

his playing a violin obbligato to a singer in the Pavilion. He taught violin and used it regularly in his Philharmonic rehearsals to get singers on the pitch or to teach them some difficult passage. He put on chamber music. One of the first body of players he brought up here was the Beethoven Quintette from Boston. He travelled about to various towns opening new organs and giving recitals on old ones, organizing choral societies and injecting enthusiasm into various communities that looked to a metropolis like Toronto for musical inspiration.

So that long before 1886, which was the big music expansion year in Canada, Toronto had become a recognized centre of music along what would now be called old-fashioned lines, but in those days quite novel. The public took a deal of interest in music. Sometimes they wrote to the papers giving their opinions about it. Torrington was always on the edge of some hornet's nest. But while the critics were complaining or commenting, he was busy on his next concert, which might be anywhere or anything, so long as there was a cause and a number of people to get interested.

In 1881 there was a grand concert in the Pavilion in honour of the Marquis of Lorne and the Princess Louise. The performers were the Philharmonic Society and an orchestra augmented from the old Royal Opera House, the Grand Opera House and from Kahn's Band in Buffalo. Thirty-five years later the Duke of Devonshire and suite attended a performance of Andre Chenier by the Boston Opera Company, in the Alexandra Theatre. By this time the Philharmonic was the parent of all big musical enterprises. Gilmore's Band became a regular assistant Shaftesbury Hall and the old hall above the library were outgrown. Too many people were interested in music to be accommodated in those old places. Good music was becoming a festival. Torrington was strong on festivals. He loved the crowd and the full stage.

And so the story ambles along down to the year 1886, when Torrington had been in Toronto fourteen years and had not yet started a permanent institution bearing his name. In May of that year there appears to have been a big concert under his baton in the Pavilion. In June we find him headlong into the big three days' festival in the old Mutual Street Rink, with 700 of a chorus, a large orchestra, several imported soloists and programmes of oratorio.

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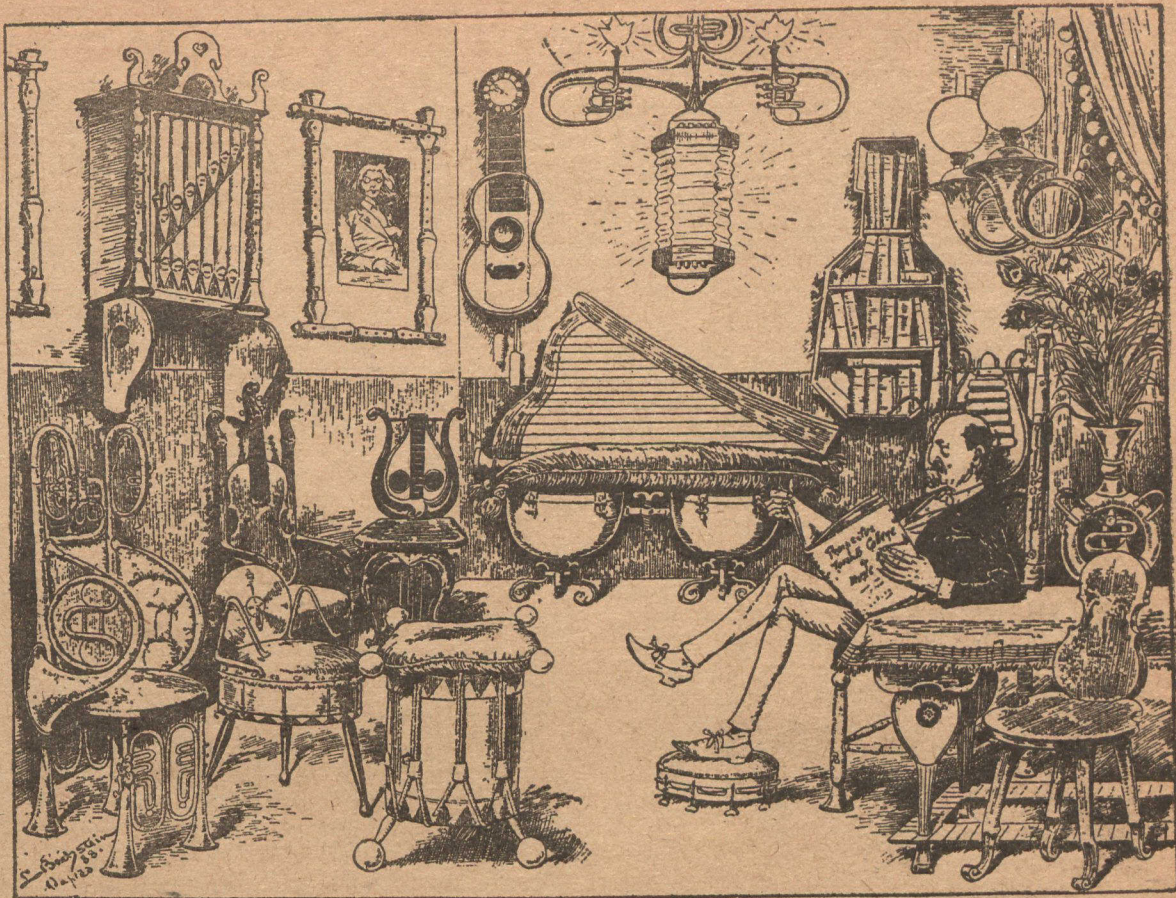
Boston Opera Last Week

