

## Astrid Varnay, American-Trained Soprano Famous for Wagnerian Roles, Will Sing in Civic Music Concert at Auditorium Tonight

Astrid Varnay, the youngest soprano ever to sing the Wagnerian roles of Isolde and Bruennhilde at the Metropolitan, will make her concert appearance in Raleigh tonight at 8:00 p.m. in Memorial Auditorium, presented in the local Civic Music series as the last concert in the season of six.

Besides enjoying the distinction of having sung more leading Wagnerian roles than any other singer at the Met, male or female, Miss Varnay recently has sung soprano parts of Italian operas and is now capable of alternating the Aidas and Giocondas with her Isoldes and Bruennhildes.

Trained in America, Astrid Varnay was actually born in Stockholm, Sweden, but was brought to this country at the age of five and is considered entirely a product of musical training and education in the United States. She was already well-known as a Metropolitan soprano before appearing in concerts and operas outside the country.

The daughter of coloratura soprano Maria Javor and Alexander Varnay, of the Royal Opera in Sweden, she first showed talent as a pianist, and had given several piano recitals in her hometown in New Jersey and one in Steinway Hall in New York when a chance assignment to sing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" at her high school commencement made her start on a singing career.

Following her graduation Miss Varnay worked as a secretary and studied voice at night with her mother as teacher, who later placed her to study with Hermann Weigert, Wagnerian coach and member of the Met's conductorial staff. After two years of study with Weigert, she auditioned at the Met and astonished her hearers by submitting a neatly typewritten list of 14 major roles as "ready to sing on a moment's notice" with a footnote announcing "other roles in preparation."

That list contributed to her



Astrid Varnay

success, for before a debut could be scheduled she proved a few months later what she could do "on a moment's notice." When Lotte Lehmann was ill on December 6, 1941, and was unable to sing her scheduled role of Sieglinde in a matinee performance of "Die Walkure," which was also to be broadcast, Astrid Varnay was called in and made her first appearance on any operatic stage without having a single orchestral rehearsal.

For this performance she received good notices from the critics, and five days later repeated her substituting performance, replacing Helen Traubel as Bruennhilde; one critic wrote of this feat that "as Sieglinde she did the improbable, as Bruennhilde the impossible."

In the past eight seasons she has become well-known both in America, and in South America, including Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. Within the past two

seasons Astrid Varnay has become especially noted for her interpretation of the title roles in Richard Strauss' two music-dramas, "Elektra" and "Salome."

She will sing "Elektra" again this year with the New York Philharmonic Symphony, under the direction of Dimitri Mitropoulos in San Francisco. In private life she is Mrs. Hermann Weigert, wife of the teacher who helped give her a start in opera and who has resigned his position with the Metropolitan to accompany her on the travels as accompanist, coach, and personal manager.

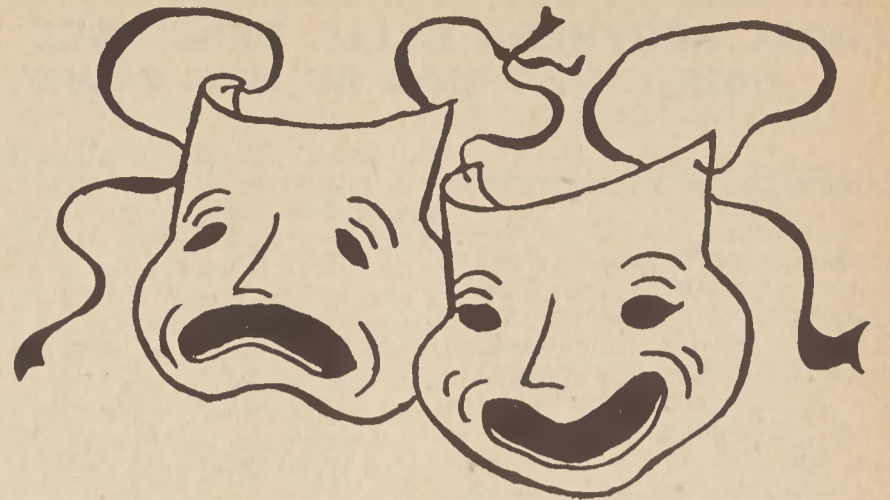
The program which Miss Varnay will sing in the Civic Music concert tonight consists of five groups of songs, including an aria from Verdi's "Aida."

