

La Bohème

1924

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SAN FRANCISCO
GRAND OPERA

SEASON 1924



GAETANO MEROLA
General Director

SEPT. 22nd to SEPT. 27th, 1924



THE FOLLOWING CASTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

MONDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 22nd
at 8 o'clock

ANDREA CHÈNIER

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS

By U. GIORDANO

Andrea Chenier.....	Beniamino Gigli
Carlo Gerard.....	Giuseppe De Luca
Maddalena di Coigny.....	Claudia Muzio
La Mulatta Bersi.....	Eva De Vol
La Contessa Di Coigny.....	Ruth Shaffner
Madelon.....	Querita Eybel
Roucher.....	Francesco Seri
Pietro Fleville.....	Louis D'Angelo
Fouquier Tinville }.....	Paolo Ananian
Il Sanculotto Mathieu.....	Lodovico Oliviero
Un "Incredibile" }.....	Albert Gillette
L'Abate.....	
Schmidt }.....	
Dumas }.....	

Conductor—Gaetano Merola
Stage Director—Armando Agnini
Chorus Master—Arturo Casiglia

WEDNESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 24th
at 8 o'clock

LA BOHÈME

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

By G. PUCCINI

Mimi.....	Queena Mario
Musetta.....	Anna Young
Rodolfo.....	Beniamino Gigli
Marcello.....	Millo Picco
Shaunard.....	Louis D'Angelo
Colline.....	Francesco Seri
Benoit.....	Paolo Ananian
Aleciendaro }.....	

Conductor—Gaetano Merola
Stage Director—Armando Agnini
Chorus Master—Arturo Casiglia

ARMANDO AGNINI.....	Stage and Technical Director
WILFRED PELLETIER.....	Assistant Conductors
GIACOMO SPADONI.....	
LOUIS PERSINGER.....	Concert Master
ARTURO CASIGLIA.....	Chorus Master
NATALE COROSSIO.....	Ballet Master

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FRIDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 26th

at 8:15 o'clock

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

By G. PUCCINI

Nagasaki—Modern times.

Cio Cio San.....	Thalia Sabanieva
Suzuki.....	Irene Marlo
Pinkerton.....	José Mojica
The Consul.....	Millo Picco
Goro.....	Lodovico Oliviero
The Bonzo.....	Francesco Seri
Il Regio Commissario.....	Albert Gillette
Yamadori.....	Louis D'Angelo
Kate.....	Glen Clifford

Conductor—Gaetano Merola
Stage Director—Armando Agnini
Scenery designed by C. Obata

SATURDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 27th

at 8:15 o'clock

RIGOLETTO

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS

By VERDI

Gilda.....	Queenia Mario
Giovanna.....	Teresina Monotti
Maddalena.....	Margareta Bruntsch
Contessa di Ceprano.....	Anita Olmsted
Il Duca di Mantova.....	Beniamino Gigli
Rigoletto.....	Giuseppe De Luca
Monterone.....	Louis D'Angelo
Sparafucile.....	Francesco Seri
Marullo.....	Paolo Ananian
Ceprano.....	Albert Gillette
Borsa.....	Lodovico Oliviero
A Page.....	Du Blois Ferguson

Conductor—Gaetano Merola
Stage Director—Armando Agnini
Chorus Master—Arturo Casiglia

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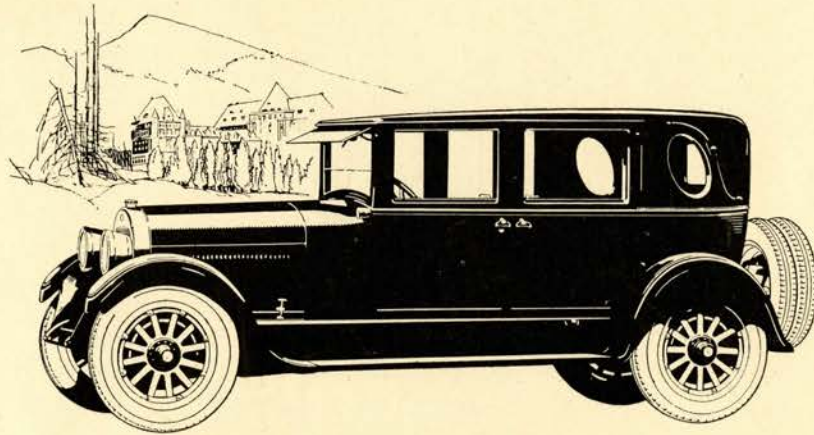
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FOREWORD

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San Francisco is justly proud of her musical assets; her Symphony Orchestra; municipal concerts, and music festivals. Now comes her Grand Opera Company to complete the cycle of musical organizations. The initial season of the San Francisco Opera Company marked a milestone in the city's musical history. Under the guidance of Gaetano Merola, San Francisco witnessed a season of opera comparable to the productions of the greatest opera houses of the world.

Twenty-five hundred men and women of San Francisco have pledged their support to the Opera Association by subscribing to the Founders Fund of this great enterprise, which places San Francisco in the front rank of the great cultural cities of the world. With the continued support and co-operation of the public, San Francisco will have a permanent opera company that should represent the artistic aspirations of the entire Pacific Coast. The city is justly proud of its Opera Company, and proud of the public-spirited men and women who have made it possible.

The Association and Mr. Merola have the good wishes of all San Francisco for the success of the present season, and for the future.

Very truly,

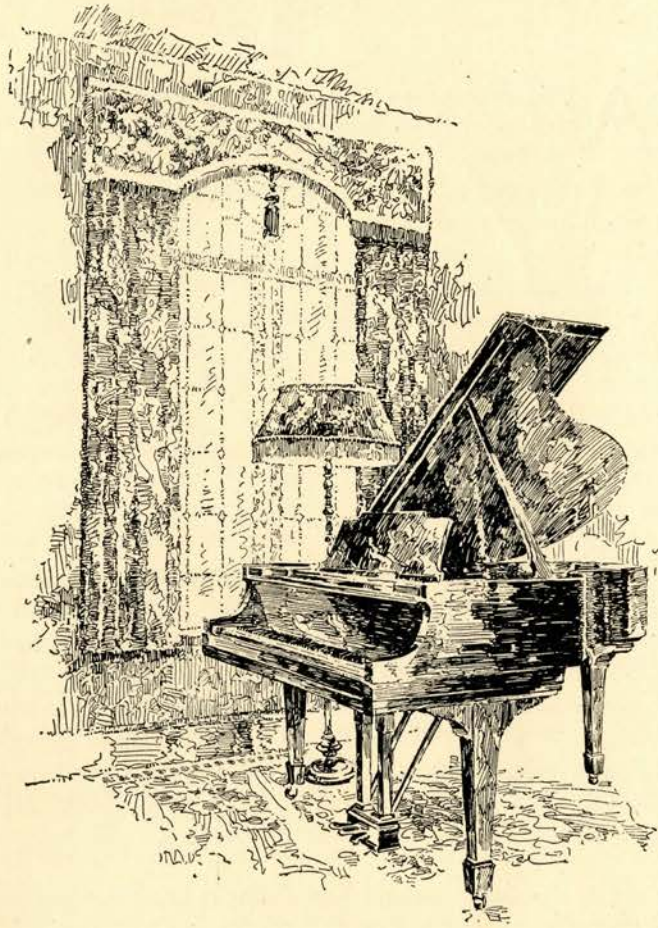
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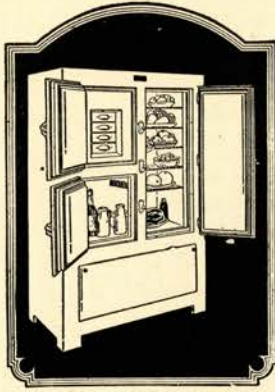
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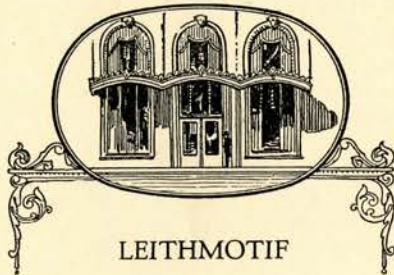
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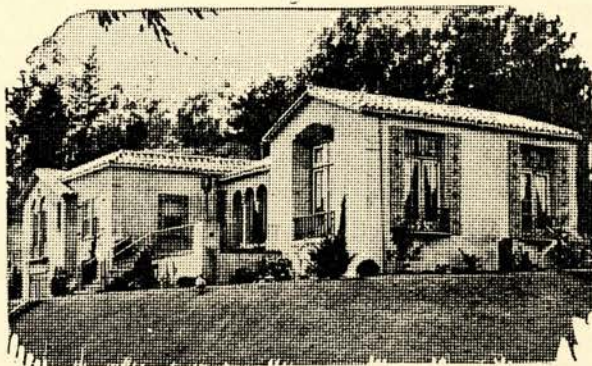
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WEDNESDAY EVENING, Sept. 24	La Boheme
FRIDAY EVENING, Sept. 26	Madame Butterfly
SATURDAY EVENING, September 27	Rigoletto

SECOND WEEK

MONDAY EVENING, Sept. 29	Manon (Massenet)
TUESDAY EVENING, Sept. 30	La Tosca
THURSDAY EVENING, Oct. 2	{ L'Amico Fritz Gianni Schicchi
SATURDAY EVENING, Oct. 4	Traviata

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30. Mr. M. H. de Young
- 32.
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MONDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 22nd AT 8 O'CLOCK

“Andrea Chenier”

Opera in Four Acts by U. GIORDANO

ACT 1—In the castle of the Count of Coigny

ACT 2—A street in Paris near Cour La Reine

ACT 3—The first section of the Revolutionary Tribunal

ACT 4—The courtyard of Saint Lazare prison.

