	39	46

Work	La Sonnambula	Rigoletto	Robert le Diable	Il Barbiere di Siviglia	Don Giovanni	Mefistofele	La Gioconda
1883	2	2	3	3	5	2	4
1884		1			2		
85							
86							
87							
88							
89					2		
90							
91	2	2			3		
93		2			1		
94		4			3		
95		1				2	
96		1			3	4	
98		1		4	4		
99		1		4	1		
1900		2			2	2	
01							
02		2		3	1		
03		5		4			
04		2		2			4
05	2	4		2	2		4
06		2					
07		4		6	4	7	

APPENDIX II

Work	La Sonnambula	Rigoletto	Robert le Diable	Il Barbiere di Siviglia	Don Giovanni	Mefistofele	La Gioconda
08		4		2			
09	1	2		3			6
1910		4					6
11		5					6
12		1		3			5
13							5
14							2
15	3	5		4			
16		5		3			
17		5		4			
18		3		5			
19		5		4			
20		5		3		7	
21		4		6		6	
22		3		3		5	
23		5		2		3	
24		6		3		3	5
25		5		2		3	7
26		7		2			8
27		5		3			4
28		3		2			5
29		2		4	5		6
30		4		3	3		4
31	3	5		2	2		3
32	3	5			2		3
33		2			3		2
34	2	4			2		3
Performances	18	140	3	91	50	44	92
Seasons	8	41	1	28	19	11	20

Work	Carmen	Hamlet	Marta	Les Huguenots	Le Prophète	1884 Tannhäuser	Fidelio
1883	5	1	3	2	1		
1884				5	9	9	3
85	2				3	4	
86					5	6	3
87					2	4	4
88				5	3	5	2
89						5	
90	3			3	1	7	3
1891	1	2	1	4	2		2
93	12	1		2		2	
94	7			6			
95	11	2		5		3	1
96	7	1	2	2		3	
98	2		1	4	2	6	
99	11			2	2	5	1
1900	1			4		5	1
01	7			2		2	
02	3			3	1	4	
03	4					5	1
04	4			4		9	1
05	2		4			4	
06	1		3			5	
07			3			4	3

APPENDIX II

Work	Carmen	Hamlet	Marta	Les Huguenots	Le Prophète	1884 Tannhäuser	Fidelio
1908	6					6	1
09						4	
10						6	
11						4	
12				5		6	
13						3	
14	9			3		5	5
15	5		4				
16	3		3				3
17	7		5		5		
18	5		5		6		
19	7		4		5		
20	7						
21	8						
22	6					3	
23	8		6			5	
24	5		2			5	
25			1			6	
26			2			4	3
27	6		3			5	2
28	5		2		4	3	
29	2					5	3
30	3						
31	3					7	
32						4	
33						5	
34						6	
Performances	176	7	54	61	51	189	42
Seasons	34	5	18	17	15	39	18

Work	Der Freischütz	Guglielmo Tell	Masaniello	La Juive	Die Walküre	1885 Die Königin von Saba	Die Meistersinger
1883							
1884	1	3	3	5	7		
1885					4	15	8
86			2		3	4	5
87				3	4		1
88		3		3	4		5
89		2		2	3	5	3
90					4		6
91							3
93							3
94		3					
95					2		1
96							3
98					4		
99					6		4
1900					5		3
01					3		1
02					3		2
03					4		
04					4		7
05					3	5	4
06					2		
07					3		4

APPENDIX II

Work	Der Freischütz	Guglielmo Tell	Masaniello	La Juive	Die Walküre	1885 Die Königin von Saba	Die Meistersinger
1908					5		5
09	2				4		2
10					5		5
11					5		3
12					6		5
13					7		4
14					7		3
15					5		4
16					4		5
17							
18							
19				7			
20				2			
21					6		
22					5		
22		5			6		
23	3	4			4		6
24	5			3	5		5
25	3			5	5		5
26				4	4		6
27				2	6		5
28	3			3	7		5
29				3	7		6
30		2		2	6		5
31		2		1	3		3
32					5		
33					5		5
34					5		4
Performances Seasons	17 6	24 8	5 2	45 14	190 41	29 4	155 37

