

THE MAKINGS OF MAX REINHARDT

From Gallery God in Vienna to Assembler of All the Arts in the Theatre That Rivals Grand Opera

By HERMANN BAHR

Author of "The Concert," produced by Belasco in October, 1910, and many other plays.

IT was Max Reinhardt who ended for this generation in Germany the sway of the literary play. He made the theatre, which, for a time, had become the exclusive domain of the art of speaking, once more the common property of all the arts. In this he is a direct follower of Richard Wagner, because each one of his productions is a "Gesamtkunstwerk" (the joint work of all the arts). He has fought the tyranny of the mere word, and prevailed. The theatre is no longer simply the intellectual enjoyment of the "elect"; it appeals to all the senses because it calls into action all the powers inherent in man. "The Miracle," which New York is just seeing, may be called "grand pantomime" after the operatic example.

I have known Max Reinhardt ever since he began his career in Berlin—some twenty years. I have been with him in various and changing relationships, so that I have been able to see him from different sides and in different lights. I was already well known and he just beginning to be known when we first met. I was a dramatic critic at that time. Afterward, he produced some of my plays and I watched him staging them. Later on, he engaged me for a time to stage a few productions. And once we even worked together on the same production. One Summer we spent four weeks together in Venice. We lay for hours on the hot sand of the Lido, and while the waves surged on the shore beside us he staged for me the whole play of "Julius Caesar" with little balls of sand.

Reinhardt is a man of tremendous unity of purpose. At the first glance he seems to be a born impressionist, receptive of every sensation, absorbing everything greedily, inhaling every stimulating breath, but also assimilating it with every fibre of his being, till the fleeting impression is transformed into his own expression. He listens to every one. No one could be a better listener. But he himself is a silent man. He hardly ever contradicts because he has no need to be on the defensive, so firm and strong are his inward convictions as to the message he has to deliver. He can go into any venture calmly because he knows that he will always find his way back to himself with new courage. He winds his way upward in a great spiral, as it were, as sure and confident of himself as a somnambulist.

The first theatre he had when he began his career somewhat resembled a cabaret. Later it was a circus. Then he played in the open in a great public square before masses of people. And finally it was in a Roman Catholic church, one of the most beautiful baroque churches in the world. But in cabaret or circus, in public square or church, he is always the same, the kindly nature with the magic gift of being able to see the hidden meaning behind appearances.

Vienna, the spiritual cradle of this impressionist, is a true theatre city. The delight in dancing and mirth is bred and born in the Austrian. For generations the Austrian peasant has been accustomed to some form of acting. Even the native dance, the "schuhplattler," and the doggerel verse, the "schnadahüpfel," already contain a kernel of the drama. The Church soon took advantage of this inborn love for the theatre, and the result was the Church plays, mimic representations of religious stories, as, for example, "The Birth of Christ," "The Three Kings," "Lazarus and the Rich Man." The Benedictine monks made use of this old custom in the schools, and, on feast days and holidays, tragedies by Seneca were performed in Latin by the pupils before the assembled teachers and the proud and happy parents.

The Jesuits pushed this tradition still further and developed it into something really imposing. The result was the baroque theatre, which had in no sense a private character. It was actually a state affair, a public dramatic festival in honor of the Emperor, given by the highest clergy and nobility. On this occasion every one—author, architect, painter, ac-

tor, lighting mechanic, master of fireworks, dancer, singer, clown—competed in friendly rivalry to show his art to the best advantage. The performances took place out of doors on a stage erected in the largest square of the city. And the whole population, young and old, rich and poor, men and women, were invited to be present.

In the seventeenth century these performances became more and more important, to the grief and vexation of the Minister of Finance, because they cost enormous sums of money. For instance, a single performance for the Emperor Carl VI. ran to the stately figure of 60,000 guilders. Three Hapsburg Emperors—Ferdinand III., Joseph I. and Carl VI., all three passionate musicians also—were so fervently devoted to the

of Louis XIV., that was what the Burg Theater meant to Vienna until about thirty years ago. To obtain a seat at a performance the young people would betake themselves to the theatre at 4 o'clock every afternoon, where they would wait, packed like sardines, until the doors to their paradise were at last opened. The stairs were disposed of breathlessly, three steps at a time, in order to get a "good" place in the gallery, that is, a little corner where, in a precarious position, hanging forward rather than standing, they could snatch a slanting view of the performance.