Time—French Revolution

Andrea Chenier	BENIAMINO GIGLI
Carlo Gerard	GIUSEPPE DE LUCA
Maddalena di Coigny	CLAUDIA MUZIO
La Mulatta Bersi	EVA DE VOL
La Contessa di Coigny	RUTH SHAFFNER
Madelon	QUERITA EYBEL
Roucher	FRANCESCO SERI
Pietro Fleville	} LOUIS D'ANGELO
Fouquier Tinville	
Il Sanculotto Mathieu	PAOLO ANANIAN
Un “Incredibile”	} LODOVICO OLIVIERO
L'Abate	
Schmidt	} ALBERT GILLETTE
Dumas	
Conductor	GAETANO MEROLA
Stage Director	ARMANDO AGNINI
Chorus Master	ARTURO CASIGLIA

Story of opera on page 45.

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WEDNESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 24th

“La Boheme”

Opera in Three Acts by GIACOMO PUCCINI

ACT I—Garret of the Bohemian

ACT II—Terrace of the Cafe Momus, Paris

ACT III—A City Gate of Paris

ACT IV—Same as Act I



Mimi	QUEENA MARIO
Musetta	ANNA YOUNG
Rodolfo	BENIAMINO GIGLI
Marcello	MILLO PICCO
Shaunard	LOUIS D'ANGELO
Colline	FRANCESCO SERI
Benoit }	PAOLO ANANIAN
Alciendoro }	

Story of opera on page 49.

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FRIDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 26th, AT 8:15

“Madame Butterfly”

Opera in Three Acts by G. PUCCINI

ACT 1—A hill near Nagasaki

ACT 2—The interior of Butterfly’s house.

ACT 3—Same as in Act 2.

Nagasaki—Modern times.

Cio Cio San	THALIA SABANIEVA
Suzuki	IRENE MARLOWE
Pinkerton	JOSE MOJICA
The Consul	MILLO PICCO
Goro	LODOVICO OLIEVIRO
The Bonza	FRANCESCO SERI
Il Regio Commissario	ALBERT GILLETTE
Yamadori	LOUIS D’ANGELO
Kate	GLEN CLIFFORD
Conductor	GAETANO MEROLA
Stage Director	ARMANDO AGNINI
Chorus Director	ARTURO CASSIGLIA

Story of opera on page 51.



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SATURDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 27th, AT 8:15 O'CLOCK

"Rigoletto"

Opera in Four Acts by VERDI

ACT 1—Ballroom in the palace of the Duke of Mantua.

ACT 2—The end of a road with house of Rigoletto to the left.

ACT 3—Salon in the palace of the Duke.

ACT 4—Sparafucile's house.

Time and action in the City of Mantua—16th Century

Gilda	QUEENA MARIO
Giovanna	TERESINA MONOTTI
Maddalena	MARGARETA BRUNTSCH
Contessa di Ceprano	ANITA OLMSTED
Il Duca di Mantova	BENIAMINO GIGLI
Rigoletto	GIUSEPPE DE LUCA
Monterone	LOUIS D'ANGELO
Sparafucile	FRANCESCO SERI
Marullo	PAOLO ANANIAN
Ceprano	ALBERT GILLETTE
Borsa	LODOVICO OLIVIERO
A Page	DU BLOIS FERGUSON
Conductor	GAETANO MEROLA
Stage Director	ARMANDO AGNINI
Chorus Master	ARTURO CASIGLIA

Story of opera on page 57.



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SAN FRANCISCO

REVISED CAST OF

“Manon”

APPEARING ON PAGE 35

Le Chevalier Des Grioux	TITO SCHIPA
Lescaut	MILLO PICCO
Le Conte Des Grioux	PAOLO ANANIAN
Guillot Morfontaine	ANDREA FERRIER
De Bretigny	LOUIS D'ANGELO
Manon	THALIA SABANIEVA
Poussette	ANNA YOUNG
Javotte	MARY NEWSOME
Rosette	RUTH SHAFNER
A Servant	CONSTANCE MONCLA
Two Guards	{ ALBERT FREDIANI N. FEDULOFF
Conductor	GAETANO MEROLA
Stage Director	ARMANDO AGNINI
Chorus Master	ARTURO CASIGLIA

Addition to “La Boheme” Cast

APPEARING ON PAGE 29

Conductor	GAETANO MEROLA
Stage Director	ARMANDO AGNINI
Chorus Master	ARTURO CASIGLIA

SPECIAL NOTICE

The Board of Governors of the San Francisco Opera Association invites you to become a Founder of the Association. The list will remain open until the close of the opera season. If you desire to become a Founder, please sign the accompanying pledge and mail to the offices of the Association, 532 Geary Street.

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In acceptance of the invitation of the Board of Governors, and in the desire to help assure the continuance and development of Grand Opera in San Francisco and vicinity, I hereby subscribe forFounder-Membership.....in the San Francisco Opera Association, and will remit Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) for each membership subscribed, within ten days from the date hereof.

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Address.....

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MONDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 29th, AT 8 O'CLOCK

“Manon”

Opera in Four Acts and Five Tableaux by J. MASSENET

ACT 1—A street in Amiens.

ACT 2—The apartment of Des Grieux and Manon-rue Vivienne

ACT 3—Ante-room in the Seminary of Saint Sulpice.

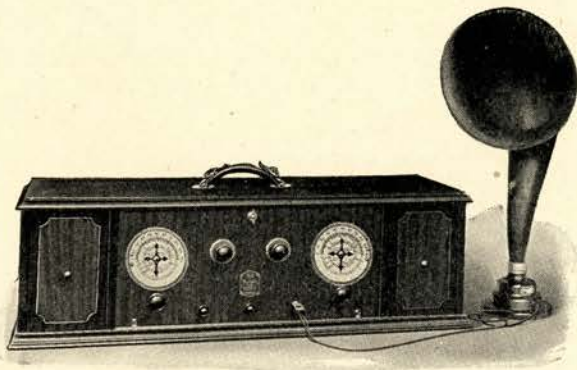
ACT 4—The Hotel of Transylvanie.

ACT 5—The road to Havre.

The action takes place in 1721.

Le Chevalier Des Grieux	TITO SCHIPA
Lescaut	MILLO PICCO
Le Conte Des Grieux	PAOLO ANANIAN
Guillot Morfontaine	ANDREA FERRIER
De Bretigny	LOUIS D'ANGELO
Manon	THALIA SABANIEVA
Conductor	GAETANO MEROLA
Stage Director	ARMANDO AGNINI
Chorus Master	ARTURO CASIGLIA

Story of opera on page 61.



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TUESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 30th, AT 8 O'CLOCK

"La Tosca"

Opera in Three Acts by PUCCINI

ACT 1—The Church of San Andrea Della Valle

ACT 2—Room of Scarpia in Farnese Palace

ACT 3—The platform of Castle Sant'Angelo

The action: Rome, 1800.

Floria Tosca	CLAUDIA MUZIO
Mario Cavaradossi	BENIAMINO GIGLI
Baron Scarpia	GIUSEPPE DE LUCA
Angelotti	FRANCESCO SERI
The Sacristan	PAOLO ANANIAN
Spoletta	LODOVICO OLIVIERO
Sciarrone	LOUIS D'ANGELO
A Jailer	ALBERT GILLETTE
A Shepherd	QUERITA EYBEL
Conductor	GAETANO MEROLA
Stage Director	ARMANDO AGNINI
Chorus Master	ARTURO CASIGLIA

Story of opera on page 65.



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SAN FRANCISCO

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 2nd, AT 8 O'CLOCK

"Amico Fritz"

ACT 1—Dining room in Fritz' country home.

ACT 2—Courtyard on the farm of Messanges.

ACT 3—Same scene as in Act 1.

The action takes place in Alsace—modern times.

Suzel	THALIA SABANIEVA
Caterina	HELEN DE VOL
Beppe	QUERITA EYBEL
Fritz	TITO SCHIPA
Rabbino	GIUSEPPE DE LUCA
Hanezo	PAOLO ANANIAN
Federico	LODOVICO OLIVIERO

followed by

"Gianni Schicchi"

Opera in One Act by G. PUCCINI

The bedroom of Buoso Donati

The action in Florence, 1299

Gianni Schicchi	GIUSEPPE DE LUCA
Lauretta	MYRTLE DONNELLY
Rinuccio	JOSE MOJICA
Zita	MARGARETA BRUNTSCH
Gherardo	LODOVIC OLIVIERO
Nella	ANNA YOUNG
Gherardino	OLIVE JONES
Betto di Signa	PAOLO ANANIAN
Simone	FRANCESCO SERI
Marco	LOUIS D'ANGELO
La Ciesca	RENE LAZELLE
Maestro Spinelloccio	ALBERT GILLETTE
Ser Amantio di Nicolao	ANDREA FERRIER
Pinellino	A. FREDIANI
Guccio	A. ALIBERTINI

Conductor GAETANO MEROLA

Stage Director ARMANDO AGNINI

Stories of operas on pages 69 and 71.