Faust as Splendidly Striped as Ever

FORTY years seems to have no effect on the popularity of Faust. People of all ages seem to like going to the devil. The presentation of this incoherent jumble of music, drama and morals by the Boston Opera people, in Toronto, last week, was quite as banal as might have been expected. The one best bet to the production was the B. O. C. There never was a more seductive and pure-souled little Marguerite than the little lady who sang so divinely, acted so naturally most of the time without acting, and took her role so seriously that she responded to certain calls as demurely as a bashful child. Maggie Teyte is more than an artist. She is a blessed little being of song and simplicity on the stage. As Marguerite she was even better than as Mimi, in La Boheme, last time she was here.

Mardones, as Mephisto, was a diabolical cynicism in song. We remember this great basso-baritone as the old king in Amor de Tre Re, at the Arena last year. His makeup was very sinister. He had that jaundiced visage and evil eye. His costume was not red. He was not that sprightly Piccadillian Mephisto we have seen on other occasions. He was a good bit of a devil. And he sang so divinely that you forgot he had ever seen hell. His acting was on the whole powerful. Compared with Huberty, who took the part here last with the Montreal crowd, he was less dramatically impressive, less Frenchy—more obviously devilish.

Faustus—there's the rub. Never was a more absurd creation except in comic opera. In the play without music the character has some distinction. In the opera, even at the hands of a big artist, he becomes a solemn charlatan in whom a moral struggle would be as likely as a poppy patch at the North Pole. As done by Riccardo Martin, he was not even up to the standard of good comic opera. Martin's voice was very choky and uneven. It lacked open resonance. His tone was throaty, yet powerful. He sang as one jaded by something. Perhaps it was one of his off times. He certainly did much better—in fact, exceedingly well—in the Arena last year. His acting was stiff and ceremonious. His makeup as the rejuvenated Faust was much like a washwoman out for a jaunt in her mistress' Sunday clothes. There



A RARE OLD MUSICAL CARTOON.

In 1886 F. D. Torrington started his College of Music. J. W. Bengough, editor of the serio-comic paper Grip drew this cartoon and put under it this: "Mr. T-r-r-ng-t-n has pleasure in announcing that he has purchased No. X Blank St., which he has furnished as a College of Music."

were times when, in spite of all these handicaps, Martin rose to a fine height of expression.

The two next Valentine represented by Vincento Ballister was a fine piece of work. Siebel and Martha were passably good.

The chorus, be it admitted, did some good work, especially in softer passages. In the bigger things they seemed weak and strident. The orchestra was quite as good potentially as usual, but on the Faust rigmarole of good, better and worse music they seemed commonplace. To be quite candid, Faust as an opera is of low calibre. Its scenic investiture, which used to seem so fine in the good old Brockton days, was perhaps much finer, but much of it seemed cheap and tawdry. The element of mystery and magic was altogether lacking. The drama went clean out of the thing. The soul of Marguerite ascending by inch jerks through the clouds that went reeling down to meet her was as obvious a burlesque as the white horses in the Valkyries of Wagner.

