

cent visit to London. Mr Max Rabinoff, manager of the Grand National Opera House of the City of Mexico, had many interesting things to say on the subject of grand opera in Mexico. "The actual structure of the National Opera House of Mexico city," said Mr Rabinoff, "is still in course of construction; it has been building for the past six years, but now it is definitely promised to be ready for opening in September of next year. In the meantime the National Grand Opera of the Mexican Republic is housed at the Teatro Arriaga, where our season begins on September 15 and continues for three months. Grand opera in Mexico is under Government control. The authorities direct it in every particular and regard it from a purely educational and artistic point of view. The new opera house, which will be the central ornament of the beautiful city, is costing over one million pounds. It is being constructed on the lines of the Paris Opera House, and it stands in a fine open square or garden. Its seating capacity is about 1,400, and its subsidy is about £5,000 for a season.

Music for the People.
"People in Mexico, as in other Latin countries, regard opera as something that affects their lives and their emotions to no great extent that each citizen considers himself or herself a part owner of a great organisation that expresses the most beautiful thoughts and feelings of their lives. Every person contributes his pence to the Government subsidy, and they feel they have a right to dictate the terms upon which their money is spent. The "star" system is not known in Mexico. What is aimed at is a level of excellence. It is said that the greatest sums ever given to individual artists have been paid in Buenos Ayres. But the opera house in the Argentine capital is a private enterprise, run by a number of millionaires. In Mexico it is arranged by the Government for the pleasure and education of the people. The prices of seats vary according to the amount of subsidy given by the Government. If a large amount of money is voted lower prices are charged than when a smaller subsidy is at command. But the highest price you can pay is 25 centos, in Mexican money, almost six shillings.

Educating the Young.
"Twice during every season of opera the Department of Education takes entire control of the opera house, and for these two performances they rearrange the scale of prices, the highest priced seat costing about a shilling, while a seat in the gallery can be had for two pence. The Minister of Education selects the operas to be performed, insists on the artists who appear being of the very best, and the audiences are composed of the teachers and higher class school-children of the city."

A Mexican Invasion.
A syndicate is being formed by Mr Max Rabinoff for the purpose of purchasing the London Opera House. The idea is to give the scheme a five year's trial with English opera as the chief attraction, but whether the project will materialise or not remains a matter for speculation. Negotiations between Mr Hoslock and Mr Hammerstein with regard to the London Opera House have, for the moment, talked through. After indicating his willingness to consider a proposal for a short lease, Mr Hammerstein added that he wished to sell the opera house outright for £200,000. "I am through with it," he added. It appears that the class of entertainments that could be launched at the London Opera House has many limitations. Not the least important of these is that the ground rent was fixed by the London County Council at a much lower figure than would have been the case if any other than an educational form of entertainment had been projected there.

Herr Pechotseh's Concert.
The Town Hall was well filled on Saturday night, on the occasion of the concert given by Herr Raimund Pechotseh, assisted by his own and Madame Pechotseh's pupils. A fine programme of solos, duets, trios, quartets, and a sextet was submitted, and the performance given of the different items reflected the highest credit on teachers and students. In the vocal department several promising pupils appeared, many possessing voices of exceptional quality. Throughout the evening the students sang with confidence, and in a way which showed they are being thoroughly trained and their voices developed on the right lines. It has often been stated that Aucklanders do not display much

vocal ability, but, judging by the talent displayed in this direction last Saturday evening, such does not prove to be the case. Many vocalists, with natural voices of pleasing timbre sang, and, with further study, and experience, continued on the same lines as they are now on, promise to make a name for themselves in the vocal world. They should be encouraged to pursue their studies conscientiously and earnestly. The programme consisted of twenty-two selections, and was considerably augmented before the end of the evening, so delighted were those in front with the efforts of the executants. The solos chosen by Herr Pechotseh were Bach's "Prelude and Fugue in G. Minor" (unaccompanied) and Artot's "Fantasia Brilliant." The playing of the former created a great impression upon the audience, and in response to an emphatic demand an encore was given. Even then the audience were not satisfied till the virtuoso study popularly known as "Yankee Doodle," had been played. Though this latter is fast becoming rather hackneyed, yet its invariably enthusiastic reception may, perhaps, afford some justification for its frequent appearance. Gounod's "Ave Maria," and Braga's "La Serenata" were played in ensemble by Herr Pechotseh and several of his pupils, accompanied by Mr. Gregson at the organ and Madame Pechotseh at the piano. Owing to the fact that many of those who played were beginners, faulty intonation was noticeable occasionally; but taking into consideration the fact that many of the performers were playing in public for the first time, the items reflected very great credit on Herr Pechotseh's teaching.