Zanette W. Potter

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2. RUTH ST. DENIS AND DENISHAWN DANCERS,	Dec. 8, 1924
3. SOPHIE BRASLAU, Contralto	Dec. 29, 1924
4. ERNA RUBINSTEIN, Phenomenal Violinist	Jan. 19, 1925
5. ALFRED CORTOT, French Master Pianist	Feb. 23, 1925
6. ROSA PONSSELLE, Phenomenal Dramatic Soprano	Mch. 30, 1925
7. TITO SCHIPA, Premiere Lyric Tenor	Apr. 13, 1925

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MISCHA ELMAN, King of Violinists	Dec. 12, 1924
SCHUMANN-HEINCK, Beloved and Distinguished Contralto	Jan. 26, 1925
VLADIMIR DE PACHMANN, Venerable Pianist	Feb. 5, 1925
PAUL WHITEMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA	Mch. 2, 1925
ANNA PAVLOWA and BALLET RUSSE	Mch. 9-10, 1925
FEODORE CHALIAPIN, Famous Actor Baritone	Mch. 24, 1925
FRIEDA HEMPEL, Beautiful and Eminent Soprano	May 7, 1925

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SATURDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 4th, AT 8:15 O'CLOCK

"La Traviata"

Opera in Four Acts by G. VERDI

- ACT 1—Salon in Violetta's home.
 ACT 2—Country place of Violetta near Paris.
 ACT 3—Ballroom in Flora's Palace.
 ACT 4—Bedroom in Violetta's home.

Place and time of action—Paris, about 1700

Violetta Valery	CLAUDIA MUZZIO
Flora Bervoix	ANNA YOUNG
Annina	TERESITA MONOTTI
Alfredo Germont	TITO SCHIPA
Giorgio Germont	GIUSEPPE DE LUCA
Gastone	LODOVICO OLIVIERO
Barone Douphol	LOUIS D'ANGELO
Marchese D'Obigny	PAOLO ANANIAN
Dottore Grenvil	FRANCESCO SERI
Conductor	GAETANO MEROLA
Stage Director	ARMANDO AGNINI
Chorus Master	ARTURO CASIGLIA
Ballet Master	NATALE CAROSSIO

Story of opera on page 75.

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“ANDREA CHENIER”

Historical Drama

Written by LUIGI ILLICA

Music by UMBERTO GIORDANO

“ANDREA CHENIER” is an opera of the French Revolution. It is a tragic idyll; but lyrical in treatment. This lyricism is characteristic of the composer, Umberto Giordano, who is eminent among modern Italians for the refinement of his style.

Chenier was a real personage, a poet of the Revolution and one of its victims. “The Republic has no need of poets,” said the Terrorists and they sent him to the scaffold. A pagan idealist, akin to Keats in the classic purity of his style, he turned the arrows of his genius against the aristocracy and, by so doing, helped to seal their doom.

The librettist has written a notable book. Chenier lives and breathes in it. He is the spokesman of the oppressed people and his muse flames into eloquence in the presence of the nobility he hates.

FIRST ACT. The opera opens in the Chateau of Coigny, where the footman Gerard is arranging the ballroom for the reception of guests. But under the flunkey’s livery beats the heart of a freeman. At the sight of his father, broken in body and spirit by long years of service, and the thought of the misery of his brothers in servitude, he bursts forth in bitter denunciation of the aristocrats “who toil not, neither do they spin.”

Madelene, the young daughter of the countess, comes in with her maid Bersi and, as Gerard watches her, his bitterness falls from him like a cloak. He is conscious only of her youthful gaiety and loveliness, and the joy and peace that her presence affords his spirit.

The guests arrive, a dignitary of the Church, lords and ladies, among them Andrea Chenier. The young poet is strangely out of place amid the gaiety and frivolity of the ballroom. He stands silent, unresponsive to the careless chatter of those about him.

It is only when Madelene, in a spirit of youthful coquetry, goads him into reply that he launches into impassioned improvisation—not the love-verse for which she has been angling, but the love of man for mankind, “the flame that lights the universe.”

Amid the shocked indignation of all the guests Madelene alone is stirred by the poet’s rebuke. But before the dance can go on a crowd of ragged beggars, with Gerard at their head, storms the chateau. The servants drive them off, and with them goes Chenier to share their fate.

SECOND ACT. Five years have elapsed when the second act opens in the Cafe Hottot in the Paris of the Terror. From denouncing the tyranny of the aristocrats Chenier has turned to attack the excesses of the revolution. Robespierre’s spies are watching

Continued

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FRIDAY EVENING

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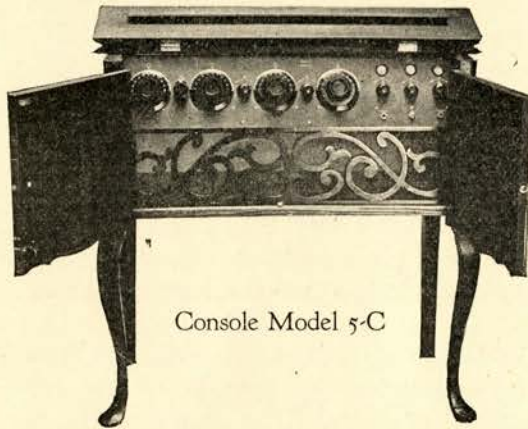
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"ANDREA CHENIER"—*Concluded*

him. One of them sits at a table with Bersi. In vain his friend Boucher begs Chenier to make his escape. Andrea insists on keeping his appointment with an unknown woman with whom he has long corresponded and whose letters have inspired him with love.

To wean him from his passion Boucher suggests that the unknown writer is one of the detested aristocrats. Chenier is on the point of leaving when the Revolutionary leaders pass by, among them Robespierre and Gerard. While Bersi talks with Boucher, Gerard takes the spy aside and gives him a description of Madelene, whom he still hopelessly loves.

Darkness has fallen when Madelene discloses herself. She does so by quoting the words of the poem which Chenier improvised on the night of the ball. While the lovers exchange their vows a spy lurks in the shadows. He sends word to Gerard, who bursts in upon them and attacks Chenier. They fight and Gerard is wounded. In a flash of chivalrous remorse Gerard begs Chenier to save the young aristocrat and warns the poet that his name is among those who are destined for the guillotine.

THIRD ACT. The third act opens in the court of the Revolutionary tribunal. The spy tells Gerard, who has recovered from his wound, that Chenier has been traced and through him they expect to find Madelene.

Filled with hopeless love for Madelene, Gerard is tempted to give up Chenier to his fate. At the same time he despises himself.

Madelene comes and he tells her that he has seized her lover. He recalls the time when he was a lackey and hungered for her. When he arrived at power he watched her, surrounded her with spies. But always she was the one desire of his life.

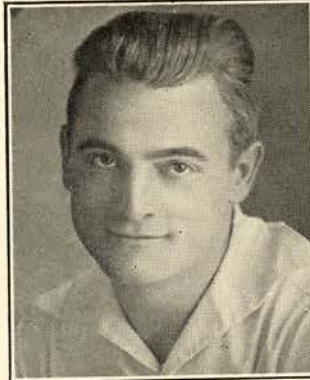
At first Madelene tries to escape, but finally, to save her lover, she offers herself as the price of Chenier's life.

Gerard is touched by her devotion. He would even save Chenier. But, it is too late. The remorseless machinery which he has set going is beyond his control. Chenier has been captured and the gendarmes are bringing him to trial and sure condemnation.

Among the prisoners is a woman, Le Gray, and last of all comes Chenier. It is not as a traitor he consents to die, but as a soldier in the cause of humanity, a poet in the service of his country. In spite of Gerard's confession and plea, Andrea is condemned to death.

FOURTH ACT. The fourth act shows the prison of St. Lazare at midnight. Chenier is writing his last poem, greeting the Muse with the worship of a dying man. As he reads the verses to Boucher, who has come to bid him farewell, Madelene and Gerard enter the courtyard. Madelene has bribed the jailer to let her take the place of Le Gray and shares death with her lover.

The last few minutes the lovers have together they glory in their love and the fate which has brought them to each other's arms. The guards summon the prisoners and they go forth to death united.



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“La Boheme”

TO THE right of the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, where the tocsin sounded for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, stands a little building from which used to proceed music of a very different kind. Today it is the office of the “Journal des Debats”; but it used to be the Cafe Momus and Henri Murger immortalized it in his “Scenes de la Vie de Boheme.” There the “Four Musketeers” made merry when there was money in their purse and sometimes when there was none. It was one of the famous resorts of that artistic Bohemia which in Paris is forever changing its location.