They knew the plays almost by heart, and when one of the lesser parts was given to a newcomer excitement was at fever heat for days before. For every spectator had the exact intonation in his ear with

enough to buy him the rôle of Salzburg Festival Theater and master of the Castle of Leopoldskron.

Reinhardt brought with him to Berlin, at that time a new theatre city, something that it lacked. For the Berlin to which he came was no longer the Berlin that Bismarck knew, that felt itself content and secure in its old Prussian traditions and its past. Still less was it the romantic Berlin of E. T. A. Hoffmann. No. It was an entirely new Berlin, a city that had shot up overnight and was being impelled forward, ever forward, with a consuming impatience something like Reinhardt's own.

In those days when, of an evening, a few Berliners foregathered to have a good time together, they were hardly seated before they were asking: "Well, what shall we do now?"

It actually seemed as if the entertainment of the evening consisted in dropping into a different café every half hour on an average to discuss the vital question: "Where shall we go from here?" Evidently a real thrill was induced by every change of café. And it was the same way in intellectual matters. If you had seated a Berliner of those days at the altar of any new art, after five minutes he would say: "Well, what shall we do? Where shall we go from here?" And during the twenty years of his sojourn in Berlin Reinhardt was always ready with a prompt answer to this perpetual question.

To begin with, Reinhardt made Berlin into a theatre city again. Not that it had never been so before: it had been, in the time of Iffland. Those were the days when the Hamburg Theater, the Berlin Schauspielhaus and the Vienna Burg Theater vied with each other in importance, in giving the stamp of style and in influence that reached beyond the merely artistic to the moral fibre of the nation. Then came fifty years during which all the talent and all the interest of Berlin became more and more absorbed by politics, and only after the German Empire was completed in the form Bismarck had shaped for it did the Germans gradually remember the duties they owed to art. It was to a moment of such artistic self-introspection that the Deutsches Theater in Berlin owed its being.

The Deutsches Theater was founded in 1884, for national reasons, with perhaps a somewhat jealous glance at the Comédie Française and the Burg Theater. Berlin wished to show that what Paris and Vienna could do she also could do. And by founding the Deutsches Theater she wished to give herself the stamp of legitimacy, so to speak, as the cultural capital of Germany. She forgot, however, that theatres cannot be raised at the word of command, that they must grow gradually, that they need a fine tradition. In Berlin, not only did the theatre lack such a deeply rooted tradition but, above all, it was lacking in the public. In fact, it can be said quite truly that "Berlin lacked a public." A heterogeneous mass of people gathered together in a theatre by chance is not a public. For the actors of the Deutsches Theater of those days the task was made doubly hard, for they had to create for themselves a new public every night.

It might be true to say that Reinhardt's greatest achievement consists in creating a Berlin public. Through that, the theatre, in the highest sense of the word, was made possible again in Berlin. His most beautiful stage settings would not have made half the impression they did if he had not first of all, "staged" a real audience. All truly creative men of the theatre have always held that the theatre does not consist exclusively of authors and actors, but that it can do its work only if and when the audience plays, too. Schröder, in Hamburg, Goethe in Weimar, Iffland in Berlin, Schreyvogel, Laube, Dingelstedt, and finally Burckhard and Mahler in Vienna were not only trainers of their actors; they were also the greatest trainers of their audiences. They created the audience they needed, made of it an instrument so sensitive that they knew they could use it as well as their actors, to give full expression to their art. Therein lies the secret of Reinhardt's phenomenal influence in Berlin, his almost magic power over

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Max Reinhardt.

Drawn by Emil Orlik.

theatre that they sometimes seemed to forget the less diverting duties of governing. These were the great times of the theatre, the times when it was not merely an amusement house but held almost the same proud position of the theatre in Athens at the time of Pericles. In other words, it was a state affair. In any case, it was something that the whole people—the finest courtier as well as the merest vagabond—considered of greater interest than anything else. And these great times, although long since departed, are still alive today; deep down in the secret heart of every Viennese man and woman.

