

Flagstad Certain to be Sell-out in Artist-Recital Series Opener

**Sensational Metropolitan Star
to Appear Here Oct. 23**

As announced in last week's issue, Kirsten Flagstad, sensational new prima donna of the Metropolitan Opera company, will inaugurate the 1935-'36 Winnetka Music club's Artist-Recital series, coming to the north shore Wednesday, October 23.

Mme. Flagstad's appearance in New Trier auditorium will be her only solo



Kirsten Flagstad

engagement in the Chicago area during the forthcoming season.

Mme. Flagstad has the advantage of growing up in an intensely musical environment.

Hers was a family for whom music was the staff of life. Her father is a conductor in Oslo. Her mother is a pianist and coach for both individual singers and chorus groups. She has two brothers—one a conductor, the other a concert pianist. Her sister, like herself, is a singer.

Studied Piano

Kirsten began to study the piano as a child. She remembers that her mother made it clear to her that there was no escape from practicing, although her parents had no intention of having their daughter make music a profession. Indeed, they had ambitions for her to become a doctor.

Practice she had to, however, and practice she did. But theory, harmony and counterpoint she shunned as much as possible. No compulsion could make the child pay any attention to these aspects of music. To this day she has retained a distaste for them.

Her beginning as a singer was largely accidental. At the age of ten, on her own volition and for her own amusement, she began studying the role of Elsa in Lohengrin. She learned it all—uncut. Then she added another role—Aida.

Studied for Fun

It happened that when she was confirmed a party was given in her honor and to help entertain the guests Kirsten sang operatic arias from these operas. A musical friend told her that she would soon ruin her voice if she did not develop it properly. She offered to give the child a few lessons. These were largely in the nature of proper placement and breathing. Formal vocal lessons, however, did not begin until she was sixteen. Then she studied with Ellen Schytte-Jacobsen in Oslo. But still she did not contemplate a career. It was all just for fun.

She was barely eighteen when her mother projected her into an opera role. Fru Flagstad had been present at an audition at which the conductor of the Oslo opera expressed dissatisfaction over the candidate for the role of the little girl Nuri in D'Albert's "Tiefeland." On the way home she stopped at a music store, bought a score of the opera and gave it to her daughter, telling her that if she learned it in two days she could try out for the role.

Kirsten was the thirteenth candidate

heard at the audition, and she got the part. Two months later she made her debut. She recalls that she had already grown to full height, and in order to give the impression of being a child, was obliged to move around stooping and crouching.

Then off she went to Stockholm for further study under Dr. Gillis Bratt. On the side she studied dancing and "plastics," the closest definition of which seems to be what not to do with the hands and feet. This training has since stood her in good stead, she says. She returned home the following year for her second role—Germaine in "The Chimes of Normandy." There were three roles the following year.

She has kept a record of all her appearances, written in Norwegian in a meticulous hand in a little notebook. By her own account she has sung sixty-eight roles—thirty-eight in grand opera and thirty in operettas and comic operas. This does not take into consideration innumerable song recitals and appearances as soloist with orchestras and in oratorio performances.

Sings at Bayreuth

Until 1933, however, all of her singing was done in the Scandinavian countries—mainly in Oslo and Gothenburg. In the summer of that year she was invited to sing at Bayreuth, and again in the summer of 1934. It was news of her singing at that great festival center that moved Mr. Gatti-Casazza and Artur Bodansky to ask her to come down at St. Moritz for an audition. The audition was held in a small hotel-room with heavy drapes—a difficult background for any singer. But Mr. Gatti and Mr. Bodansky were impressed by her voice and musicianship, and signed her up for the leading soprano Wagnerian roles at the Metropolitan for the winter of 1934-'35.

Proves Sensation

What has happened since then is musical history. Arriving quietly in New York without any preliminary fanfare, she swept an unprepared audience completely off its feet at her debut as Sieglinde in "Die Walkure" on February 2, 1935. At her second performance as Isolde a few days later every inch of standing room was taken. The same condition existed at all of her subsequent eighteen appearances during the season. Coming at a crucial time when the Metropolitan was facing serious financial straits, she was hailed as the lifesaver of the opera. Hers has been the greatest triumph experienced at the Metropolitan in many years.

The Winnetka Music club Artist-Recital committee, with Mrs. Donald D. Whitman of Winnetka as chairman, repeats that tickets for the 1935-'36 season will be sold only as a course. Subscriptions are due June 1.

POETESS, NOVELIST

A certain new novel written by Lenore G. Marshall and announced for June publication is likely to awaken a special response in many modern people who have had to face problems created by the conflict between today's customs and yesterday's standards.

It is called *Only the Fear* and it tells the story of a woman who lives two lives, one that of the external self in a realistic world, and the other that of a dreamer who clings to her illusions and is only released by shock into the world of fact.

Mrs. Marshall has already won recognition as a poet; her verse is now appearing in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, *Scribner's*, *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, etc.

PUBLIC FORUM

ABOUT BLOCK-BOOKING

May 14, 1935.

Editor, WILMETTE LIFE:

A communication in your Letters to the Editor department (Public Forum) of April 25, commenting on anti-block booking legislation, prompts me to make a brief statement on the block booking of motion pictures which I believe you will find informative.