The “Four Musketeers” are Rodolfo the poet, Marcello the painter, Shaunard the musician, and Colline the philosopher. At the commencement of the opera Rodolfo and Marcello are together in their little garret, which serves them as den and home, trying to keep warm in the bitter Parisian winter, though there is no fire in the grate. The musician wants to burn the furniture, but the poet sets fire to his four-act tragedy. The door opens and in comes Shaunard followed by Colline. The musician has made money; he brings wine and food and firewood and in a moment the dismal little room is full of gaiety. They are so happy that they decide to celebrate by supping at the Cafe Momus. The landlord disturbs their gaiety somewhat by coming with a demand for the rent; but they get rid of him by threatening to tell his wife of his amorous escapades.

Left alone, Rodolfo turns to his task, but is interrupted by a knock at the door. It is his neighbor, the pretty young girl who occupies a room further up the staircase. She begs pardon; her candle has gone out; will monsieur give her a light? The gallant poet offers her a seat and the girl, poor and underfed—Mimi is almost at the end of her strength—sinks into it on the verge of fainting. A sip of wine restores her; she lights her candle and bids the poet good evening. But she is only gone a moment. She has dropped her key. The pair seek for it; the draft blows out the candle, and groping in the dark their lips meet in a kiss. It is the beginning of the idyll around which the drama circles. Rodolfo is a poet; she shall be his muse. After a charming love scene in which Puccini has poured some of his most beautiful music, the twain set out to join friends at the Cafe Momus.

The scene outside the cafe where the group dine together is full of the gaiety of all fresco Paris. The toy seller comes with his little cart, followed by a mob of youngsters, soldiers march by; housewives haggle for bargains; the air is full of laughter and well-being.

Mimi is welcomed by the friends; but Marcel is out of spirits, for on the other side of the street he spies his fickle lady, the dainty Musetta, tete a tete with an elderly roue. Musetta is mercenary but bored. The pair signal to one another; Musetta is seized with a cramp in the foot, and Alcindoro hurries off to get her a new shoe. Musetta is carried off in triumph and, when the elderly lover returns, there is no one to welcome him but the waiter with the bill.

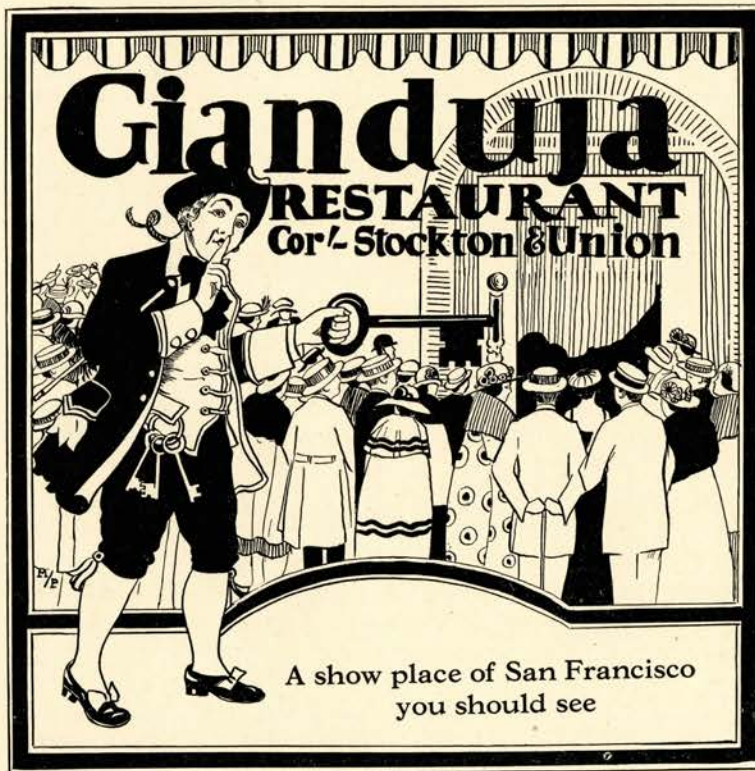
Early morning in a snow-covered Paris finds Marcel and Musetta in altercation outside the little inn where he has painted the sign and she gives music lessons. Rodolfo comes with his tale of woe about Mimi; they are miserably poor; her instincts are luxurious, and he knows that her life is being eaten away by illness. He spends his

Continued

“LA BOHEME”—*Concluded*

time between love and jealousy as he speaks. Mimi has stolen in unseen, overhears him; there are words of tenderness and regret, and the twain agree to part.

Once more the “Four Musketeers” are gathered together in Rodolfo’s attic and the brethren amuse themselves as only Quartier Latinists can with music and dancing and jokes. Musetta enters; Mimi is near and so ill she can hardly climb the stairs. Rodolfo rushes out and the girl is brought in and laid upon the bed. Her condition is desperate. There is a tender reconciliation between the lovers. The doctor is sent for and the kindly Colline sells his treasured coat—the one object he has that is worth money—to pay for medicine. Musetta in tears offers up a tender prayer to the Madonna, but it is too late; the little figure upon the bed is rigid in death.



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ABBIE GERRISH-JONES said “Miss Heath’s voice came over the air beautifully full and resonant. . . . Every soft tone was perfectly audible here, 1000 miles distant.”—Seattle, 1924.

“Madame Butterfly”

GIACOMO PUCCINI is a master of atmospheric color, and in none of his operas does this mastery show more clearly than in “Madame Butterfly.”

The composer was a friend of the Japanese ambassador to France and from him he learned a number of authentic oriental melodies. Some of these strains are made use of in the score of his opera and, building upon them with rare talent, Puccini has introduced the oriental idiom into the music of Italy.

At first the Italians were unresponsive to the beauty of the innovation, and the premier at La Scala was not a success. But Italians, like other people, can learn and today the pathetic story of Cio Cio San is a popular factor in the Italian repertory.

The libretto written by Illica and Giacosa on the basis of John Luther Long's novel, is a model of clear exposition and simply forceful diction.

The story has provoked controversy. Travelers have declared that our pity for Cio Cio San is misplaced. Young though she was, she knew that the marriage between herself and Pinkerton could be terminated at the whim of her husband. That is true; but the cavillers ignore human nature. Butterfly loved her man, and the fictions of the law cannot undo the tragedy of a broken heart. So, in sympathizing with her, plain men and women are wiser than the casuists.

FIRST ACT. Cio Cio San is known as Butterfly by all her friends. She is an exquisite flower-like little creature, barely out of her childhood, who has been driven into the life of a geisha by the poverty of her family.

When the opera opens she is about to be married to Pinkerton, a young lieutenant in the American navy. The wedding preparations have all been made and Goro, the go-between, who has brought about the marriage, is waiting with Pinkerton for the arrival of Butterfly and the family.

It is the first time that Pinkerton has seen the little house that he has rented for his Japanese bride, and Goro proudly displays to him its clever contrivances and introduces the servants, among them Suzuki, Butterfly's maid.

The first guest to arrive is Sharpless, the American consul, an old friend of Pinkerton's. Sharpless looks with disapproval on this marriage in Japanese fashion. As the two men drink together and talk, he remonstrates with Pinkerton, warning him that his marriage, a mere pastime to him, may end in tragedy for Butterfly, who takes it in all seriousness.

But Pinkerton refuses to listen. In his roving life love is a means of beguiling the time and not until he is ready to settle down with an American wife to the responsibilities of home and family will he willingly give up the pleasures of the moment.

He is impatient now for Butterfly to arrive. At the first sound of her voice he eagerly watches the path leading up the steep hill overlooking the harbor. She appears with her girl friends, gayly laughing and chattering, while behind her come her relatives and the officials who are to draw up the contract.

Butterfly is radiant with happiness. This is the day of her life when all her dreams are to be realized. From the first moment she saw Pinkerton she has loved

Continued

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Prospect 67

"MADAME BUTTERFLY"—Continued

him. To her he is a god, a being set apart. And now that she is to be his wife, her heart is filled with wonder and joy and, at the same time, a deep humility that amounts to adoration.

Her one desire is to please him in all things. And, after seeing that her friends offer him the deference she thinks is his due, she takes him aside and childishly asks his permission to keep the few girlish possessions she has brought with her. From her sleeve she takes a few ribbons, a mirror, a fan, and a little jar of paint. When Pinkerton looks disapprovingly at the paint, she throws it away.

Suddenly her face saddens, and slowly and reverently she draws out a sheathed sword and lays it before her. Goro whispers that it is the dagger the emperor sent her father with a message—and silently he indicates by a gesture the act of suicide by *hara-kiri*.

Last of all Butterfly takes out a row of little images—the souls of her ancestors. But she puts them aside and tells Pinkerton that the day before she went to the Mission. There she renounced her religion, her race, her country, and now she worships his God, and his people are hers.

The contract is drawn up and signed. The consul and officials depart. As the guests make ready for the feast, a half-crazed fanatical figure bursts in upon them. It is the priest, Butterfly's uncle, who denounces and curses her for betraying her gods. The family turn on her with imprecations until Pinkerton drives them, yelling and shrieking, off the place.