Work	Rienzi	1886 Aïda	Das Goldene Kreutz and Vienna Waltzes	Tristan und Isolde	Merlin	1887 Siegfried	Der Trompeter von Säkkingen
1883							
1884							
1885	7						
86	5	4	4	8	5		
87				3		11	7
88		3				8	
89	1	3		5		2	4
90				3		4	
91		2					
93							
94		3					
95		4		6			
96		3		2		6	
98		3		5		1	
99		5		3		2	
1900		4		4		2	
01		5		3		1	
02		7		4		3	
03		6		4		2	
04		5		2		2	
05		5		3		3	
06		6		4		4	
07		7		6		4	

APPENDIX II

Work	Rienzi	1886 Aïda	Das Goldene Kreutz and Vienna Waltzes	Tristan und Isolde	Merlin	1887 Siegfried	Der Trompeter von Säkkingen
1908		8		4		2	
09		7	1 (V. W.)	5		3	
1910		8		4		2	
11		7		5		3	
12		5		5		2	
13		7		5		4	
14		8		4		3	
15		7		5		3	
16		7		5		5	
17		8					
18		8					
19		5					
20		9		6			
21		8		4			
22		8		5			
23		6		2		2	
24		8		2		2	
25		8		4		2	
26		9		2		3	
27		5		5		4	
28		8		4		3	
29		7		6		2	
30		6		6		5	
31		7		6		3	
32		6		5		2	
33		5		5		2	
34		5		7		3	
Performances	13	265	5	176	5	115	11
Seasons	3	44	1	40	1	36	2

Work	Eury-anthe	Ferdi-nand Cortez	Götter-dämme-rung	1888 L'Afri-caine	Das Rhein-gold	1889 Der Flieg-ende Hol-länder	Il Ballo in Maschera
1883							
1884							
1885							
1886							
87	4	4	7				
88			4	5	9		
89			5		3	5	4
90			4	3		4	
91				4			
93							
94				1			
95							
96				1			
98			1	1	1		
99			2	1	2	3	
1900			3	1	2	2	
01			1		1		
02			2		2		1
03			1		1		
04			2		2		2
05			3		2		
06			1	2	1		
07						4	

APPENDIX II

Work	Euryanthe	Ferdinand Cortez	Götterdämmerung	1888 L'Africaine	Das Rheingold	1889 Der Fliegende Holländer	II Ballo in Maschera
1908			5		1		
09			2		2		
1910			1		1		
11			3		1		
12			4		1		
13			3		1		5
14	5		2		1		2
15			3		3		3
16			1		2		
17							
18							
19							
1920							
21							
22				4			
23				4			
24			4	4	1		
25			2	3	1		
26			4	3	3		
27			3	2	1		
28			2	3	1		
29			3	1	1		
30			4	5	1	7	
31			2	3	1	2	
32			4		1		
33			2	3	1		
34			2		1		
Performances	9	4	92	54	52	27	17
Seasons	2	1	33	20	31	7	6

Work	Der Barbier von Bagdad	Puppenfee	1890 Asrael	Der Vasall von Szigeth	Diana von Solange	1891 Roméo et Juliette	Orfeo ed Eurydice
1883							
1884							
1885							
86							
87							
88							
89	5	5					
90	4	4	5	4	2		
91						3	3
93						5	1
94						4	
95						4	1
96						5	
98						6	
99						5	
1900						5	
01						3	
02						2	
03						2	
04						4	
05		1					
06						5	
07							

APPENDIX II

Work	Der Barbier von Bagdad	Puppenfee	1890 Asrael	Der Vasall von Szigeth	Diana von Solange	1891 Roméo et Juliette	Orfeo ed Eurydice
1908							
09							5
10						3	5
11							5
12							2
13							3
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22						10	
23						6	
24						7	
25						4	
26						2	
27	5					2	
28						3	
29						4	
30						6	
31						3	
32						3	
33						1	
34						1	
Performances	14	10	5	4	2	108	25
Seasons	3	3	1	1	1	27	8