I  
Aria: Dich, teure Halle, from "Tannhauser" Richard Wagner  
Aria: Ebben? Ne andro lontana (La Wally) Alfred Catalani

II  
A Swan Edvard Grieg  
With a Primrose Edvard Grieg  
Solveg's Cradle  
Song Edvard Grieg  
A Dream Edvard Grieg

III  
Aria: Ritorna vincitor, from "Aida" Guiseppe Verdi

IV  
Staendchen Franz Schubert  
Die Forelle Franz Schubert  
Litanei Franz Schubert  
Der Erlkonig Franz Schubert



## BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS

By MICKY BOWEN

Again—the spring returns and with it a mad activity in the world of theatre. From the important producer's offices on the "Great White Way" all the way down to Room 16 of the Arts Building, the new shows are being cast and rehearsed. This is an optimistic period for us and one relatively free of tension.

We are, at present, in the stage of beginning to work without the scripts and no one quite knows what is going on and is really not expected to. Comfortable, in a way. Rehearsals are divided into stages, you know, and are classified as hard, unbearable, and why bother, when nobody cares?

Probably the very worst of all the phases, though, is the try-out, when one is alternately confident and filled with despair. The more important the play, the more extreme the conflicting moods. One is crushed, it seems, be-

tween the two. The final press is not the worst, by any means, because one proceeds without the time to analyze the situation.

This bit of encouragement is directed to some of our young ladies, who might happen to have some time on their hands. We will not have, on the spring production, sessions of back-breaking labor, as in the past, but a chance to learn, while preserving your health. Have courage and join us.

"The Madwoman of Chaillot" turned out to be one of those shows that must be hit right on the nose, or not at all. If the cast clicks and the audience sympathizes, the play is very good, but if either ingredient is missing, the whole thing goes rather flat. However, the run here seems to have been very successful and the Raleigh Little Theatre deserves our congratulations.

## GIRLS FAVOR NAVY BLUE FOR EASTER

By LeGRACE GUPTON

Easter has come and gone, but if everybody's clothing budget is like mine that new outfit is the spring forecast. To what do we have after the orchids are cleared away? It seems that navy blue is the favorite this go 'round. Sonny Burnham got a voluminous navy linen duster with a fire-engineered taffeta lining which she says "will cover a multitude of sins"—sins in this case being any old dress you don't want to be seen in. She has an unusual pair of matching linen spectators to go with the duster. Ruth Champion wore a navy fitted suit accented by white pumps and a white straw hat.

Mary Whisnant departed from the darker blue with a turquoise silk dress, champagned faille "pyramid" coat with cocoa accessories. This same tone was used in accessories by Mary Bland Josey with a brown suit and striking yellow topper.

Emilia Kutchinski took to the

V  
Do You Remember Mischa Levitzki  
Ecstasy Walter Morse Rummel  
Songs My Mother Taught Me Anton Dvorak  
Me Company  
Along Richard Hageman

Paris diagonal with a rose wool suit. The pencil-slim skirt was topped off by a dolman-sleeved jacket buttoned on the left shoulder to the right hip and having an unusual symmetrical neckline treatment.

Navy blue again, this time in the accessories Daphne Stephenson wore with an electric blue suit—and it's rumored around that those two white orchids looked quite smart too.

That's about the scope as far as fashions go, and even if I didn't mention your bonnet and glad rags I know you looked pretty too!

## DR. VAUGHAN TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan, head of the sociology department at Meredith, will deliver the principal address today at the Virginia Council on Family Relations, meeting in Richmond. Her topic is "Changing Roles of Men and Women in Present-Day Society."

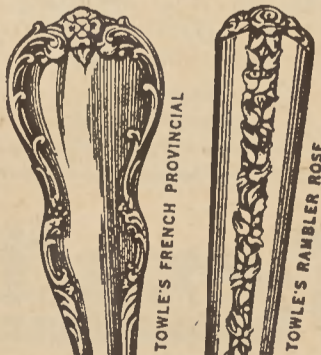
Last year Dr. Vaughan delivered the main address at the North Carolina annual conference on the family, which met in Raleigh in November. She has also been in the consultant for the Southern Regional Conference on Home Economics education and directed a workshop in family education at Winthrop College in July.

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