As the mad hubbub dies away night is coming on, and Butterfly turns to her lover to be comforted. They are alone. Suzuki brings the white bridal garments, and Butterfly makes herself beautiful. With touching pathos she likens herself to the "Little Moon Goddess, coming down by night from her bridge in the star-lighted sky."

All that she asks for is love, only a very little love. And, even in the midst of his passion, Pinkerton is touched by tenderness for the clinging little figure who looks up to him as her god.

SECOND ACT. Suzuki is ringing the prayer bells before the image of Buddha, petitioning her god to come to the help of her mistress. It is now three years since Pinkerton left, and Butterfly's little stock of money is almost exhausted. Day by day, with her faithful maid, Butterfly watches for the return of Pinkerton. But still her faith does not weaken. Sternly she rebukes Suzuki for her doubts and misgivings and pictures the day when the man of war comes sailing up the harbor and her husband, full of loving impatience, rushes up the hill to his beloved Butterfly.

Filled with pity, Suzuki leaves the room as Sharpless and Goro enter. The consul has received a letter from Pinkerton, asking him to tell Butterfly that he is returning, but not to her. His American bride is with him.

When she hears that Pinkerton has written, Butterfly is overwhelmed with delight. In her excitement she interrupts Sharpless again and again as he tries to give her the message. Turning on Goro, she reproaches him for the many times he has urged her to re-marry and when Prince Yamadori, her latest suitor, comes in with his servants laden with flowers, she scornfully rejects the position and wealth he offers her.

After the prince and Goro leave, Sharpless steels himself to his task. In pity he tries to soften the blow by telling her only that Pinkerton has left her forever.

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"MADAME BUTTERFLY"—*Concluded*

She stands there mute with grief, then suddenly runs out of the room and returns triumphant with her child in her arms. Surely when Pinkerton knows he has a son, a tiny image of himself, nothing will keep him away.

She urges Sharpless to write and tell him at once. Then she turns to her baby, Trouble, whose name, on the day of his father's homecoming, is to be changed to Joy.

No sooner has Sharpless left than Suzuki drags in Goro by the ear. She has overheard him telling the neighbors that the baby is fatherless and an outcast. Butterfly is filled with rage and seized her father's sword from the shrine, but, when she hears the booming of the harbor cannon in salute, and through the telescope sees Pinkerton's ship, the Abraham Lincoln, making for port, there is room in her heart for only love and thankfulness.

With Suzuki's help she strips the garden of flowers to make the house beautiful for the master's homecoming. Anxiously she looks at herself in the tiny mirror and tries to banish the marks of grief and suffering. Then she puts on her marriage garment and dresses the baby in all his finery.

With moistened fingers she tears three tiny holes in the frail paper wall, and the two women and the child silently watch for the first glimpse of Pinkerton.

PART TWO. It is morning. Suzuki and the baby are both asleep, but Butterfly is still at her post. With the dawn Suzuki wakes and persuades Butterfly to rest with the baby. As she disappears there is a knock at the door. Sharpless and Pinkerton are standing there, and beyond them is a lady in the garden.

As Pinkerton looks about him, everywhere he sees reminders of Butterfly's devotion, and he is overcome with remorse. He stands apart, and Sharpless tries to persuade Suzuki to help them prevail upon Butterfly to give up the child to its father.

Pinkerton's wife, Kate, promises that she will care for the baby as if it were her own and sorrowfully Suzuki consents. But at that very moment Butterfly appears, full of joyful anticipation, eagerly looking about for Pinkerton.

She sees Sharpless, and Suzuki weeping in a corner. She stares bewildered at the woman she has never seen before. At first she can get no answer to her question. And then Sharpless tells her it is Pinkerton's wife and they have come to take the child.

Very gently Kate asks Butterfly's forgiveness, and with sweet dignity Butterfly grants it, wishing her every happiness. Calmly she acquiesces to their wishes. In a half hour she will be ready, and Pinkerton may have his son.

When they have gone, she orders Suzuki to close the doors and curtains and then dismisses her. From the shrine she takes her father's sword, reverently kisses it and reads the inscription:

"To die with honor when one can no longer live with honor."

As she raises the sword, the child rushes in and Butterfly kisses and caresses him. She seats him on a stool with a doll and an American flag, then bandages his eyes. Watching him lovingly, she goes behind the screen. There is the sound of a falling sword, and she comes out faintly smiling, with barely enough strength to grope her way.

With one last caress, she embraces the baby, and then falls at his side dying, as Pinkerton's voice is heard calling, "Butterfly, Butterfly."

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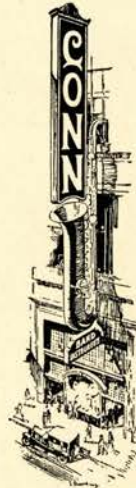
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“RIGOLETTO”

Opera in Three Acts

By VERDI

CAST in the form of a drama, “Rigoletto” is a study in the psychology of deformity. Victor Hugo, on whose “Le Roi s’amuse” Verdi’s librettist Piave based his book, wrote of the jester in words which are a key to the whole work: “Take a being of the most hideous physical deformity; illuminate that miserable creature on all sides with the sinister light of contrast; throw him a soul, and put into that soul the purest sentiment that can be given to man—a father’s love. The deformed being will become beautiful.”

“Rigoletto” was first produced in Venice, then an Austrian city, in the year 1851. But the story had to be changed. The censorship vetoed the presentation on the stage of a dissolute king. Fortunately the Venetian chief of police, Martello, was an art-lover and had ideas. He suggested that Francois Premier should be transformed into the Duke of Mantua, ducal morals being less important than kingly, and so it was done.

“Who will give us a new ‘Rigoletto?’” asked Leoncavallo when he was in San Francisco a dozen years ago. The question still awaits an answer. Not only is the score full of beautiful melody; but Verdi is a musical pathbreaker. Rigoletto’s monologue, “Pari siamo” opened a new world of rhythmical declamation, and every writer of opera since his day is Verdi’s debtor.

The famous song, “La donna e mobile” was kept secret by Verdi till the night before the first performance. Then it was given to the tenor with injunctions that he must neither sing nor whistle it, and the members of the orchestra were bound to silence. The secret was well kept and the song made a triumph.

Without using representative themes, the composer identifies his characters with their music by conceiving melody in a personal mould. The great quartet in the last act, perhaps the most perfect thing of its kind ever written, is a composite photograph of the participants—the pathetic Gilda; the libertine Duke, the amorous Maddelena, and the tragic Rigoletto.

FIRST ACT. The story opens in the ballroom of the pleasure-loving court of the Duke of Mantua. The courtiers are jesting about the love affairs of the Duke, who in all his fickle intrigues is abetted by his favorite Rigoletto, the hunchback, the jester of the court.

Among the courtiers are many whose wives and daughters the Duke has wronged. Hidden in their hearts, beneath the resentment they dare not show, is the desire for vengeance, not only against the Duke, but against Rigoletto, the instigator, whose misshapen body and bitterness against the Fate which has maimed him, lead him to vent his malice on his victims.

The Count Ceprano against whose wife’s honor the Duke and Rigoletto are now plotting, determines to be revenged. As the courtiers are laying their plans, the tragic figure of the old Count Monterone, whose daughter the Duke has wronged, bursts upon the scene. His denunciation of the Duke is met by the jeers of Rigoletto, and as the old noble is dragged away by the soldiers, he curses the jester. Rigoletto shrinks in superstitious fear, for he too has a beloved daughter.

This daughter, Gilda, he keeps hidden away from the world. She is the embittered buffoon’s one solace, and he does not even disclose to her his shameful calling.

Full of apprehension, Rigoletto hurries home. He thinks that none knows of

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"RIGOLETTO"—*Concluded.*

Gilda's existence but himself. There he is wrong. The courtiers know it, and they think she is the jester's mistress. So does the cutthroat, Sparafucile, who offers to rid Rigoletto of his rival. The buffoon listens—and remembers.

Rigoletto finds Gilda in the courtyards of his house, with her maid, Giovanna. He questions her, warns her to keep indoors, cautions Giovanna. Gilda loves her father; but she does not tell him of the young student whom she sees in church and whose love she returns in all innocence.

Startled by a noise, Rigoletto goes out to discover the cause, and the Duke, disguised as a student, slips into the garden, thrusts a purse into the hands of Giovanna, and hides behind a tree. After Rigoletto leaves, satisfied that all is safe, the Duke discloses himself to Gilda as the poor student Gualtier Malde. As they exchange their vows, there is the sound of voices in the street. Gilda begs her lover to go, and she is left standing on the terrace, in full view of the masked conspirators in the street. They are the courtiers, who have come to carry off Rigoletto's supposed mistress.

They have tricked Rigoletto, who is with them, into the belief that it is the Countess Ceprano, who lives in an adjoining palazzo. The jester's fears are set at rest. They mask him and tie a handkerchief over his ears, so that he will not recognize the voice of the victim.

Not until he is left alone in the deserted street does he realize that he has been duped. He tears the bandage from his eyes, rushes into the house, only to find it deserted. His daughter has been stolen. He falls to the ground in an anguish of despair. The curse has stricken him.