Work	Cavalleria Rusticana	Otello	Norma	Dinorah	Lakmé	1893 Philémon et Baucis	Pagliacci
1891	3	1	2	1	2		
1893	7					4	3
1894	3	4					2
95	7					2	2
96	4					1	
98							
99	6						1
1900	4						1
1901	4	3					1
02	1	3					6
1903	8						5
04	3						3
05							3
06	1				3		8
07							4

APPENDIX II

Work	Cavalleria Rusticana	Otello	Norma	Dinorah	Lakmé	1893 Philémon et Baucis	Pagliacci
1908	7						4
09	7	6					7
10	6	5					8
11	6	4					9
12	5	3					9
13	3						9
14	3						7
15	4						4
16	3				3		5
17	6						5
18	7						6
19	5						6
20	3						6
21	6						6
22	5						6
23	7						4
24	6			2			8
25	5						7
26	7						6
27	6		6				6
28	7		5				6
29	4		2				6
30	3		4				8
31	3		2		5		6
32	1				4		6
33	3				3		5
34	2				3		3
Performances	181	29	21	3	23	7	204
Seasons	39	8	6	2	7	3	39

Work	L'Amico Fritz	Semiramide	Le Nozze di Figaro	1894 Elaine	Manon	Falstaff	Samson et Dalila
1891							
1893	2	3	3				
94		1		2	4	3	1
95						3	
96							
98			3				
99			4				
1900							
01			2				
02			1				
1903			1				
04			2				
05							
06							
07							

APPENDIX II

Work	L'Amico Fritz	Semiramide	Le Nozze di Figaro	1894 Elaine	Manon	Falstaff	Samson et Dalila
1908			6		6	3	
09					4	2	
10							
11					3		
12					5		
13					4		
14					3		
15					1		5
16			3				5
17			2				4
18							5
19					4		5
20					5		4
21					6		1
22					4		5
23	3						5
24						6	3
25							6
26							4
27							
28					5		
29					5		
30					4		
31					5		
32					4		
33					4		
34					3		
Performances	5	4	27	2	79	17	53
Seasons	2	2	10	1	19	5	13

Work	1895 La Favorita	La Navarraise	Les Pêcheurs de Perles	1896 Werther	Le Cid	1898 Ero e Leander	1899 Don Pasquale
1891							
1893							
1894							
95	2	4	1				
96	2		(2 acts)	1	2		
98						2	3
99							1
1900					3		1
01					2		1
02						2	
1903							
04							2
05	4						2
06							1
07							

APPENDIX II

Work	1895 La Favorita	La Navarraise	Les Pêcheurs de Perles	1896 Werther	Le Cid	1898 Ero e Leander	1899 Don Pasquale
1908							1
09				2			2
10							
11							
12							2
13							2
14							
15							
16			3				
17							
18							
19							
20							
21		4					
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							
31							
32							
33							
34							3
Performances	8	8	4	3	7	4	21
Seasons	3	2	2	2	3	2	12

Work	Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor	Die Zauber-flöte	1900 La Bohème	Tosca	Salammbô	1901 La Fille du Régiment	Messa-lina
1891							
93							
94							
95							
96							
98							
99	1	5					
1900			5	3	3		
01		3		3		3	3
02		2	3	4		6	
1903		4	3	4			
04			3	4			
05			5	3			
06			6	6			
07			7	5			

APPENDIX II

Work	Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor	Die Zauber-flöte	1900 La Bohème	Tosca	Salammbô	1901 La Fille du Régiment	Messa-lina
1908			7	6			
09			7	6			
10			6	6			
11			8	5			
12		9	6	5			
13		6	8	7			
14		6	7	6			
15		4	5	3			
16		3	4	5			
17			5	6		5	
18			7	6		4	
19			4	5			
20			9	6			
21			7	9			
22			7	7			
23			8	7			
24			7	5			
25			8	5			
26		5	7	4			
27			4	7			
28			6	7			
29			7	4			
30			6	2			
31			4	3			
32			7				
33			3				
34			6	2			
Performances	1	47	202	166	3	18	3
Seasons	1	10	34	33	1	4	1