Finally, is not Faust, as either a play or an opera, out of the question in this country? The thing is of German origin. Hush! This is a bigoted view. Goethe was a great poet, of course, and a good deal of a philosopher. But his Mephisto would be a poor mannikin in Germany now. And the idea of poor Marguerite being condemned by public opinion in the Germany of to-day is too ridiculous for utterance. Besides, what did we all think of applauding German soldiers in the Soldiers' Chorus, "ready to die for fatherland"? Of course, it was sung in French. But that failed to make it palatable.

After all, we don't go to grand opera it seems to be sensible. This production of Faust proves that a lot of people have a fine, expensive appetite for the ridiculous.

TOSCA WAS SUPERB

Also Extremely Sensational

THE opening night of the Boston Opera was La Tosca, by Puccini, with a three-star cast—Villani, Zenatello and Balakoff, a second group of lesser stars, a full chorus, a splendid orchestra of sixty, an eminent operatic conductor, Moranzonit, a chorus master, stage director and all the other accessories that make a little world of big opera complete in itself. The first notes of the orchestra are loud and emphatic. There is no long and suggestive overture. A few bars after the first chord up goes the curtain and the play is immediately on.

And the theatre is packed. Seats ranging from \$1.50 to \$5 in a time of war do not keep people away. The moment it was known that the Bostons were coming Toronto society and a large number of others bought tickets. The crush to get in was almost equal to that at the exits. Many Italians were present; some Jews. The foreign population of Toronto has

become operatized. There was an instant hunger for the opera.

And of course Tosca is no lingering dalliance. It is a very swift plot, similar to Carmen. The motif is obvious. The story is known to some; by others surmised as the play goes along. It has been played here before; never quite so well, even by the Montreal company, with Edvina as Tosca. Such a crowd might have been gathered to hear a Verdi Opera, but it would never have been Il Trovatore. There is something temperamentally different about Tosca. It is the spirit of the age. Concealment, dalliance, hesitation, reserve are unknown here. Young women chatted to their escorts at the intermissions as blithely as though the motif were mere sentiment or intrigue. There is intrigue. There is a dash of Carmen, of Otello, of Trovatore. But there is much more. There is a woman—of course; and she is the heroine, as usual. There is the hero—a tenor, as always. There is the villain, baritone, Scarpia the devil. What little history there is serves merely as a peg on which to hang a story that has about it much of the sexual flavour of Tristan and Isolde. But it is more swiftly impetuous than even that.

So the audience pretend to be interested mainly in the art of the actors and the singers, in the scenic investiture, in the beautiful and passionate orchestra that plays to the gallery as eloquently as ever did Wagner's. And the young gentlemen understand that after all, it's mainly a matter of art, that has nothing necessarily to do with morals. Anyway, big music must have a *raison d'être*. You never could play most of this dazzling, ripping stuff as orchestral programmes. Every chord, every turn of the rhythm, every blurt of the brass and shudder of the strings has something intimately to do with episodes and situations in the story. It is all amazingly interwoven, and devilishly clever. One scarcely knows whether Puccini or Charpentier or Massenet is the abler at this sort of marriage between music and the struggle of sex.

But comparisons are let slip. The play's the thing. The music—marvellous! Follow the libretto and the orchestra positively talks. It is stunningly beautiful. There is a great strident glamour over all. In the third act a quartette of 'celli do an episode of singular beauty. In the second there is a most intricate ensemble of a concealed chorus, a prima donna obligato behind the scenes, a men's duo and trio on stage, and the orchestra. This is not merely great contrivance in music; it is also great execution.

But any of these and all the rest may be ignored. One may close his ears to the various sections of the ensemble and feast upon the principals. Villani as Tosca is amazingly efficient. Her gown in the second act is a marvelous colour-harmony with the surroundings and the lights. Her form shows to great

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