SECOND ACT. The second act finds the Duke in the palace, bemoaning the interruption of his meeting with Gilda. On his return to the house she was gone. While he burns with thwarted passion, the courtiers rush in to tell him of the trick they have played on Rigoletto. At first the Duke is in despair; but, when he hears that Gilda is in the palace, he rushes off to find her.

Rigoletto comes, hiding his despair, but full of suspicion. The demeanour of the courtiers confirms that suspicion, and he discovers that Gilda is in the palace. He demands and implores the return of his child.

Gilda rushes into the room, broken-hearted and dishonored. Rigoletto's one thought is vengeance; but Gilda still loves her betrayer.

THIRD ACT. In the third act Gilda and Rigoletto are in a desert spot near the inn kept by Sparafucile and his sister Maddalena. The Duke has been lured there by the charms of the gypsy girl. Rigoletto tries to destroy his daughter's love for the Duke by proving his faithlessness. Gilda hears the Duke make the same vows to the courtesan that he made to her, and sadly obeys her father's command to dress herself as a boy for flight.

With Sparafucile Rigoletto arranges for the Duke's murder.

A storm breaks and the Duke is glad to spend the night at the inn. Won by the Duke's ardour, Maddalena begs her brother to spare his life. The cutthroat consents—if a substitute can be found. This compact Gilda overhears, and she determines to give her life for her lover.

Rigoletto returns to complete the bargain. As he drags the sack with its ghastly burden, to throw it into the river, he hears the Duke's voice. He tears open the sack and finds Gilda, mortally wounded. She dies in his arms, beseeching her father to forgive her lover, and Rigoletto in his despair, cries "The malediction!"

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"Manon"

Opera in Five Acts

By JULES MASSENET

JULES MASSENET was formed by nature to be the musical interpreter of that masterpiece of eighteenth century romance, "Manon Lescaut." Gallic in its daintiness, Gallic, too, in its just and charming sentiment, his score has pages full of emotional power.

The novelist was a churchman, the Abbe Prevost, but hardly an ideal representative of the type. He deserted the Jesuits to become a soldier, and forsook the Benedictines to follow literature. He strove to be true to his sacred calling; but he sadly confessed that, though his books were faithful friends, "they were dead like myself."

Much of his novel is doubtless autobiography, for the abbe, like Abelard before him, knew what it was to have an adored face come between his eyes and the pages of his prayer book. He wrote "Manon Lescaut" to show the danger of giving loose reign to passion; but so seductively did he portray the passion he feared, that for half a dozen generations his book has been the lovers' missal of young France.

The libretto, which is the work of Meilhac and Gille, differs from the novel in one important particular. In the novel the death of Manon takes place in the French colony of Louisiana. To shorten the action the librettists bring about the tragedy in the seaport of Le Harve.

"Manon" has a tender spot in the heart of San Francisco, for one of the first exponents of the part was the California Sybil Sanderson. Massenet himself said she was an ideal Manon.

FIRST ACT. The opening scene is laid in the courtyard of the inn at Amiens.

The coach arrives. All is bustle and confusion. Among the passengers is Manon Lescaut, an exquisitely lovely young girl of a frivolous, pleasure-loving nature. Her parents are sending her to a convent in the hope of saving her from the temptations of the world.

Lescaut, Manon's cousin, an officer of the guard, is there to meet her; but, even while she is under his protection, the old roué, Guillot de Morfontain, minister of finance, who is at the inn with a party of dissolute men and women, finds an opportunity to make love to her.

Manon, repulses him, only to fall in love at sight with the Chevalier Des Grieux, whom a deeply religious nature has destined for the priesthood. The young man's heart is touched by the girl's loveliness and apparent simplicity, and he offers her all the tenderness and passion of a deep devotion.

With ample malice, Manon tricks Morfontain by using the carriage he has placed at her disposal and eloping with Des Grieux to Paris. When the old debauchee discovers he has been deceived, he vows vengeance on the girl who has tricked him.

SECOND ACT. The lovers are established in an apartment in Paris. Des Grieux is writing his father for permission to marry Manon, when Lescaut, accompanied by De Bretigny, forces his way in to avenge the honor of his family.

Des Grieux convinces the guardsman of his desire to make Manon his wife by showing him the letter. While they are talking, De Bretigny tells Manon that the old Count Des Grieux is plotting to abduct his son that very night.

Continued

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"MANON"—*Concluded*

De Bretigny loves the girl and wants her for his mistress. He pictures the poverty of the life before her with Des Grieux, and urges her to give up her lover without a struggle. He tempts her with the luxury and worldly pleasure that her nature craves and that he can give her.

After De Bretigny and Lescaut have gone Manon reproaches herself for her frailty, and yet the simple, secluded life in a cottage in the wood, the mere thought of which fills Des Grieux with idyllic bliss, has no charm for her. She has but to warn her lover to keep him with her. But much as she loves him, she loves pleasure more, and when she hears the low knock that tells her they have come to take him, she makes but a feeble effort to keep him by her side.

From the window she sees him led away and, for the moment, grief overcomes her.

THIRD ACT. A fete is being held in Cours La Reine. Manon, now the mistress of De Bretigny, is the center of an admiring throng. Living in the midst of luxury, with every fickle whim gratified, she revels in her life of pleasure. But still she remembers her old lover.

Des Grieux' father is in the crowd and when he and De Bretigny meet Manon eagerly listens. She hears that the young chevalier has returned to the seminary and is about to become a priest.

She disguises De Bretigny and anxiously questions the old court, trying to discover if there is any love or pity left for her in the young abbe's heart. When she learns that he has buried his sorrow in the past, her old love flames up anew and she determines to win him back.

The second scene is laid in the seminary of St. Sulpice. The young novice's eloquence and sanctity have brought him fame, from which he shrinks. His father tries to dissuade him from the priesthood; but Des Grieux, robbed of Manon's love, has returned to the vocation from which, but for a brief moment, he had turned aside.

Manon finds the young priest resolved to refuse all earthly love. In the desperate fear of losing him forever, she woos him with all the tender passion her love inspires. She recalls the past, the touch of her hand, the memory of old caresses. Des Grieux can no longer fight against his love, and the lovers are reunited.

FOURTH ACT. Des Grieux has returned to the old gay life with Manon. They are on the verge of poverty, and Manon, aided by Lescaut, urges Des Grieux to try his luck at the gaming tables. With the good fortune of beginners, he wins a large sum from Morfontain, who accuses him of cheating. The old roué still has revenge in his heart for Manon, and he sends the police to arrest Des Grieux and her as his accomplice.

It is only through the intercession of his father that Des Grieux is saved from exile. But Manon is sentenced to be deported as a woman of evil life.

FIFTH ACT. In despair Des Grieux is watching on the lonely road to Havre for Manon to pass on her way to the ship. He threatens to attack the guard; but Lescaut restrains him with a promise of trying to save her. Manon appears, exhausted by fatigue, barely able to drag herself along. Lescaut disappears with the sergeant and Manon, overcome with remorse, finds peace in her lover's arms. For the last time they tell their love, and Manon dies repentant and forgiven.

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“LA TOSCA”

LA TOSCA,” libretto by Illica and Giacosa, is based on the play by Victor Sardou written for the immortal Sara Bernhardt. The drama is familiar to American theatre-goers of twenty years ago—when Fanny Davenport created the role of Tosca in this country.

Puccini has written some of his best music in the score of “Tosca.” His musical portrayal of the Baron Scarpia is a model of Sinister characterization.

Sardou’s drama is a story of the period of the days of the close of the French revolution. That period of liberty, equality and fraternity. It deals with those trying times—when brave souls were sacrificed for their ideals, when intrigue, fear and terror reigned.

Angelotti, a Roman patriot, brother of the Countess Attavanti, who has escaped from the political prison of San Angelo, seeks refuge in the church of San Andrea alla Valle, from whence he hopes to make his escape to the frontier.

While seeking the refuge of the church he is discovered by his friend Cavaradosi, who is engaged in the painting of the Magdalene, for whose countenance he has chosen the likeness of the Countess.

Hearing the voice of his mistress “La Tosca,” the famous singer, approaching, Cavaradosi secretes Angelotti in the chapel and turns to meet his lover who, suspicious of his apparent abstraction, is seized with a fit of jealousy and accuses him of infidelity, professing to see in the likeness of the portrait her fancied rival.

Reassuring her and with endearing caresses, Cavaradosi urges her to depart, promising to meet her later, and after she has left summons his friend and urges him to secret himself in an old abandoned well near his villa, where he promises to join him and aid him to make good his escape over the border. He has scarce disappeared when a cannon shot is heard from the fort disclosing that his escape has been discovered.

There is an inrush from the church of choristers, acolytes and penitents—headed by the Sacristan and confusion reigns. Suddenly a silence falls. Scarpia stands there with Spoletta and his agents. The crowd melts away in terror and the chief detains the Sacristan, whom he questions. Then comes a search for the fugitive.