Work	Manru	1902 Ernani	Der Wald	1903 Parsifal	L'Elisir d'Amore	Coppélia (b)	La Dame Blanche
1891							
93							
94							
95							
96							
98							
99							
1900							
01	3						
02		3	2				
1903				11	4	4	1
04				8	1	1	
05				4	2		
06				2			
07							

APPENDIX II

Work	Manru	1902 Ernani	Der Wald	1903 Parsifal	L'Elisir d'Amore	Coppélia (b)	La Dame Blanche
1908				5	2		
09				3	1	4	
10				4			
11				3			
12				3			
13				3			
14				4			
15				3			
16				3	5		
17					5		
18					5		
19				6	5		
20				4	1		
21		4		3			
22		4		4			
23		3		3			
24				3			
25				2			
26				1			
27				1			
28		4		1			
29				2	3		
30				1	2		
31				2	3		
32				2	3		
33				2			
34				4			
Performances	3	18	2	97	42	9	1
Seasons	1	5	1	29	14	3	1

Work	1904 Lucrezia Borgia	Die Fleder- maus	1905 Hänsel und Gretel	Der Zigeuner- baron	1906 Fedora	Damna- tion de Faust	Madama Butterfly
1903							
1904	1	4					
05		1	11	1			
06			8		4	5	5
07			5		3		6
1908							8
09			4				6
10			2				8
11			7				7
12			4				8
13			6				8
14			4				8
15			4				4
16			5				5
17							4
18							8
19							8

APPENDIX II

Work	1904 Lucrezia Borgia	Die Fleder-maus	1905 Hänsel und Gretel	Der Zigeuner-baron	1906 Fedora	Damna-tion de Faust	Madama Butterfly
20							6
21							7
22							6
23					6		7
24					5		5
25					3		5
26							5
27			8				4
28			5				5
29			4				6
30			5				3
31			3				3
32			3				2
33			2				3
34			1				3
Performances	1	5	91	1	21	5	163
Seasons	1	1	19	1	5	1	29

Work	Manon Lescaut	Salome	1907 Adriana Lecouvreur	Iris	1908 Tiefland	Le Villi	La Wally
1906	3	1					
1907	5		2	5			
1908					4	5	4
09							
10							
11							
12	5						
13	4						
14	3			4			
15	3						
16	4						
17	5						
18	4						
19	4						
20	4						
21	2						
22	2						
23							
24							
25							
26							
27	3						
28	2						
29	4						
30				4			
31							
32							
33		7					
34							
Performances	57	8	2	13	4	5	4
Seasons	16	2	1	3	1	1	1

APPENDIX II

Work	Die Verkaufte Braut	1909 Germania	Stradella	Fra Diavolo	Pique Dame	The Pipe of Desire	Hungaria (b)
1908	7						
1909	1	5	3	3	4	2	2
10	4	2					
11	2						
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25	5						
26	3						
27	2						
28							
29							
30							
31							
32	2						
33							
34							
Performances	26	7	3	3	4	2	2
Seasons	8	2	1	1	1	1	1

Work	1910 Armide	La Fanciulla del West	Königskinder	Ariane et Barbe-bleue	1911 Lobetanz	Le Donne Curiose
1908						
1909						
1910	3	9	11	4		
11	4	5	7	3	5	5
12		4	6			3
13		4	6			
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						
26						
27						
28						
29		8				
30		2				
31		2				
32						
33						
34						
Performances	7	34	30	7	5	8
Seasons	2	7	4	2	1	2

APPENDIX II

Work	Versiegelt	Mona	1912 Il Segreto di Susanna	Les Contes d'Hoffmann	Cyrano de Bergerac	Boris Godounoff	1913 L'Amore dei Tre Re
1910							
11	4	4					
12			4	7	5	4	
13			3	2		6	5
14						6	5
15						6	
16						4	
17						6	5
18						4	3
19						3	3
20			3			1	5
21			1			5	4
22						5	1
23						4	2
24				6		4	
25				3		3	
26				4		2	3
27				3		3	2
28				3		3	2
29				4			
30				1			
31				4			
32							2
33							
34							
Performances	4	4	11	37	5	69	42
Seasons	1	1	4	10	1	17	14

