

LENSKA MAGNIFICENT IN BENEFIT RECITAL

Chicago Civic Opera Star Holds
Audience Enthralled in
Winnetka Program

BY R. L. P.

Madame Augusta Lenska, contralto of the Chicago Civic Opera company, was received most enthusiastically at her concert last Monday evening at the Skokie school, Winnetka. The concert was given as a benefit for the Winnetka Nursery school, under the auspices of the Winnetka Women's club.

Madame Lenska opened with an anthem by Bach, "My Heart Ever Faithful," and followed it by an aria from Handel's oratorio, "Samson." This aria is found in only the Chrysander edition of Handel's work, and one wonders why it has been omitted from other editions. Madame Lenska showed a strong feeling for its pathos and beauty, and one readily recognized the tremendous background necessary to execute this piece. The Mozart "Alleluja" was joyful and vigorous, like the preceding Bach.

The second group began with a talky, character song, "Elfenlied" which ended with several delightful "Ho-ho's." Both "Der Asra" by Loewe, and "Brangaenes Call from Tristan and Isolde," by Wagner, brought out Madame Lenska's remarkable breath control in her pure, steady, sustained tones. Their perfect clearness and beauty were thrilling. "Habanera" from the opera "Carmen," was Madame Lenska's encore, sung in a teasing abandonment.

Displays Versatility

The dramatic "My Land," by Gretchaninoff, was sung excellently, as was the mournful "Willow—Why Bended Thou," by the same composer. One sensed the dreariness of the Steppes of Russia in "Steppe," by Mossourgski, who was also the composer of the saucy "Hopak," which followed. Madame Lenska again was gracious enough to sing an encore, a plaintive melody.

The last group was made up of folk songs, the first of which "Les Fetes Venitiennes" (Capra, 1660, 1744) was reminiscent of Bach. A French song of 1703, "La Petite Janneton" was very sweet and naive; and the delicate lyrical quality of "O Du Liebes Engele," a Swiss folk song of 1548, was so beautifully done that the audience demanded to have it repeated. "Sally in Our Alley," (Henry Carey, 1685-1745) completed the folk songs. The program ended with a sentimental "Song of the Heart" by Rosamund Johnson. In response to the continued

applause of the audience, which refused to be dismissed just because the program was ended, Madame Lenska sang that exquisite Lullaby by Brahms. Frank St. Leger did the accompaniment work for Madame Lenska throughout the program in a masterly way.

Expresses Gratitude

Preceding the program, Carlton W. Washburne, superintendent of Winnetka schools, expressed his gratitude to Madame Lenska, who was so generously giving her voice for the benefit of the Nursery school. He told of the need for a school where tiny tots of pre-school age might have a natural place in which to live, where they might climb and build and move around harmlessly. Here, he said, they learn the right habits of eating, sleeping, and cleanliness; and the workers deal with the four sides of growth, the mental, physical, emotional and the social.

"The child goes to the school after a snack of orange juice in the morning, and is returned after the afternoon nap. The mother is fresh then, the baby is happy, and they can have a real visit before bedtime. The nursery school is good training for the parents too, for it shows them how their children are handled, and how they act with groups of other children, and whether their problems are normal or whether they require special attention. It is the best place in the world for them to learn the important habits of independence, responsibility and consideration for others."

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The Wilmette and Winnetka Woman's Christian Temperance union will meet at the home of Mrs. W. S. Hamm, 270 Scott avenue, Hubbard Woods Monday afternoon, November 1, at 2 o'clock. Reports from interesting speakers will be heard.

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