Scarpia discovers the portrait of the Magdalene and recognizes the likeness. He inquires of the Sacristan the name of the artist. Scarpia has long cherished the hope of possessing Tosca, but sees in Cavaradosi a rival. Quickly his mind evolves a scheme to place him in his power. Hearing Tosca again approaching he quickly secretes himself behind a pillar. In a rage of jealousy Tosca enters in search of her lover, and not finding him sets out to follow him, who, she believes, has gone to his villa accompanied by her rival. Scarpia bids Spoletto follow in a closed carriage, sure that the trail leads to the hiding place of Angelotti.

Scarpia repairs to his palace to await the capture of Cavaradosi, and sends word to Tosca to bid her come thither to meet her lover. Spoletta has just brought in Cavaradosi in irons, and is upon the point of dragging from him information of the whereabouts of the fugitive when Tosca appears, and throws herself in the arms of her lover, who whispers not to disclose the hiding place of Angelotti.

Cavaradosi is dragged away to the torture chamber. Torn amid conflicting emotions, punctured with the cries of anguish of Cavaradosi at the hands of his tormentors, she

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“LA TOSCA”—*Concluded*

consents for the sake of her lover, to yield to the promises of the scheming Scarpia and pay the supreme price of giving herself as a ransom for the release of her tortured sweetheart.

Exacting a passport of safe conduct, she awaits while Scarpia sits at his table to execute the written order to the firing squad to use blank cartridges.

Quietly Tosca picks up a knife, and when he rises to approach her with the order in his hand, she stabs him to the heart. “Thus Tosca kisses,” she cries, as he falls at her feet, dying.

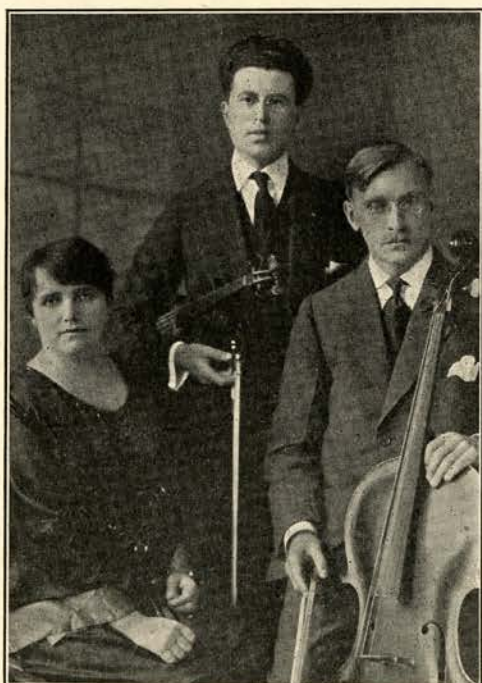
Loosening from his stiffening fingers the fateful document, and extinguishing the candles, she takes the crucifix from the wall and lays it on his breast, and with a backward look, disappears into the grey dawn.

Cavaradosi has but an hour to live. He is sitting in the midst of his reveries. A jailer enters with Tosca, who throws herself into his arms, whispering the good news, and telling him that Scarpia is dead.

Secure in his hope, he is led away to face the firing squad.

Alas! Scarpia, treacherous even after death, has betrayed them. The guns were loaded. Tosca waits with bated breath the signal to fire. Mario falls. Believing him shamming and playing his part she falls upon his prostrate form imploring him to arise and flee. He is dead! Voices approach. Spoletta and his men have discovered the murder and have come for Tosca. With one loud cry she leaps upon the parapet and flings herself upon the rocks below.

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PEOPLE were surprised when Mascagni turned from the tragic Italy of “Cavalleria Rusticana” to the placid Alsatian life of Erckmann Chatrian’s “L’Amico Fritz.” Here was no striving after “Verismo,” but a peaceful idyll of the countryside.

FIRST ACT. Fritz is a comfortable bourgeois, well off in this world’s goods, and he tells himself he is an inveterate old bachelor. But his heart is as good as gold and when David, the local rabbi, tells him the plight of young lovers, who cannot marry for lack of a dowry, he goes down into his own pocket to make good the deficiency.

The rabbi is wise, and a regular match-maker to boot. It seems a shocking thing to him that a good fellow like Fritz should not go happily in double harness.

It is Fritz’s birthday, and a little group of old cronies are seated at the hospitable board, paying their good wishes to their friend. One of the number to pay him her respects is Suzel, a lovely young girl who would make any good fellow happy. And indeed her attitude towards Fritz suggests that possibly, deep in her woman’s heart, love has already asserted itself.

In laughing fashion the rabbi makes Fritz a wager, one vineyard against another, that not forever will he remain in single blessedness. And Fritz’s Romany visitor plays the fiddle in strains that seem a prophecy of an idyll yet to be. But Fritz only scoffs. He thanks Suzel for her flowers and promises that he will visit her old father and see how things are progressing on his farm.

SECOND ACT. It is the farm of Suzel’s father and Fritz has fulfilled his promise. In the early morning his ears are greeted by the voice of Suzel, as she gathers the newly ripe cherries for the guest. Fritz is delighted by the young girl’s sweet ingenuousness and half seems to toy with sentiment; but he persuades himself that after all love is not for him.

But the rabbi is of another mind and he sets about to try how Suzel herself feels. In a lovely episode, he makes her relate to him the story from the Bible how Eleazar sought a wife for Jacob, how he went among a far away people, praying the Lord that the young woman who should give him to drink should be the chosen mate for the son of his master, Abraham. Deeply moved Suzel tells the ancient story, and from her emotion, the rabbi divines that one party to the plot which he has devised in his heart has already been won. But Fritz takes fright when he feels the hold that sentiment is obtaining over him and hurries back home, and poor Suzel is left sorrowful.

THIRD ACT. Rabbi David pursues his object steadfastly. He guesses that Fritz is not altogether indifferent to Suzel and adroitly arouses his jealousy. Suzel is of marriageable age, very beautiful; the young men are conscious of her charms and seeking her hand. Fritz is indignant. The idea of giving such a child in wedlock angers him.

This is the appropriate moment for David to bring Suzel and Fritz together. Fritz questions the girl. He has heard she is to be married. Who is the man? The maiden is confused; Fritz is in love without knowing it. Passion asserts itself in their tones, and it dawns on Fritz that Suzel is indeed destined for marriage, for he himself is the intended husband. The rabbi has won his bet and the vineyard he has won from Fritz he gives Suzel for her dowry.



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“GIANNI SCHICCHI”

GIANNI SCHICCHI” is Puccini’s one experiment in humorous opera. It radiates Italian geniality, but a geniality with a grim, ironic touch, as might be expected from a story which draws its inspiration from the Inferno of Dante Alighieri. Musically it is urbane, jocund, spirited. Puccini knows his “Barbiere” well and he has steeped himself in the comedy of Goldoni.

It was the composer’s original intention to write a symphony, of which the first movement would be in the keen, passionate spirit of “Il Tabarro,” the second movement patterned on the emotional idyll, “Suor Angelica,” with “Gianni Schicchi” as the light-hearted conclusion. He changed his mind, however, and, instead of a “programme” symphony, we have three one-act operas.

“Gianni Schicchi” is a masterpiece in miniature. The libretto by Giacomo Forzana is literature. Puccini has been uniformly fortunate in his libretti; but his good fortune is a tribute to his artistic vision, not a matter of mere chance.

The scene is laid in the bedroom of old Buoso Donati, who has been dead only two hours. All the members of his family, no matter how distant the connection, are gathered about his bedside. Under a pretense of grief the mourners are in a fever of avaricious impatience until they shall learn the contents of the will.

The room is filled with the sound of forced groans and mumbled prayers, interrupted by exclamations of hypocritical sorrow. As they kneel the mourners glance about them furtively, watching each other and keeping an eye on the dead man’s belongings.

A little apart from the rest is Betto, the black sheep of the family. In a smothered whisper he tells them there is a rumor that when Buoso made his will he left everything to the friars.

Instantly they all jump to their feet. Dropping all pretense of grief, they crowd round Simone, who, as sheriff of the town and the oldest of the family, is a man of importance. What can they do in the face of such a calamity? Simone ponders. He decides that, if the will has been filed in the town hall, they can do nothing; but, if not and it is there in the room, where they can find it, there is still hope.

They set to work feverishly, throwing out the contents of the drawers and boxes and ransacking every nook and corner.

While they are absorbed in the search, Rinuccio, the nephew of the old woman, Zita, sends a boy for Gianni Schicchi and his daughter Lauretta. Rinuccio is in love with Lauretta; but his penurious old aunt will not let him marry her, as she has no dowry.

There is only one person who can help them out of this dilemma, and the young man knows it is Gianni Schicchi, the shrewd old peasant, who not only knows the law, but also many ways of getting around it.

The room is in a turmoil. Every now and then someone calls out excitedly, thinking he has found the will, only to be disappointed.

In the midst of the confusion Betto quietly goes his own way and makes good use of the time by picking up what he can find and stowing it away in his pocket.

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"GIANNI SCHICCHI"—*Concluded*

Rinuccio is the one who at last holds up the will for them all to see. But he refuses to let it out of his hand until his aunt promises him that, if they are all remembered, she will consent to his marriage with Lauretta.