Work	L'Amore Medico	Julien	Madeleine	Der Rosen-kavalier	1914 Madame Sans-Gêne	L'Oracolo	1915 Goyescas
1913	4	5	4	8			
14				5	6	6	
15				5	2		4
16				3	3	2	
17					3	6	
18						3	
19						5	
20						5	
21						3	
22				4		1	
23				3		5	
24				2		2	
25						1	
26				3			
27				4			
28				2			
29				4			
30							
31						4	
32						1	
33							
34				4			
Performances	4	5	4	45	14	44	4
Seasons	1	1	1	12	4	13	1

APPENDIX II

Work	Prince Igor	Der Widerspänstigen Zähmung	1916 The Canterbury Pilgrims	Francesca da Rimini	Iphigenia auf Tauris	Thaïs	1917 Marouf
1915	5	2					
16	2		6	5	5	5	
17	2			4		6	6
18						5	3
19							2
20							
21							
22						7	
23						6	
24						3	
25						1	
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							
31							
32							
33							
34							
Performances	9	2	6	9	5	33	11
Seasons	3	1	1	2	1	7	3

Work	Saint Elizabeth	Lodoletta	Le Coq d'Or	Shanewis	Dance in the Place Congo	1918 Forza del Destino	Il Tabarro
1917	5	5	6	5	4		
1918		3	5	3		6	6
19			7			5	4
20			5			3	
21						3	
22						2	
23			9				
24			5				
25							
26						3	
27			5			3	
28							
29							
30						5	
31						4	
32							
33							
34						3	
Performances	5	8	42	8	4	37	10
Seasons	1	2	7	2	1	10	2

APPENDIX II

Work	Suor Angelica	Gianni Schicchi	Oberon	Crispino e la Comare	La Reine Fiammette	Petrouch-ka	Mireille
1917							
1918	6	6	6	3	4	5	4
19	4	4	5				
20			2				
21							
22							
23							
24						5	
25		4				5	
26		2					
27		2					
28							
29							
30							
31							
32							
33		4					
34							
Performances	10	22	13	3	4	15	4
Seasons	2	6	3	1	1	3	1

Work	The Legend	The Temple Dancer	1919 L'Italiana in Algeri	L'Oiseau Bleu	Zaza	Cleo-patra's Night	Eugen Onegin
1918	3	3					
19			4	8	7	4	4
20				4	7	3	3
21					6		
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							
31							
32							
33							
34							
Perform-ances	3	3	4	12	20	7	7
Seasons	1	1	1	2	3	2	2

APPENDIX II

Work	1920 Don Carlos	Louise	Andrea Chenier	The Polish Jew	1921 Die Tote Stadt	Le Roi d'Ys	Snegour-otchka
1920	6	7	5	3			
21	5	4	4		6	5	3
22	2		5		4		2
23			4				
24			3				
25			5				
26			3				
27			5				
28			3				
29		4	3				
30			1				
31			1				
32			2				
33							
34							
Performances	13	15	44	3	10	5	5
Seasons	3	3	13	1	2	1	2

Work	Loreley	Così fan tutte	1922 Anima Allegra	Mona Lisa	1923 Habanera	I Compagnacci	Le Roi de Lahore
1920							
1921	5	4					
1922	3	3	5	5			
23		2	4	1	3	3	5
24		2					
25							
26							
27		1					
28							
29							
30							
31							
32							
33							
34							
Performances	8	12	9	6	3	3	5
Seasons	2	5	2	2	1	1	1

APPENDIX II

Work	1924 Jenufa	Giovanni Gallurese	Pelléas et Mélisande	1925 L'Heure Espagnole	La Vestale	I Giojelli della Madonna	La Cena delle Beffe
1924	5	4	4				
25			4	5	5	6	6
26			4		3	5	2
27			3				
28			2				
29			2				
30			2				
31			2				
32			2				
33			2				
34			2				
Performances	5	4	29	5	8	11	8
Seasons	1	1	11	1	2	2	2

