

The repertoire of the private opera house currently housed in the "International" Theatre on Nikitskaya Street is tiresome and monotonous. As you already know, the Solodovnikov Theatre, where the troupe previously performed, burned down. With the move to the new premises, the opera's performances have suffered in many ways. Firstly, the stage here is smaller, inconvenient for setting operas; secondly, the acoustics are poor; and thirdly, there are no amenities for the audience. Of course, all this in no way gives us the right to treat the production of operas carelessly, as the management allowed itself to do with Rimsky-Korsakov's "May Night," which premiered on January 30. Our anticipation was great, but our dissatisfaction was no less. Wonderful, typical, full of picturesqueness, humour, realism and fantasy, Rimsky-Korsakov's opera was in many ways unrecognizable. Let's start with the actors, and right away with Chaliapin, in the role of the Head. He came off as some kind of weakened, good-for-nothing old man, already too simple-minded, forever pacing hunched over, with his arms spread out. Such a Head could not have courted the red-cheeked Hanna, could not have said to her, "love me, love me," with such energy as Mr. Shalyapin did. I will say frankly, it would not have hurt the actor to have worked harder on the role, without relying on previously achieved success in the public, ready to applaud their favourite. Mr. Inozemtsev, the singer Levko, was beneath all criticism, especially in the first act. All his luxurious songs, the story about the young lady, were lost and caused a significant protest from those present. In the third act, Mr. Inozemtsev got his bearings and got back into the swing of things. But, in my opinion, the management is to blame for everything: they should monitor the distribution of roles and take care to invite a tenor more suitable for the leading roles. Mr. Brevi sang the clerk, instead of Mr. Bedlevich, who had fallen ill, and played this role very intelligently, not without comedy. Mr. Kassilov, who played Vinokur this time, would have made a very good impression if he hadn't pronounced the letter "o" and hadn't stamped his feet zealously to the song of the young men in the second act. In my opinion, this song should only entice and inflame Vinokur; he should express all this with light body movements, and in no way with dancing. Mr. Sokolov, who performed in Kalenik, was too drunk, exaggerated not only with his acting but also with his voice. Madame Zabela is too heavy for a young lady, and is rather coarse in both her cantilena and her movements. Of all the women on stage, the best was the Head's sister-in-law, Mrs. Selyuk, and Mrs. Lubatovich-Ganna was very sweet, but the latter would have benefited from paying more attention to Levko's story and becoming angrier at the Head's advances. Mrs. Lubatovich's vocal vibrations also harmed the impression. Perhaps, individually, each actor was tolerable, but as an ensemble, they were literally inexperienced. The ensemble was repulsive, especially in the crowd scenes. What the chorus, for example, did—only Allah knows! The singing was out of tune, the voices were out of tune, there was no discipline in the choirmaster's direction, and the choir acted like talentless extras. Overall, the choir this season is outrageous. Things were no better in the orchestra. It was conducted by Mr. Rachmaninoff, still young, but an excellent musician who studies scores. He is too sluggish, and his baton is monotonous. There is hope that he may develop into a delightful conductor. In any case, Mr. Rachmaninoff leads the orchestra and is now a hundred times better than Mr. Esposito, the first conductor of the private opera. There is more softness in his orchestra, although he plays from the shoulder. His tempos are correct, and he has musical phrasing. If I were the director, I wouldn't dare give Russian opera to the untalented Mr. Esposito, when he has such an excellent musician as Mr. Rachmaninoff. One cannot help but wish that the latter would study harder and delve into this new practice. We need conductors with a solid education and great talent. It's worth mentioning that "May Night" was rehearsed again after the first

performance. It doesn't hurt, because at that time it was performed in a downright disgraceful manner, without any attention from the director. [...] Iv. Lipaev

[Translation: Google]