Theatregoing is, for the Viennese, not merely an amusement, a way of passing the time. It is the centre around which their intellectual life revolves. And even to the most frivolous Viennese, who is never serious about anything, the theatre is holy ground.

What Olympia was to Greece, what the circus was to Imperial Rome, what the court life was to the France

which each single word had always been spoken, and woe to the new impersonator if the smallest point missed its expected effect! Bloody and bitter battles were often fought in the Olympus of the Burg Theater. Among the "gods" in the gallery of the Burg Theater in the '90s of the last century was a poor Austrian who had just come to Vienna in search of luck. His name was Max Reinhardt.

At that time Vienna was still so much of a theatre city that, among others, it had a theatre that did not live on the kind patrons who went to the theatre to see, but on the actors who wished to be seen. This theatre was in one of the suburbs, and its manager not only gave his actors no salaries but let them pay him for graciously permitting them to play. Each rôle had its own price. And in this theatre Max Reinhardt played his first part. Schiller's "The Robbers" was the play. The manager demanded cash down, and all the money the young Austrian could command was just

So here was Brahm in Salzburg, and since it was raining, as it generally does in Salzburg, he let himself be persuaded by some friends, out of pure boredom, to go to the theatre to see a much-lauded "star" hero about whom the whole town was raving. After the first scene he had already had enough of the star, but something in the bearing of one of the young actors, cast for a very small rôle caught his attention. The young man was awkward and embarrassed and seemed not yet to be able either to walk or stand on the stage. Yet there was something characteristic and individual about him that pleased Brahm. He sent for the young actor the next day, and engaged him on the spot for the Deutsches Theater in Berlin, never suspecting that the young man would soon be his most dangerous rival and, in fact, would be his successor in the management of the Deutsches Theater. For this awkward young actor of small unimportant parts was none other than Max Reinhardt, now director of the

THE HOUSE OF JAMES MONROE

By DIANA RICE

TWO Italians sat in their junk shop, the shop that had once been the drawing room of James Monroe, fifth President of the United States, eating their lunch of oranges and bread and washing it down with a pale rose-colored liquid.

"Old house," said Tony, following the eyes of the visitor toward the time-stained ceiling. "Ver' ol'!" he added sympathetically and returned to the business of peeling his large yellow orange with the serious attention all Europeans give to their Monday meal.

But Tony and his junk shop are to be swept out of the small red brick house at Prince and Lafayette Streets where the author of the Monroe Doctrine passed the last days of his life. The panes are to be replaced in the fan-topped front door. The sashers are to be dislodged from the dormer windows on the third floor windows commanding Lafayette Street and the towers of lower Manhattan. The fluted columns and pilasters are to be repaired. And another one of New York's historic old homes is to be restored to its old-time dignified beauty. This restoration has been planned by the James Monroe Memorial Association as an appropriate observance of the one hundredth anniversary of the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine and as a fitting monument to the memory of the man who proclaimed it. The association has appealed to the people of America for support in their pious undertaking.