Mozart's "Grand Fantasia in F Minor" is one of the finest compositions for the organ ever written, and (though it is by no means a "show piece," being pure music throughout) makes great demands on the performer. Mr. Harold Gregson gave a fine rendering of this great work, and also of "Prayer and Berceuse," by Gullmunt. In addition, Mr. Gregson also accompanied several of the songs and concerted numbers.

The vocal portion of the programme opened with Rossini's "Carita," for solo soprano with chorus. Mrs. John Alexander, the soloist, has a voice of pleasant quality, but appeared greatly handicapped by nervousness. This was no doubt the cause of faulty intonation on several occasions. The chorus gave evidence of careful training, the parts being well rendered, and the attack and intonation generally good. Of the rest of the pupils, Miss Mabel Secombe, Miss Mabel Stevenson, and Mr. Alan Bailey shared the honours of the evening. Miss Secombe sang Sullivan's "The Lost Chord" very successfully. Miss Stevenson coped successfully with the difficult task set her in the "Jewel Song" from "Faust" (Gounod), which is an exacting solo. She appeared more at her ease in Tours' "Mother of Mine," which was sung with due dramatic force and feeling. Mr. Alan Bailey is the possessor of a deep baritone voice of pleasant quality, which he used to good effect in the "Toreador's Song" from "Carmen." This received a careful rendering, though there was at times a tendency to overlook the dramatic character of the song. "The Carnival of Venice," a soprano solo of the well-known air of that name, arranged by Sir Julius Benedict, did not show Miss Laidla Gardner's true soprano voice to the best advantage. The encore brought forth a tasteful rendering of Herr Pechotseh's "Violets bring thoughts of you," which the composer accompanied with excellent effect.

The concerted items on the programme consisted of the part song "Come, let's haste to the Fields" (Bishop) by Madame Pechotseh's pupils, the well-known sextet from "Lucia di Lammermoor" and Pissini's quartet "Good Night." Duets were also given by Misses St. Clair and Sealrock and Misses Gardner and Secombe. The other soloists were Miss Fanny Montgomery, Mrs. Albert E. Humes and Messrs W. A. Taylor and Victor E. Ellich, all of whom were heartily applauded for their respective items.

The accompanying was shared by Madame Pechotseh and Mr. Leo Whitaker, both of whom carried out their important duties successfully.

Kipling Recital.
Mr. Thomas Harris, the well-known elocutionist, whose recent Dickens' character entertainments were so successful, is to give recitals from the works of Rudyard Kipling. The recitals, which are under the auspices of the Ponsoby,

Shakespeare and Rhetoric Club, are to take place in the Town Hall on October 28, and 29.

The programme, which is of exceptional literary, musical and elocutionary merit, comprises a selection of Kipling's character sketches, songs, monologues, and recitals, combining humour, pathos, patriotism and dramatic incident, which should prove a test of the elocutionist's versatility.

Mr. Harris, who has a genuine individuality, should find ample scope for his talent in portraying Kipling's humorously drawn and realistic type of the British soldier. The assisting artists are Mr. Arthur H. Ripley (tenor), Miss Gwyneth Evans (contralto), and the Auckland Highland Pipe Band will also play selections. The box plan is open at Wildman and Arey's.

West's Pictures.
Russia, with its tales of intrigue and exile, war and tyranny, has been a fertile field for the novelist, and now the enterprising film manufacturer seizes it as a setting for a magnificent dramatic story, "The Governor's Daughter." This is a film, which, by the way, is beautifully coloured, has been viewed by West's, and may be seen exclusively at the Royal Albert Hall, where it forms one of the features of a most attractive entertainment.

The Lyric Theatre.
Another very fine programme is being shown at the Lyric Theatre this week and apart from the excellent selection of imported films, special mention must be made of the "Auckland Animated News." This is a really good feature and cannot fail to arouse interest. It includes among a wide variety of interesting topical items "The 24 Hours' Strike," "Explosions at the City Quarries," "Fashions for Men," "Military Snapshots," "A Rough Day in the Harbour," etc. The enterprise of the management in giving local events a place on the programme is a step in the right direction.

Wilde's Comedies.
"The function of the artist is to invent, not to chronicle," Wilde says somewhere; and throughout his entire body of literary work he has carried this theory into practice. Even in drama, where such a maxim, by very nature of things, seems paradoxical, he has persisted in bringing on the stage charac-

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