The avaricious old woman has only one desire—to get hold of the document, so she consents. They crowd about her, pushing and jostling.

Suddenly they fall back aghast. Everything, even the most valued possessions, the house in Florence, the saw mill, the famous mule, all has been left to the friars. Beside themselves with rage, they storm and revile the friars and the dead man. In the midst of the hubbub Gianni Schicchi is announced.

They resent his intrusion; but Rinuccio overcomes their distrust, and persuades them that perhaps the crafty old fellow can help them. They consent and show Gianni Schicchi the will. At first he says nothing can be done. Suddenly, however, he becomes more hopeful and sends the lovers out of the room.

First he makes sure that no one besides the family knows of Buoso's death, and cautions them to keep it secret. Then he orders the body and the candles to be removed to another room.

The doctor arrives to see the patient. Gianni Schicchi, behind the curtains, impersonates the dead man, and gives orders that he is not to be disturbed till evening.

After the doctor has been gotten rid of, he sends for a notary and witnesses to draw up another will. The relatives are delighted. Each tries to outdo the other with bribes and promises, if Schicchi will only deed him the house, the mill and the mule.

They undress Gianni and push him towards the bed. But he stops and warns them that, if the falsifying of the will is discovered, it means the banishment from Florence of all concerned and the loss of the right hand to each one of them.

A knock is heard at the door and Schicchi jumps into bed. It is the notary and the witnesses.

With all solemnity the will is drawn up. To the delight of the family Schicchi leaves only two florins for the funeral, and they heave a sigh of relief at the pittance left for the poor. To one of the relatives he leaves a cornfield and there is a sigh of contentment; to another a meadow, and so on.

But when it comes to the house, the mill and the mule Schicchi's tone changes. He leaves one and all to his dear, his beloved friend—Gianni Schicchi.

All jump up in an outburst of rage; but the false Buoso softly chants as he waves his hands, "Farewell, dear Florence, with this poor handless hand, I wave good-bye."

They seethe with repressed fury. Gianni Schicchi finishes by bidding Zita pay the notary 125 florins out of her own pocket.

When the lawyer and the witnesses have gone, they all rush to the bed; but Schicchi seizes Buoso's stick to defend himself. They turn and grabbing all they can, rush to the door.

As the crafty old peasant pursues them, the lovers come back into the room, and Schicchi finds them, when he returns, in each other's arms. Dropping his bundles on the floor, he turns to the audience, and asks if any better use could be made of old Buoso's money than to use it to make these young people happy.



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“LA TRAVIATA”

Opera in Three Acts

By VERDI

THE LAST of the five kings of modern Italian music” Hans von Bulow called Verdi, and in no opera does the great Italian show his genius with more distinction than in “La Traviata.”

The work was composed in the extraordinarily brief time of four weeks; the portrait of Violetta is a psychological masterpiece; the score is literally strewn with jewels of melody.

Verdi had a theme worthy of his genius. Violetta was not a fiction, but a real person. She was the courtesan, Marguerite Gauthier, whom the younger Dumas idealized so charmingly in “La Dame aux Camelias,” that pilgrims to Pere La Chaise still strew flowers on her tomb.

Can a light of love be redeemed by a genuine passion? Dumas holds that she can, and “La Traviata” is the musical pleading of her cause.

At first the opera was coldly received. The Violetta was extremely stout, and she was made love to by a tenor with a bad cold. The singers commiserated Verdi on his non-success; but the composer told them they had failed to understand his music. He believed in his work, and the verdict of a world-wide public justifies his belief.

The period of the drama is about 1850; but Violetta often appears in modern dress, and Germont is usually a country gentleman of the old regime.

FIRST ACT. Violetta is living a gay, reckless life in the midst of luxury and extravagance. Her lovers indulge her every caprice, and she flits restlessly from pleasure to pleasure. In the eyes of her friends she is carefree and content; but under her mask of frivolity is loneliness and disillusion.

Only too well she knows that death lies before her, and that her way of living is shortening her days. But in a mad whirl of excitement she tries to forget not only her fear, but the dreams of her youth, when she longed for love and true devotion.

When the opera opens, her friends are gathered about her, among them Gaston Leturiere, and the Baron Dauphol, who is courting her for his mistress.

Gaston introduces his friend, Alfred Germont, and tells Violetta that for months Alfred has loved her. During her illness he came day after day, in his anxiety, to inquire after her.

Violetta is touched, but hides her emotion with gay indifference and the baron sulks, seeing in Alfred a rival.

The banquet over, the guests go into the ballroom; but Violetta, suddenly faint, stays behind and finds herself alone with Alfred.

Anxiously he watches her, urging her to give up her gay life and trying to convince her of his love, which yearns to surround her with tenderness and loving care.

The simple sincerity of his devotion touches her to the very depths. For the first time in her life the love for which she has always longed is offered her. But she shrinks from it almost in fear. She tries to harden her heart and send him from her forever. But, in the end, she relents and tells him that their parting is only till the next day.

When the guests are gone and she is alone, she gives herself up to her old dreams and hopes, realized now in Alfred. But even yet she mistrusts happiness. Resolutely

Continued

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"LA TRAVIATA"—*Concluded*

she thrusts the new vision from her mind and turns to thoughts of folly and pleasure to find forgetfulness.

SECOND ACT. Violetta has given up her old life and is living in happy seclusion with Alfred near Paris. Without her lover's knowledge, she is selling her jewels and all her belongings to pay the expenses of their establishment. When Alfred discovers it from Annina, the maid, he is filled with remorse and hurries to find a way in which he can repay her.

While he is absent Alfred's father comes to take him home. He reproaches Violetta for the extravagance into which she has led his son. But when he hears that she has sold all that she has, and counts it nothing for the sake of her love, he softens. Nevertheless he asks her to give up Alfred, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of his family. Germont tells Violetta of his young daughter betrothed to the man she loves, and pictures her despair when her lover's relatives threaten to break off the marriage, unless Alfred gives up the irregular life he is living.

Violetta hears him in fear. She will give up Alfred for a time. Even that would be hard. But the old man stops her; it is not enough; it must be forever.

He tries to comfort her with the thought of another love, and tells her that, as she can never marry his son, there can be no happiness in store for them.

In despair Violetta yields, asking only that some day, after she has passed away, Alfred may know of her sacrifice.

The father leaves her with gratitude in his heart, and Violetta bids him farewell, knowing that, with the loss of all she holds dear, life will soon be at an end for her.

She sits down and writes to her lover that she is leaving him forever. But, as she finishes, he comes in and she hastily hides the letter.

She goes out of the room and soon afterwards a messenger hands him a letter. It is from Violetta, telling him of her departure. Alfred utters a cry and falls into his father's arms.

He hurries to Paris and finds Dauphol and Violetta at a masked ball. The two men play and Alfred wins heavily. Violetta has been looking on, with fear in her heart. Turning on her, Alfred flings at her feet the money he has won. Violetta cowers before him, overcome with sorrow. The elder Germont intervenes, reproaching his son for his brutality.

THIRD ACT. It is morning and Violetta is just waking from her sleep. She tries to rise, but is so weak that Annina has to help her to her couch. The doctor reassures her; but he knows that in a few hours all will be over.

It is carnival time, and in the streets there is shouting and laughter. Violetta tells her maid to count the little money they have left and give part of it to the poor. When she is alone, she takes out a letter from Alfred's father. He tells her that Alfred wounded the baron in a duel and has had to leave the country for a time. When he returns he will come to her and ask her forgiveness. As she reads, Violetta tells herself that it will be too late.

Annina returns and tries to prepare her mistress for an unexpected happiness. Instantly Violetta knows that Alfred has come. She watches the door. Pale with emotion he rushes towards her and they throw themselves into each other's arms.

But her joy is too great and she sinks back, overcome by weakness. With the last feeble remnant of her strength, she gives Alfred a tiny medallion, a likeness of herself, for the bride that will be his some day, long after she is gone. Then with a sigh she falls back, her last breath a prayer for her lover.

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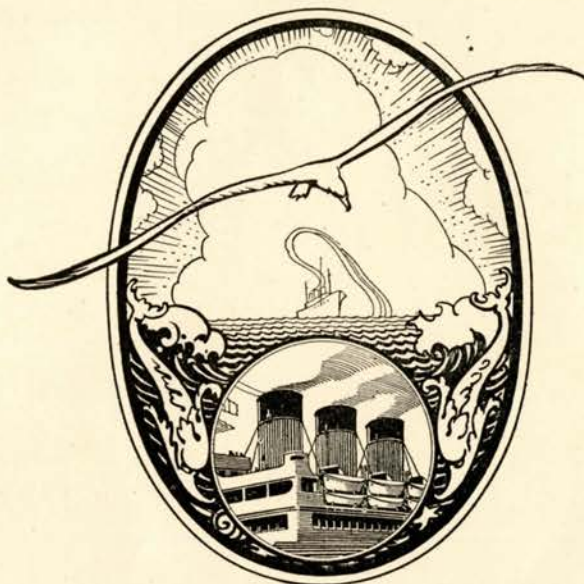


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