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Metropolitan Opera Has Had Its Most Successful Season

Passing of Caruso Has Not Dampened Ardor of New York's First Nighters And Though No Equal of Great Tenor Is Looked For New Artists Have Moved Blasia Metropolitan Audiences to Torren tial Applause

New York, Dec. 21. (By The Associated Press)—Its light undimmed by the passing of its greatest luminary of recent years—Enrico Caruso—the Metropolitan Opera has reached the height of what its social and professional sponsors acclaim as the most successful season since the world's eyes were focused on New York as the hub of the operatic universe.

Not, officials of the opera say today, that a great gap has not been left in the ranks of the artists who have made it so famous. Caruso's place, they declared can not be filled in a few months or even in a few years. But his death has served to direct the interest of opera goers from the brilliancy of the individ-

ual singer and to widen it to embrace the opera itself and the great, though less well known stars, who nightly are drawing multitudes to the historic Broadway auditorium.

Great changes have taken place in the opera as a social institution, they declare. The social side of the gatherings there season by season has again taken on the aspect that it wore a generation ago. Once more it is the brilliant show place it was in the 80's and 90's. Nightly, regardless of the name of the tenor or the soprano who is to sing, boxes, stalls and chairs, from orchestra pit to "peanut gallery" are at a premium, and every foot of standing room in the shadowy horseshoe about the walls is solid with the mass of music lovers who would rather stand three and a half hours than miss a performance.

In a widespread reaction from the fashions of the years before and during the war, the gentleman opera goer appears in evening dress, whether he sits in a box or any other part of the house below the gallery. And many who stand through the succession of acts parade the lobbies and doff the shiniest of silk hats to acquaintances or when they go to exchange visits among the boxes filled with richly gowned and jeweled women.

Apace with the changing custom in dress and the etiquette of the entrance, the public has mastered its post bellum aversion for German opera, manifested in 1919 by threats of violence that would ensue on their presentation.

Twice this season the stately measures of Wagnerian opera have resounded in the ears of audiences that have taxed the capacity of the house, and "Die Tote Stadt," new to American devotees of the art, was the vehicle upon which Mme. Marie Jeritza, a Viennese, took a cosmopolitan audience by storm at her debut.

A few nights later the same imposing daughter of the former enemy country tore and shook into dishevelment her coronet of shining golden hair through the passionate scenes of "La Tosca"—a role long regarded as the exclusive property of the American idol, Geraldine Farrar—while an American audience dissolved into tears and interrupted the scene with an outburst of applause and "bravos" such as seldom mars the serenity of New York's blasé first nighters.

As to the much heralded successor of Caruso—the operatic maestros declare they are seeking none and hope to find none. After touring Europe most of last summer, General Manager Giulio Casazza returned with many new singers added to his company and several new operas for his repertoire. But he announced that while Caruso's place in the hearts of his admirers must remain unfilled, the roles he made famous would be sung by the great tenor's former colleagues, Audsco, Bada, Crimi, Martinelli and a half dozen others, with Pertille, a new comer from overseas.

"Time only," he declared, "and the judgment of a fickle public can determine who the eventual idol of the American opera will be."

Titta Ruffo and Amelita Galli-Curci, who, as visitors with the Chicago Opera Company, have had New York triumphs in past years, are among the new members of the Metropolitan Company.

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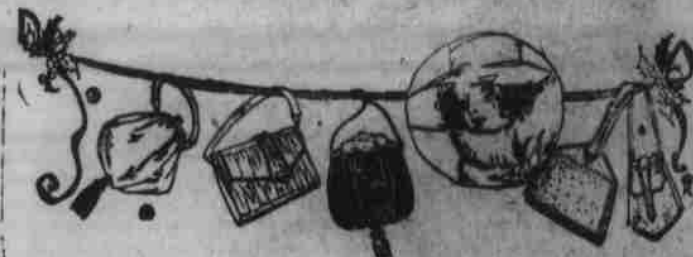
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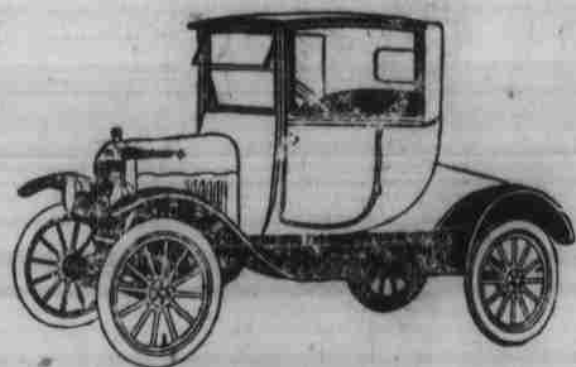
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