Lonely after the death of his wife,

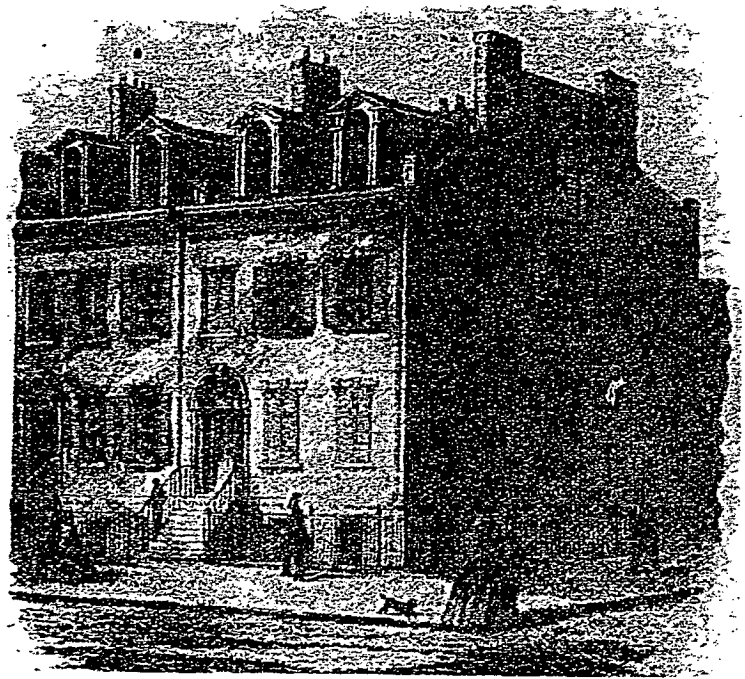
President Monroe left Oak Hill, his Virginia farm, as he used modestly to call it—and came to visit his eldest daughter, Maria, the wife of Samuel I. Gouverneur, then Postmaster of New York. The Gouverneurs had built the house at 63 Prince Street, on property formerly belonging to the Nicholas Bayard estate—a tract originally bounded by the present Broadway, the Bowery, Walker and Prince Streets. But on the death of the elder Bayard much of it passed out of the family's hands, about four hundred lots becoming the property of Philip Livingston. In 1821 Gouverneur bought from Livingston the corner plot at Prince and Lafayette Streets and erected the present dwelling, then considered most palatial.

Here James Monroe lived for many months with his daughter and son-in-law. Lafayette Street was at that time one of the fashionable residence streets of the city and here many of New York's wealthy citizens built their houses. A few of these old brownstone fronts with their iron railings and arched doorways are still to be found along the wide thoroughfare. Well toward the top of the street stood the Astor Library with its pleasant reading room, and close by were the stores where ladies in ruffles and crinolines did their shopping. President Monroe shrank from the thought of leaving the friendliness of New York for the solitude of his Southern home. In a letter written about this time he said:

"My ill health continues, consisting of a cough, which annoys me by

The
Monroe
House
at the
Corner of
Prince and
Lafayette
Streets.

From a
Woodcut
of the
Early
Thirties.



night and by day, considering my advanced years, and renders the restoration to health very uncertain. In such a state I could not reside on my farm. The solitude would be distressing and its care burdensome. It is the wish of both my daughter and of the entire connection that I should remain here and receive their good offices, which I have decided to do."

So at the age of 72, President Monroe set about the business of finding a suitable home for himself in New York City, and at the time of his death was negotiating for the sale of

his place in Virginia and the purchase of land near the Gouverneurs. "I could make no establishment of any kind without the sale of my property in Loudoun (Oak Hill), which I have advertised for sale the eighth of June, and given the necessary power to Mr. Gouverneur and my nephew James. If health will permit I will visit it in the interim and arrange affairs there for that event and my removal here."

But James Monroe never made that visit. He died a few months later on July 4, the second President of the United States to pass away on the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Four years later Samuel Gouverneur sold the hospitable wide-windowed house he had built ten years earlier, and during the past three-quarters of a century it has changed hands some half-dozen times. The house sank into obscurity as the occupants of neighboring dwellings moved uptown. It became the scene of activities remote from the graceful ways when Maria Monroe served tea to her own and her father's friends in the high-ceilinged drawing room now abandoned to heaps of junk. Eventually even the names of its former owners were forgotten. Its identity, in fact, was not revealed to the present generation until 1905, when the Women's Auxiliary of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society placed thereon a bronze tablet. Mrs. Charles Scar-

borough, Chairman of the society, was the person who first learned of the exact location of the house which is now to be converted into one of the city's shrines.

When the job of restoration is finished, it is the plan of the present committee to place in the old house relics, documents and manuscripts relating to the career and life of President Monroe. Not only will the home be a museum for valuable historical data, but it will be used for various activities of national and civic significance. Standing as it does on one of the main routes leading to the east side, where thousands of men, women and children fresh from Europe pass each day, the Monroe House appears to have a strategic importance. Here, accessible and convenient, will be a pleasant place to pass a few hours reviewing an early chapter in our country's history.

