

# Musical Journal.

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## ROSSINI'S RECIPES FOR OVERTURES.

The *Voltaire* publishes a letter written by Rossini, or, at all events, attributed to Rossini, on the subject of the difficulties attending overtures, and the proper mode of remedying them. The document takes the form of a reply to a young musician who had consulted the *maestro*. It runs as follows:

"General and invariable rule: Do not compose the overture before the very eve of the first representation. Nothing produces inspiration so much as necessity, the inciting presence of the copyist who is awaiting your work strip by strip, and the terrifying sight of a despairing manager tearing out his hair by the roots. The real *chefs d'œuvre* have never been composed under other circumstances. In Italy, in my day, managers were all bald before they were thirty.

"First Recipe—I composed the overture to 'Othello' in a little room in the Babaja Palace, in which the most ferocious and baldest of managers shut me up, with *maccaroni à l'eau*, and the threat that he would only let me out alive if provided with the last note of the said overture.

"Second Recipe—I composed the overture to the 'Gazza Ladra,' not on the eve, but on the very day of the first representation, in the 'fies' of the La Scala Theatre, at Milan, whither the manager, a worthy rival of Barbaja, had relegated me under the guard of four machinists. These four wretches were ordered to throw down my work, sheet by sheet, to copyists who sat below in the body of the theatre, transcribing, and sending the manuscript bit by bit to the *chef d'orchestre*, who had it rehearsed. If a due amount were not forthcoming, the barbarians were directed to throw me *in propria persona* to the copyists.

"Third Recipe—I did better in the case of the overture to 'Il Barbieri,' which I did not complete at all, having made use of the overture to 'Elisabetta,' an excessively serious opera, instead of the one written for the above equally *buffa* piece. The public seemed delighted by the substitution.

"Fourth Recipe—I composed the overture, or, more properly speaking, the musical introduction, to the 'Comte Ory' while fishing in company with M. Aguado who never ceased talking to me the whole time about Spanish finances.

"Fifth Recipe—I composed the overture to 'Guillaume Tell,' under somewhat analogous circumstances, in some rooms on the Boulevard Montmartre, which were filled night and day with a posse of fellows smoking, drinking, talking, singing and bellowing in my ears, while I was working away with might and main.

"Sixth Recipe—I never composed any overture at all for 'Moise,' which is the easiest of all, and was followed by my good friend Myerbeer for 'Robert le Diable' and the 'Huguenots,' as well as, so they say, for the 'Prophete.'"—*Galignani's Messenger*.

—You will be glad to learn that Mme. Patti is in splendid voice. I heard her as *Giulietta*, in Gounod's opera, a few nights ago with M. Nicolini as *Romeo*. She held her audience spell bound with her brilliant and impassioned singing. M. Nicolini was received with chilling silence, but he soon secured generous acknowledgment for his thoroughly artistic work. Mme. Patti would, I believe, regret to leave America without having been seen in the opera in which alone her yet unapproachably brilliant voice and splendid dramatic power find adequate utterance.—Correspondence of the *Boston Herald*.

—Some interesting figures have been published in the Milanese papers relating to the public appearance of the great tenor, Mario, who is now living in retirement at Rome. From 1839, when he made his *debut*, till 1871, when he retired, he sang 931 times in all. Two hundred and twenty five of these appearances were in operas by Donizetti, one hundred and seventy by Meyerbeer, one hundred and forty-three Rossini, one hundred and twelve Verdi, eighty-two Bellini, seventy Gounod, sixty-eight Mozart, thirty Flotow, twelve Cimarosa, twelve Auber, five Costa, and d'Halévy and one by Mercadante.

—Some years ago, Suppe, the composer, spent his summer holiday with some old friends at Gratz. Every evening a party met to play at skittles in the garden. When ready to begin, they would hold a for the old woman next door to send the "lad" to set up the skittles. The lad was a sprightly, black-eyed girl named "Maly" Materna. One day Suppe happened to hear her sing, and, struck by her voice, called the attention of Capellmeister Zaitz, also stopping at Gratz, to it. Shortly afterward "Maly" was a member of the chorus at the Landes Theatre. By Suppe's advice Treumann engaged her for Vienna. Her voice had meanwhile become developed, and thus it was that the celebrated Frau Amalie Materna made her first appearance on the stage.—*London Musical World*.

—The conclusion has been reached that London cannot support two Italian houses during the season and a syndicate was formed for converting Covent Garden into a limited liability company, with Gye as manager at a stated salary. The company then endeavored to secure Her Majesty's, and this they attempted to do by seeking to gain possession of the premises through the lessor by means of an action of ejectment. Finding himself involved in costly legal proceedings Mr. Mapleson determined to accept the offers made him by the syndicate, and an arrangement has now been made by which he sells out his entire interest, good will and lease in Her Majesty's, with the object of devoting his attention entirely in future to the United States. Mr. Mapleson receives the sum of £80,000 and when his liabilities are deducted from this he will be left with more than sufficient capital to enable him to open an energetic campaign next season in America. Mr. Mapleson has secured certain valuable concessions from the new company, among others the call on Covent Garden for all new operas, artists, scenery and costumes which he may require. In fact, Covent Garden will be henceforth the recruiting house for his American season. Thus, after hopelessly struggling with Italian opera in London for so many years, he finds himself finally released from his difficulties, and hopes henceforth to give undivided attention to his operatic enterprises in America.

