

There's Magic In Opening New York's Opera Season

But the Magic's in the Audience and Not on the Stage, the Grand Moment Being When Lights Come On At End of First Act

By ROBERT T. SMALL

New York, Nov. 6.—There is something quite magical about the opening of the opera season in New York. The magic lies in the audience and not upon the stage. It seems almost as if the singers were acting merely as accompanists to the real players in the great spectacle.

The curtain rises at 20 minutes after 8. A few moments before that the lights have been dimmed. But before the "house" becomes dark it seems half empty. This is because the parterre boxes forming the diamond horse shoe, have no occupants. Balcony and gallery are filled with the "true lovers" of music, but they are so far away as to be unnoticeable from the orchestra pit. The vacancy of the horse shoe is the most striking impression left upon the observer.

The first act of the opera proceeds. The stars appear. They get a vociferous greeting from the true lovers perched up near the roof. In the quieter moments of the music, one is conscious of movement in the house. In the darkness the real stage is being set. As the curtain of the first act descends and the dazzling lights are turned full on once more, the spectacle bursts upon you. The boxes are filled. Society's bewildering display is on. Another opera season has been ushered in; another great success has been achieved. It is a wonderfully dramatic effect, this late arrival of the box holders. If they were all in their places at the hour set for the beginning of the performance it would all be so common-place.

The holding of a parterre box at the opera is tantamount to holding a sceptre in New York society. Opera boxes are inherited nowadays. They pass from one generation to another. "Outsiders" may lease certain nights, for "odd Mondays" or "strange Wednesdays," or "unoccupied Fridays," and all that sort of thing, but to own a box outright, ah, there is the test of true blue-bloodism and the circle of owners is far less than 400, because there are no 400 cells in the famed diamond crescent.

Something of a sensation was caused in opera circles this year by the announcement that there were three changes in the parterre circle. Think of that. Three changes. It seems that Mr. James B. Clews has purchased from the estate of his late uncle, Henry Clews, one half of box Number 2. The late uncle had owned the box for 30 years. There was also another drastic change of this sort. An owner who inherited a box from his father, has given one half of it to his daughter. Another owner who held a box by the inheritance route, has parted with a half interest to one of his oldest and dearest friends. This friend has long been just a mere lessee. His friend could not stand any longer to see him placed in such an awkward position. Now the friend is admitted to the inner circle. All is well with the social world.

Rain had been predicted for the opening night, but Jupiter Pluvius could not find it in his heart to break up the show.

The threatened downpour did not appear. So society appeared in all its ruffles and finery.

There was a noticeable contrast to the old-time jewel displays. The blazing tiara that once flashed its brilliance through metropolitan halls is no more. Once it was the crown of the reigning members of New York society, the dowagers of the Vanderbilt, the Astor, the Morgan and the other families of the moneyed nobility. Nowadays the jewels are just as expensive, if not more so than they were a decade ago.

But today they take quieter and

more effective forms. The rare jewels of the opening night at the opera were priceless strands of perfectly matched pearls; costly pendants dangling at the end of a slender platinum chain; diamond bracelets that did not force their presence upon you too flamboyantly, or a brooch so placed that it seemed to serve a utilitarian purpose rather than one of mere display.

Some of the casual observers at the opera Monday night attempted to figure the wealth represented in

the diamond horse shoe—not the cost of jewels and gowns and sables, but the wealth represented in the families holding the boxes. It proved an impossible task. One began with the Rubens, the Whitneys, the Fricks, the Harrimans, the Morgans, but even before the first ten families were exhausted, the computation had got completely out of hand, and the mathematician began to chatter in a manner that suggested German marks.

The opera, Oh, yes, it was Muccillo's beautiful Thais, and Jeritza was in the title role. Jeritza had taken the place of the once adored Fanny in the opera circle, and her beauty never seemed more brilliant than it did on this opening night of 1923-24.

WARRANTS ISSUED FOR KLAN OFFICIALS

Atlanta, Nov. 7.—Peace warrants were issued here yesterday on complaint of Dr. Fred B. Johnson, chief of staff, for William Joseph Simmons, emperor of the Ku Klux Klan, for the arrest of H. W. Evans, Imperial wizard, and three other Klan officials.



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VIRGINIA BOND ISSUE IS BADLY DEFEATED

Richmond, Nov. 7.—The proposed \$50,000,000 road bond issue was defeated yesterday by Virginia by a large majority, according to incomplete returns.



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