James Monroe probably filled more great places in the history of this Government than any other one man. These are set forth on the bronze tablet which is the only mark that now distinguishes the old house from its shabby neighbors: Soldier in the Continental Army, Member of the Continental Congress, American Envoy to Great Britain, France and Spain, Negotiator of the Louisiana Purchase and of the Florida Purchase, Secretary of State, Secretary of War, twice Governor of Virginia, twice President of the United States.

THE MAKINGS OF MAX REINHARDT

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a city otherwise mockingly superior and with little talent for enthusiasm.

Reinhardt brought with him to Berlin what Berlin needed: an old and firmly rooted tradition, while Berlin gave him in exchange the confidence, the quick pulse, the eager daring, the impatience and love of adventure of a young, selfish city willing to take any risks. Only in Berlin could it have been possible to do the work of half a century in about fifteen years.

Reinhardt began in the Kleines Theater on Unter den Linden. There never was a smaller theatre; it could hardly even be called a hall. Nevertheless, the whole of Berlin was forthwith declaring that the only right place for plays was a room. A decade later the same Berlin was declaring that real plays were possible only in a circus. Thus perfectly did Reinhardt and Berlin understand each other. It seemed almost as if the one had been waiting for the other.

On his arrival in Berlin, Reinhardt found a style of acting which had developed since the '80s of the last century, as the result of the war waged by naturalistic Young Germany, under the influence of Antoine and his Théâtre Libre in Paris, against the empty, declamatory Court Theatre manner. This development was hastened through playing Ibsen, Arno Holz and Gerhart Hauptmann's first pieces. The main characteristics of the new style were great objectivity, complete subordination of the actor to the author, and a drab, colorless honesty that went so far as to avoid all dramatic effects. Nevertheless, as a cure for the bad tricks of "virtuosity" and for weaning the actors from meaningless posing, this style turned out to be a blessing for the German stage. And if, at bottom, the result was only negative, still, it cannot be denied that it rendered service by sweeping away abuses and thus making a real art of playing possible again. This style, however, had not, in itself, the strength to create a new art of the theatre in response to the continuous and impetuous demand of the public. In naturalistic plays it was able to cover up its weakness, but when it ventured into the province of the classical drama, its impotence at once became apparent.

In the first years of his career, Reinhardt had been entirely a nat-

uralistic actor, but he had too clear an eye, too much imagination, too much inborn longing for movement, change, surprise, to tolerate for any length of time the monotony and drabness of naturalism. Then unexpected help came to him from quite a different quarter: from the young painters. Everywhere, in the Germany of that time, secessions from the academies were taking place, led by the impressionists. But the latter were soon pushed aside by the impetuous demand for a decorative style. In Munich the "Jugend style" and in Vienna the "Wiener Werkstätte" came into being. A riot of youthful brightness took possession of the homes, and this new colorful scheme of interior decoration was, one might say, the prelude to Reinhardt's stage settings.

This knowledge is the secret of Reinhardt's fame. His work may be summed up in these words: Taking over from Brahm the new naturalistic style of the young modern painters, he gained, by this union of the two arts, a wealth, breadth, and depth of expression that equipped him equally well for the Greek drama and for the classical and naturalistic plays. Not only that: He could stage wordless plays, operas, and operettas by the same methods. Thus he had arrived at the same point as the long-forgotten baroque producers of two hundred years ago.

If his work gives the impression of being startling and new, we must not forget that it is in reality the old baroque tradition of two centuries ago come back to life in him, a tradition that sums up in itself the whole art of the Middle Ages. Even in his first decisive Berlin success—the production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" he had used, as if in a dream, the baroque tradition, having pressed all the arts into the service of the stage and once more freed the theatre from the tyranny of the spoken work, whose slave it had been for at least a hundred years. For the actor had become more and more a mere speaker of words, and blank verse ruled the German stage.