—Not many years since, a young musician went abroad for the purpose of improving his musical education. Previous to the time when this pilgrimage of study was undertaken, he had been for three years a pupil of one of America's most noted instructors, a musician of highest genius and rank. The student, on arriving at the city of L——, in Germany, decided to remain there and pursue his studies in counterpoint under the direction of a well-known professor in the L—— Conservatory. He had with him as proofs of his past study a number of manuscripts which had been worked out under the careful and intelligent supervision of his former teacher. These manuscripts were each in turn critically examined by the German professor, whose tuition he now sought.

"This writing," said the German professor, on concluding his examination, "indicates that you have talent, but judging from the canon and fugue that you show me I should infer that you had not been properly taught."

The student was very much inclined to doubt the justice of the criticism, and would have been better satisfied had its implied censure reflected on himself.

But a number of years elapsed, when one day he showed the same fugue that had been criticised to this same professor, who, wrongfully inferring that it was a result of his own teachings, complimented it, this time in unqualified terms. By way of crowning his compliment with a little of the self-credit which he ludicrously thought to be his due, he added:

"You can now see for yourself how greatly you have improved since you came to Germany to study with me."

As an appropriate sequel of this story, for the truth of which the writer can vouch, it may be stated that the loyal young American returned to this country, here to complete his studies in counterpoint under the instructions under his former teacher, whose name, as it may be a pleasure for many to know, is Prof. J. K. Peine of Harvard College.—*Boston Home Journal*.

—HERN CARL BRINTHALER has gained the prize offered by the city of Frankfort for the composition of an opera. The work is to be produced next season, and is called *Kretchen von Heilbronn*.

—"THE MASCOTTE," with its speaking music, gay dresses and amusing situations, continues to be the feature at the Bijou Opera House, and the audiences are generally large, being composed, to a great extent, of strangers in the city.

—FRAYVOST, the newly discovered tenor of the Chateau d'Eau theatre, Paris, has been playing sad tricks with his manager, and the obliging doctor has now sent him to the Pyrenees to take two month's rest, after which he will study for a year in Italy.

—THE NORCROSS OPERA BOUFFE COMPANY, of Boston, composing 60 artists, held the boards of the Montreal (Canada) Academy of Music, successfully representing "The Mascot" and "Olivette" to fair houses, on the 7th, 8th and 9th of July last.

—THE QUEBEC ACADEMY OF MUSIC, which has thus far limited its sphere of usefulness to rewarding individual effort and success, proposes offering prizes for competition by bands, orchestras and singing societies at the next annual *Concours*, to be held at Quebec in June, 1882.

—THE large organ being erected in the Queen's Hall, Montreal, is fast approaching completion, and, in a few weeks the public will have an opportunity of judging of its qualities by means of a recital by Dr. Davies, who is so widely and favorably known one of the most accomplished organists in America.

—VAN ZANDT. Marie Van Zandt is engaged to sing in September in the Royal Opera Houses at Copenhagen and at Stockholm, and she will return to Paris in October. Two new operas, one by Massenet and the other by Delibes, will be ready for her to create the roles of the heroines next season.

—SCHILLER. Mr. George Schiller, of this city, (who succeeded the late Mr. Harry Hunter as the *Lone Fisherman* in Rice's "Evangeline Company") will replace Mr. R. A. Cripps in the Standard Theatre "Billie Taylor" Company" which performed at the Oakland Garden Theatre last week.

—THE Emilie Melville (California) Opera Company, who are to visit New York, Boston and other Eastern cities next season, will comprise thirty-two. The repertoire will probably comprise "The Royal Middy," "Olivette," "The Musketeers," "The Mascot," "Carmen," and any good new operas that may be obtained.

—We respectfully suggest, that Count Gora Lichy, the one-armed piano-forte virtuoso, and Baroness Alphonse Weiss, the recently discovered one-armed *artiste*, strikes up a partnership as one has a wonderful left and the other a wonderful right hand, they would constitute a very artistic whole.—*Boston Home Journal*.

—STRAKOSCH says: "I shall present Gerster in concerts in towns where she has never appeared, and in cities where she is well known I shall give operas as a rule. I may decide to give both operas and concerts in all of the large cities as well. I expect to make a gigantic success next season, although there will be the greatest competition possible in the musical field."

—MR. CARL ROSA has arranged for a grand season of English opera at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, beginning January 14, 1882, during which the principal novelties will be an English version of "Tannhauser," by Mr. J. P. Jackson; Mr. Villiers Stanford's "Veiled Prophet," and a new version of "Pauline." Mr. Carl Rosa is also in negotiation for an English version of Signor Boito's *Meistofele*.

—To carry out her American tour, Mme. Patti has made some financial sacrifices, and has refused \$4,000 per evening at Monte Carlo, and at Madrid, for the winter season, \$2,000 for thirty nights, with a splendid mansion, valued at \$30,000, to be her own property, so as to induce her to repeat her visits. "So," adds Mme. Patti, laughingly, "I don't think I shall be charged with visiting America simply with the purpose of making money."

—LONDON, July 18.—It is said that a company is about to be formed by the Covent Garden and Haymarket operatic undertakings. It will employ Mr. Gye as manager in London and Mr. Mapleson to conduct American tours. It has been arranged that Adelina Patti shall give one performance weekly next season. She intends to reside in Wales and come to town expressly for each performance. The *Morning Post* says the direction of the company will include a number of noblemen and gentlemen whose names guarantee the efficient conduct of the enterprise.