Work	Skyscrapers (b)	La Vida Breve	Le Rossignol	Don Quichotte	1926 Turandot	The King's Henchman	La Giara (b)
1925	6	4	4	4			
26	5		3	1	8	6	4
27					6	5	
28					6	3	
29					1		
30							
31							
32							
33							
34							
Performances	11	4	7	5	21	14	4
Seasons	2	1	2	2	4	3	1

Work	1927 Violanta	Madonna Imperia	La Rondine	1928 Die Aegyptische Helena	Campana Sommersa	Jonny Spielt Auf	Fra Gherardo
1927	4	5	5				
28			3	5	5	7	4
29			2		2		
30							
31							
32							
33							
34							
Performances	4	5	10	5	7	7	4
Seasons	1	1	3	1	2	1	1

Work	1929 Luisa Miller	Sadko	1930 Fair at Sorochintzy	Le Preziose Ridicole	Boccaccio	Peter Ibbetson	1931 Schwanda
1929	2	8					
30	1	4	5	4	8	6	
31		4				6	5
32							
33						3	
34						1	
Performances	3	16	5	4	8	16	5
Seasons	2	3	1	1	1	4	1

APPENDIX II

Work	La Notte di Zoraima	Donna Juanita	Simon Boccanegra	1932 Elektra	Il Signor Bruschino	Emperor Jones	1933 Merry Mount
1931	4	6	6				
32			4	6	4	7	
33			2			3	6
34			2				
Performances	4	6	14	6	4	10	6
Seasons	1	1	4	1	1	2	1

Work	Linda di Chamounix	1934 In the Pasha's Garden	La Serva Padrona	
1933	3			
34	4	3	4	
Performances	7	3	4	
Seasons	2	1	1	

APPENDIX III

Performances of Operas
1935–1938
(The works listed in order of their appearance in the repertory.)

APPENDIX III

Opera	*1935–36*	*1936–37*	*1937–38*	*1938–39*	*Total*	*Total Seasons*
Faust	3	3	1		239	48
Lucia di Lammermoor	1	1	2	4	110	38
Il Trovatore	3	2	3	3	130	41
Mignon	3	2		3	45	17
La Traviata	3	5	5	2	159	43
Lohengrin	6	5	4	7	260	50
Rigoletto	6	4	5	3	158	45
Il Barbiere di Siviglia			5	3	99	30
Don Giovanni			4	2	56	21
La Gioconda		2		1	95	22
Carmen	7	5	6	1	195	38
Tannhäuser	5	2	5	7	207	43
Fidelio	2			3	47	20
La Juive	3				48	15
Die Walküre	4	6	7	5	212	45
Die Meistersinger	4	3	3	1	166	41
Aïda	6	7	6	7	291	48
Tristan und Isolde	7	8	9	8	208	44
Siegfried	3	4	5	5	132	40
Götterdämmerung	4	2	3	3	104	37
Das Rheingold	2	2	2	2	60	35
Der Fliegende Holländer		4			31	8
Roméo et Juliette			3		111	28
Orfeo ed Eurydice				5	30	9
Cavalleria Rusticana	1	3	2	2	189	43
Otello			8	4	37	10
Norma		2	3		26	8
Lakmé	2	2		2	29	12
Pagliacci	5	5	1	4	219	54
Manon	3	4	4	4	94	23
Falstaff				4	21	6
Samson et Dalila		4	1		58	15
La Bohème	6	2	5	6	221	38
Tosca	1			4	171	35
Parsifal	3	1	3	3	107	33
Hänsel und Gretel	2	1	1	1	96	23
Madama Butterfly	6	3			172	31
Salome			3	3	14	4
Die Verkaufte Braut		3*			29	9
Les Contes d'Hoffmann		3			40	11
Boris Godounoff				2	71	18
Der Rosenkavalier			5	3	53	14
Thaïs				4	37	8
Le Coq d'Or		5	2		49	9
Gianni Schicchi	5*		3		30	8
Louise				5	20	4
La Rondine	3				13	4
Simon Boccanegra			2		16	5
Elektra			4	3	13	3
Caponsacchi		2			2	1
Il Matrimonio Segreto		2			2	1
A Man Without a Country			1		1	1
Amelia al Ballo			3*	3*	6	2

* Given in English

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Abbreviations: b.—ballet; ft.—footnote.

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