One might almost say that the theatre was no longer a theatre, that it was not there for seeing, but only for hearing words, for listening to the recitation of verses apporportioned among different rôles. For this the actor had to thank the so-called "regular play," which appeared soon after the demise of the

baroque theatre. Contrary to the baroque play, this "regular play" was not one which grew organically out of all the arts and their friendly rivalry. It was, rather, the work of the author alone, the outcome of his poetic conception, entrusted solely to the vehicle of the writer: the spoken word. Briefly, a spoken work. The healthy instinct of the people had always secretly rebelled against the sway of blank verse and the spoken work. And for that reason the people were hardly ever to be seen in the bourgeois theatres, which gradually became more and more exclusive and finally were considered the special property of the "intellectuals" and "high-brows."

SCOTTI'S QUARTER CENTURY OF OPERA

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accepted immediately and wired to Puccini that I would not play Scarpia for him. He was deeply hurt by my brusque message, and the coolness between us was not explained away until two years later, in Paris, where I sang Scarpia with both Puccini and Sardon in front.

"And that is how I came to America in 1899 and made all my warm friends here and missed being the first Scarpia of all!"

There is one thing, over here, which Signor Scotti frankly admits that he hates. "It is what you journalists call 'the personal touch' in interviews! Such questions 'as they ask'! Principally about my being engaged. In twenty-five years I have never ceased to be 'engaged,' according to the American papers; but you see I am not married yet. Please let us have no 'personal touch' in this interview, considering that it is only my twenty-five years of professional work here that I am celebrating."

So I will not betray Signor Scotti with more "personal touch" than to say that although he lives in big hotels, he carries a little "home around with him, made up of personal things—pictures and treasures of his own, many of them of great intrinsic value, many very simple. Foremost among them are the portraits of his mother (to whom he bears a striking resemblance) and his father, and the quaintest picture, to modern eyes, of his grandmother.

There is another entire picture gallery shut away in a portfolio, consisting of many photographs of Scotti in his various rôles. It seems almost incredible that they can be of the same man—for his range of facial expression is marvelous. Many of these pictures were taken without make-up of any kind. Scotti can assume the features of any of his stage characters on demand, sitting in an easy chair in his own drawing room, in his own twentieth century clothes.

"I have never considered myself as a singer only," he explains. "I am also an actor. Acting is quite as essential to an operatic artist as a voice. I like to sing, but I must act at the same time. That is why I have always remained in opera and avoided the concert platform. To stand up in a concert hall and turn myself on like a gramophone and just sing—no! I have refused a lot of money for concert-work, but—" He shrugged his shoulders expressively.

This aversion, now that the Metropolitan no longer goes "trooping," has cut down Signor Scotti's touring to a minimum. But he does not mind it so much as apparently he did when he became an impresario for the sake of seeing America.

In another collection of treasures in a cupboard at the Vanderbilt apartment are his favorite costumes, many of them exquisite affairs. Scotti takes a great interest in his costumes, and insists on their being "just right." He is, indeed, so care-

ful of every detail that it takes him an hour and a half to get into the attire of "Falstaff," which includes so many pads that, according to Scotti, playing the part is almost as good as a Turkish bath.

That is not the only time he has electrified the traditionalists among Metropolitan audiences. On his first appearance here in "La Traviata," he ignored the custom of keeping the hat on at the beginning of the Father's scene with Violetta in order that he might mark his change of attitude toward her, after the first few words, by removing it. There were those who wondered how the politely hatless Scotti would contrive to show his new-born respect when the time came. But to an actor of his ability nothing was simpler; he expressed the change naturally, with his face, his posture, his tone of voice. Afterward he explained to the inquiring press that, "Even under the circumstances a gentleman would hardly keep his hat on in presence of a lady. And when Mme. Sembrich plays Violetta it is doubly impossible!"

To the inevitable question as to his favorite rôles, Scotti finds it difficult to reply. He loves them all so much that it is hard for him to pick out any one that has brought him the most happiness in the playing. He thought a long time before answering:

"Well, let us say Scarpia in 'Tosca,' Falstaff, and the Chinese villain, Chin-Fang, in 'L'Oracolo.' " Certainly his favorites are all great acting as well as singing parts.