

EUGENE ONEGIN ENDS THE OPERATIC SEASON

Fine Performance of Tschai-kowsky Opera at the Metropolitan Opera House

UNIQUE OPERATIC WORK

EUGENE ONEGIN
Opera in three acts, by Tschai-kowsky.
Tatiana..... Jeanna Gordon
Onegin..... Charles Stein
Anna..... Flora Perini
Eugene Onegin..... Giuseppe de Luca
Prince Dimitri..... Giovanni Martinelli
Trinet..... Adame Diedo
Xenia..... Angelo Rada
Captain..... Milio Picco
Guillot..... Adam Lellman
Conductor: Artur Rodanzky

Philadelphia last evening had its first presentation of Tschai-kowsky's opera, "Eugene Onegin," and popularly at least placed the seal of approval upon it. Further than this, it gave a solar plexus blow, if anything so crude may be said of grand opera, to Mr. Gatti-Cavazza's theory propounded at the close of last season, that Philadelphia does not like novelties, for the second largest audience of the season was present, only the last Caruso night exceeding it in size.

never designated it as an opera, but declared that it was a series of lyric scenes. This description probably fits the composition better than any other, but while the story of the opera is coherent enough, far more so than many of the most famous of the Italian operas, there is nevertheless a very apparent lack of continuity about both action and music which will prevent it from ever becoming one of the world's great operas.

"Eugene Onegin" is essentially an opera of a great symphonist. Tschai-kowsky thought invariably in the phraseology of the orchestra and throughout the work there is thematic development in the orchestra, often with a rather feeble contrapuntal vocal part, which, at least to the experienced listener, distracted attention from both singing and stage action, to the typically Tschai-kowskian orchestration, or to poignant melodies in the great solo instruments of the orchestra.

This was especially the case in the first act. In the second and third the great composer adopted a style radically different to that of the first, to the manifest gain of the opera as a vocal and dramatic work. The first act is decidedly the weakest of the three, both musically and dramatically. In the second there are melodic numbers for the voices, notably the scene of the challenge to the duel, which makes a powerful close.

The full possibilities of the orchestra as an operatic adjunct, nevertheless made the vocal parts the principal ones. The bass aria in this act, "Ad ogni eta l'amor," and the ensuing scene between Onegin and Tatiana are operatic, both in style and character, to the fullest extent, while there is no loss in the wonderful Tschai-kowsky orchestration. It was a fine tribute to Tschai-kowsky's powers that the audience remained silent after sporadic applause, at the close of the second act, to the orchestral postlude which closed the act. This in strong contrast to the applause which completely drowned the exquisite cello quintet which closes the first act of "Othello" at its last performance in Philadelphia. There were numerous other musical points of the opera of which space forbids discussion.

There are few places in "Eugene Onegin" where drama takes precedence, in spite of the fact that the opera is full of dramatic situations, or rather possibilities. The opera is not one of dramatic action for there is little action in it. It is sociological, rather than melodramatic, although this condition might easily have been reversed.



The opera was not especially well cast, considering the resources of the Metropolitan Opera Company. The Italian temperament does not lend itself well to the Slavic atmosphere (tempered with Gallic) which the work demands. Miss Muzio was not happy as the love-sick Russian maiden, although the part of the wife of the ancient Russian nobleman who still clings fondly to the dreams of her youth was admirably depicted. Not was Mr. De Luca at his best in the character of the blasé man of

the world who dallies with the flame of love only at the end to be consumed by it. The sincerity and native humor of his own personal character, which he shows in every part which he enacts, makes such a role evidently unconvincing and hence unconvincing. Mr. Martinelli as Oniski had a part which suited him better than the others and was vocally and dramatically adequate. All the principal parts were well sung. There are many fine moments in the opera vocally and Miss Muzio, Miss

Perini, Mr. De Luca, Mr. Martinelli and Miss Gordon were more than equal to the vocal demands made upon them. The relatively minor parts taken by Mr. Djidur, who had little opportunity to show his vocal ability and some of all to display his tremendous dramatic powers, Miss Howard, and Messrs. Bada, D'Angelo, Picco and Lellman were all well done.

The stage settings were of unusual beauty and evoked applause at the opening of almost every scene and the ballet in its several appearances was rhythmic and altogether beautiful. Mr. Rodanzky conducted with skill and knowledge of the opera, although there were places where "editing" seemed to be apparent.

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What Is Philadelphia Going to Do About It?

"WHAT IS PHILADELPHIA going to do about it?" Owen J. Roberts asked at a luncheon in the Bellevue-Stratford, April 10, after hearing America's leading tuberculosis experts testifying of the value of The Phipps Institute to the country's public health, and the inconceivability of the Institute's being allowed to close May 1 because its treasury would be empty then.

DR. WILLIAM H. WELCH, "father" of modern scientific medicine in the United States, had said:

We have had many meetings in Philadelphia of our Advisory Council and I think there is not a member of it who does not seize eagerly the opportunity of coming here. We all go away inspired by what we have heard and what we have seen at these meetings. This morning at our business meeting we heard the story told of the organization and the work of this Clinic for delicate school children. It is perfectly obvious that not only is there a very important work being done, but work is being done in a way that will serve as an example for others, for the extension of the same undertaking in other parts of the city, state and throughout the country.

Then again, exactly what is the part that is played by inheritance in the development of tuberculosis? Now I venture to say that there is going on in The Phipps Institute, under particularly advantageous conditions, a research of the utmost significance for a better understanding of the inheritable, constitutional factors of the disease.

I wonder if you who are living in Philadelphia realize what you have? Standing off as I have, I feel that The Phipps Institute has been one of the great directing forces in the tuberculosis campaign. You have it here in Philadelphia. It brings credit; it brings renown to your city, and is something of which the city should be proud.

A financial crisis is hard upon The Phipps Institute. Mr. Phipps generously provided for the Institute, but it was understood from the first he was not contemplating a permanent endowment. The Institute's situation is precisely one we are about to face at the Johns Hopkins University of Baltimore, where Mr. Phipps very generously built the Phipps Psychiatric Clinic and maintained it on terms almost identical.

We do not propose to let our Phipps Psychiatric Clinic close, and it is inconceivable that Philadelphia will allow her Phipps Institute to be closed.

I wish that Dr. Flexner, who is a member of the Rockefeller Foundation, and could have spoken with authority, might have been here today. I may say this as one who is familiar with the foundation policy. The Rockefeller Foundation feels that what it is able to contribute for the furtherance of medical research should be concentrated in the work of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York. I do not think that it is to be expected that the Foundation will provide for research in this field of medicine outside of the splendid Institute which they are contributing so generously to in New York.

I do feel that you have here a going concern, a splendid institute, doing fine work, one which brings great reputation to the City of Philadelphia, to the University of Pennsylvania, one which should make the strongest possible appeal to public-spirited citizens here.

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