One of the measures proposed is the Pettengill Bill. This bill prohibits the booking of motion pictures at group prices, thus attempting to prevent what is nothing more than the wholesale selling of pictures. If the bill were to become law, every film would have to be sold at a retail price, regardless of whether the purchaser took one or fifty pictures.

The second feature of the Pettengill Bill requires that in advance of production a complete synopsis of each picture must be submitted and that this synopsis must thereafter be rigidly followed under penalty of fine and imprisonment.

The producers unanimously declare that the technical significance of this provision will make it virtually impossible to continue the present fine flow of photoplays. The technical and artistic requirements of individual films make constant revision of plot and form vitally necessary. This is true of practically every film that is made, but to cite some of the prime examples of films radically changed during the course of production there might be named "The Covered Wagon," "The Big Parade" and the more recent "Les Misérables," "David Copperfield" and "It Happened One Night." In each instance dozens of scenes and episodes had to be discarded; characters were changed and the treatment of the material was altered from day to day. "The Covered Wagon," which started out as a western grew in scope until it became an epic of the frontier days. "The Big Parade" started out to be a small program picture. The greatness and bitterness of war soon emerged out of an unpretentious film necessitating a complete change of cast, a complete re-write of the beginning and the ending, and other changes. The result was a great picture.

Sincerely yours,

C. C. Pettijohn,

General Counsel, Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc.

Editor's note: The Public Forum contributions to which the above is a response were published in the April 18 issue of this publication.

HOSTESS IS AUTHOR

"Only those are unwise who have never dared to be fools," declares Elsie de Wolfe (Lady Mendl), famous on two continents as a brilliant hostess and distinguished interior decorator, who tells the story of her eventful life in *After All* which Harper & Brothers will publish on May 1st. In the concluding paragraph of the autobiography, she writes: "I have attained happiness and a measure of sincerity. I have lived and laughed and loved; been happy and sometimes sad. Reading over these, my memoirs, I find nothing to regret. I rejoice that I was born with the courage to live."

Charles Boyer, personable Frenchman, is the man of the hour in Hollywood as a result of his brilliant success in "Private Worlds."

Recent Movies Suggest Much Fine Reading

By Anne L. Whitmack

(Wilmette Librarian)

Good movies, besides satisfying our desire for pleasure, leave us with a curiosity about men and manners. We go to other sources to answer our questions. Sometimes we ask others, but more often we search for our answers in books. Innumerable men and women read about Henry the Eighth, went on to his daughter Elizabeth, and sidestepped to Mary of Scotland.

The answer to the puzzling question "Did the castaways of the Spanish Armada have any racial influence on the Irish?" is still being sought as a result of seeing the beautiful movie "Man of Aran." Sources consulted have been Synge's "Aran Islands," Colum's "Road Around Ireland," and Irish histories. Other have been curious about the Irish temperament and have read "Twenty Years a-Growing," by O'Sullivan, followed by the "The Crock of Gold," by Stephens, "Nest of Gentle Folk," by O'Faolain, and "The Sea Wall," by Strong.

Those Red Gap Stories

"Ruggles of Red Gap" is a homely American story, illuminated by the superb acting of Charles Laughton. The Red Gap stories are: "Ruggles of Red Gap," "Somewhere in Red Gap," and "Ma Pettengill," by Harry Leon Wilson.

Other books about Westerners and their ways not to be missed are: "The Desert Wife," by Faunce (the most taciturn man in America is in this book); "The Virginian," by Wister, the classic of all Westerns; "Happy Hawkins," by Wason, which deserves to be a classic, and "A Cowman's Wife," by Rak, a delightful account from a woman's viewpoint.

Suggest Rich History

There were two roads leading from "The Scarlet Pimpernel," and one hesitated at the fork. Should one pursue the broad road of the French Revolution, lined on both sides with adventurous history and striking personalities, or follow the quieter, but no less colorful, road through the life and manners of the English Eighteenth century? Leslie Howard's excellent acting is responsible for the latter, for he is the only actor that has worn the costume of another century as though it were his own.

Baroness Orczy wrote the stories of "The Scarlet Pimpernel," and "The Elusive Pimpernel." The background of the French Revolution is given in such interesting books as Beraud's "Twelve Portraits of the French Revolution," "Marie Antoinette," by Zweig, and Mathews' "French Revolution."

Dramatic stories of the same period are "The Whirlwind," by Davis, "Scaramouche," by Sabatini, "Tale of Two Cities," by Dickens, "Reds of the Midi," by Gras, and "Empress of Hearts," by E. Barrington.

MARVELS OF THE SKY

An outstanding name in science is being added to Macmillan's list in that of H. Spencer Jones, Astronomer Royal. (This title is bestowed by the King on the astronomer who is considered the greatest of his day; among earlier scientists who held the title were Ball, Dyson and Faraday.) The Astronomer Royal's new book is called *Worlds Without End*, it is an account of the marvels of the sky, written in delightfully clear and readable style. It should take a place with Eddington and Jeans on the shelf of the best popular science. (Scheduled for Fall publication.)