Надоѣдливъ и монотоненъ репертуаръ и частной оперы, пріютившейся въ на-стоящее время въ „интернаціональномъ“ театрѣ, на Никитской. Какъ извѣстно уже вамъ, театръ Солодовникова, гдѣ играла ранѣе труппа, сгорѣлъ. Съ пере-ходомъ въ новое помѣщеніе спектакли оперы во многомъ проиграли. Во-пер-выхъ, здѣсь сцена меньше, неудобна для обстановочныхъ оперъ, во-вторыхъ, плохи и акустическія условія, въ третьихъ, и для публики нѣтъ удобствъ. Конечно, все это нисколько не даетъ права отно-ситься халатно къ постановкѣ оперъ, какъ это позволила себѣ дирекція съ „Майской ночью“ Римскаго-Корсакова, шедшей въ первый разъ 30 января. Пре-велико было ожиданіе наше, но и не меньшее недовольство. Чудная, типич-ная, полная картинности, юмора, реализ-ма и фантастики, опера Римскаго-Корса-кова была во многомъ неузнаваемой. Начнемъ съ артистовъ, и прямо съог. Шаляпина, въ роли Головы. Онъ у него вышелъ какимъ-то разслабленнымъ, ни-куда не годнымъ старичишкой, уже слиш-комъ простоватымъ, вѣчно разхаживаю-щимъ согбенно, съ растопыренными ру-ками. Такой Голова не могъ ухаживать за краснощекой Ганной, не могъ рить ей „полюби, полюби меня“ съота-кой энергіей, какъ то дѣлалъ г. Шаля-пинъ. Скажу откровенно, не мѣшало бы артисту посильнѣе заняться обработкой роли, не надѣясь на ранѣ созданный успѣхъ въ публикѣ, готовой апшлудиро-вать своему любимцу. Ниже всякой кри-тики былъ г. Иноземцевъ, пѣвшій Левко, гово особенно въ первомъ актѣ. Всѣ его рос-кошныя пѣсни, рассказъ про панночку, пропали и вызвали значительный про-тестъ присутствовавшихъ. Въ третьемъ актѣ г. Иноземцевъ освоился и вошелъ въ колею. Но, на мой взглядъ, во всемъ - виновна дирекція: она должна слѣдить -за распредѣленіемъ ролей, позаботиться и о приглашеніи тенора, болѣе пригод-наго на первыя партіи. Писаря, вмѣсто заболѣвшаго г. Бедлевича, пѣлъ г. Бреви, и провелъ эту роль очень осмысленно, не безъ комизма. Игравшій на этотъ разъ Винокура г. Кассиловъ произвелъ совсѣмъ бы хорошее впечатлѣніе, если бы не произносилъ на букву „о“ и не притопывалъ рьяно подъ пѣсню паруб-ковъ во второмъ актѣ. На мой взглядъ, эта пѣсня должна Винокура только лишь подмывать, разжигать, онъ долженъ все - это выразить легкими тѣлодвиженіями, а никакъ не приплясомъ. Г. Соколовъ, вы-ступившій въ Каленикѣ, слишкомъ былъ пьянъ, утрировалъ не только игрою, но и голосомъ. Для панночки г-жа Забѣла слишкомъ грузна, грубовата и въ канти-ленѣ, и въ пластикѣ. Изъ женщинъ на сценѣ всѣхъ лучше была свояченица го-ловы, г-жа Селюкъ, и очень мила г-жа Любатовичъ-Ганна, только этой послѣд-ней не мѣшало бы болѣе внимательно отнестись къ рассказу Левка, посердитѣ къ приставаніямъ Головы. Впечатлѣнію вредила и голосовая вибрація г-жи Люба-товичъ. Пожалуй, въ отдѣльности каждый - артистъ еще былъ и терпимъ, но въ ан-самблѣ буквально не нашлось у нихъ опыта. Ансамбль былъ отвратительный, особенно же въ массовыхъ сценахъ. Что, напр., выдѣлывалъ хоръ, — одному только Аллаху извѣстно! Въ пѣніи слышалась фальшь, голоса вступали невпопадъ, не слышно было никакой дисциплины въ постановкѣ хормейстера, а въ игрѣ хоръ напоминалъ бездарныхъ статистовъ. Во-обще въ нынѣшнемъ сезонѣ хоръ возму-тительный. Не лучше обстояло дѣло и въ оркестрѣ. Имъ дирижировалъ г. Рах-маниновъ, еще молодой, но отлично изу-чающій партитуру музыкантъ. Онъ слиш-комъ вялъ, въ палочкѣ его однообразіе. Есть надежда, изъ него, можетъ быть, вырабатается прелестный капельмейстеръ. Во всякомъ случаѣ, г. Рахманиновъ ве-детъ оркестръ и теперь въ сотни разъ лучше г. Эспозито, перваго капельмей-стера частной оперы. У него въ орке-стрѣ больше мягкости, хотя онъ и

играетъ съ плеча. У него вѣрны темпы, есть музыкальная фразировка. На мѣстѣ дирекціи, русскія оперы я не отважился бы давать бездарному г. Эспозито, когда имѣется у нея такой отличный музыкантъ, какъ г. Рахманиновъ. Нельзя, однако, не пожелать, чтобы и сей послѣдній усерднѣе занимался и вникалъ въ новую для него практику. Намъ нужны дирижеры съ солиднымъ образованіемъ и большимъ талантомъ. Говорятъ, „Майскую ночь“, послѣ перваго представленія, перерепе-тировали снова. Не мѣшаетъ, ибо тогда шла она прямо-таки безобразно, безъ всякаго вниманія со стороны режиссера.