

VLADIMIR ROSING—An Impression

(By ALICE M. WINLOW, L.A.B.)

Russia's greatest composer, Glinka, was enchanted at an early age by the sound of bells, and tried to imitate their peculiar resonance by beating on copper bowls.

One can imagine Vladimir Rosing, stirred by the emotions of people around him, learning to express these emotions by the inflections and color of his own voice. He has chosen that art and in it he is supreme.

"The Nightingale and the Rose," by Rimsky-Korsakoff, has its origin in the "clear untroubled pools of poetry" and moves in an ideal lyric world. In listening to Rosing sing this song, with its exquisite accompaniment so deliciously played, the listener was enchanted at once.

Rosing's voice can suggest by its very quality anything, from a cobweb shimmering with jewelled drops of dew, to a comet splitting the heavens.

"The Orphan" has been repeated on canvas by Perov. Moussorgsky was the champion of the humiliated and offended, and one feels that Rosing is their champion too. Moussorgsky was not a musician, but a poet using musical material. Rosing is the singer, the actor, and the interpreter of that poetry.

In "Invocation to Rain," one could feel the freshness and sweetness of rain. Then came the drenching downpour.

Huneker has written of a new art: "An art of precious essences, an evocation, an enchantment of the senses—a sixth sense."

Rosing is the creator of that new art in singing.

As an encore to this number he gave a lullaby. The silver-violet of his speaking voice came into his singing, then gold, misted green, and moon-silver. The song ended on a throbbing lustrous note of indescribable beauty.

The next number was an Aria from a Tchaikowsky Opera. An Aria sung before a duel, a farewell to dreams and youth, and a desperate cry of yearning to Love. All that is earthly drops away, and the cry comes, muted, across thin open spaces of a frozen world. After the icy note of approaching death, comes the ardent crimson-hued cry of love. This song is the very ecstasy of woe.

With excruciating grimaces Rosing held up Conceit to ridicule, withering it with the hot breath of enharmonic scorn.

In "The Sea," the singer rose to most dramatic heights. Losing the rhythmic relaxation of his body he rivetted attention by impassioned gestures.

"Make my bed soon for I fain would lie down" was a refrain sung with utmost poignancy. Rosing has created a new musical shudder in his singing of this despairing song.

The "Cradle Song of Death," by Moussorgsky, was the outstanding number on the program. The melody has the ragged contours of flame. Vladimir Rosing achieves in this song an impression unique in music. The impression of a spirit detached from its body and speaking from another, rarer, atmosphere than ours. There is a sense of spaciousness, of glimpsing a possible fourth dimension. Then through that awful mystery comes the human agony of a mother's loss. When Death sings, the music comes with its icy breath from the charnel-house. Death's lullaby is of the sepulchre. The death-rattle ends this tragic and terrible song.

GEO. T. WADDS

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