

Gramme

MONDAY, JULY 11

- 6.00-The Angelus, 6.01-Huckleberry Hound, 6.30-News, 6.40-Outlook, 6.45-Adventure, 7.15-World Cup Soccer-Opening Game, England v. Uruguay, 8.15-Jack Benny, 8.45-News, 10.05-Late Extra, 10.15-The Idiot, Dostoevsky, by Fyodor, 11.00-Nuacht, 11.05-Late News, 11.10-Closedown.

TUESDAY, JULY 12

- 6.00-The Angelus, 6.01-Gumby, 6.05-Notre Ville, 6.30-News, 6.40-Outlook, 6.45-The Legend of Jesse James, 7.15-Quickilver, 7.45-Break House, by Charles Dickens, 8.15-12th July, 8.45-The Rogues, 8.45-News, 10.05-Late Extra, 10.15-Cross Country, 10.45-World Cup Soccer-Highlights, Bulgaria v. Brazil, 11.45-Nuacht, 11.50-Late News, 11.55-Closedown.

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Limerick Tenor who won world Fame

THE centenary of the birth of the celebrated Limerick tenor, Joseph O'Mara, will occur on Thursday next, July 16. His versatility was remarkable, but he excelled particularly in tragic roles, and he had, too, a rare histrionic ability. The O'Mara Opera Company, which he formed in 1912, made a number of visits to Limerick, and its appearances here were always warmly welcomed by the citizens. O'Mara recordings are now collectors' items and an offer of £50 was recently refused for one of his discs. The following interesting account of Joseph O'Mara's long and brilliant career is written by Robert Patterton.

As befitted a well-known and celebrated "Myles na Coppelain" in Benedict's "Lily of Killarney," Joseph O'Mara, the famous Irish operatic tenor, was born in Limerick. The date was July 16, 1866, and he was the son of James O'Mara, High Sheriff. Discovering early he had a remarkable voice, he wisely went to Italy for training in 1889, remaining several years. His retirement from the operatic stage only came in 1936, his voice then being unusually well preserved despite his age. This was, no doubt, the result of his Italian training in correct voice production.

HISTRIONIC TALENT

There are not so many operatic artists who win as much fame for their acting as for their voices. Joseph O'Mara was one of these. Calvé was another. She was once asked if she had the great misfortune to lose her voice what would she do? "Leave opera at once for the dramatic stage," she replied. I think the same would very likely have been O'Mara's answer had he been asked for the term "singing-actor" describes the artist. In such roles as "Giano" (Pagliacci), "Don Jose" (Carmen) and "Elezzer" (La Juive) his acting thrilled one. In his last role O'Mara always received an overwhelming ovation, and a splendid opera though "La Juive" is, it was the tenor's delineation of "Elezzer" that was the great attraction and always drew the public when the opera was produced.

COMEDY

Returning from Italy, O'Mara was quickly taken up on the concert platform as well as in Sir Augustus Harris's opera seasons. An early success was in Sullivan's "Ivanhoe." Coming to Ireland in 1893 with "The Mapleson troupe he sang in "Carmen" with Gullia Ravogli and in other operas. Later, he was the first "Mike Murphy" in Stanford's "Shamus O'Brien," partnered by Madam Kirkby-lunn. Like many artists who excel in tragic roles, Joseph O'Mara could also bring in full measure the greatest comedy to light roles such as this one also "Myles" in "The Lily of Killarney." Sir Charles Stanford tells in his memoirs how he himself was once conducting "Shamus O'Brien" and O'Mara suddenly, without warning, introduced so much unrehearsed comedy into one scene that he himself could not hold the baton properly he began to shake so much from laughter. Quite out of control he laid his baton down and stopped conducting and so he ceased the orchestra, who now stood up to see what was happening on stage. The audience also joined in the laughter and only when the uproar had subsided could the opera proceed.

MOODY MANNERS

During the early 1900's O'Mara became a leading dramatic tenor with the Moody Manners Company, with whom he remained until he formed his own company (1912). With Moody Manners he created "Elegy" in "Giocconda" (April, 1908) for the Irish premiere with Blanche Marchesi in the title role. In 1908 he was the first Irish "Rudolph" (Bohème). Later same year he made a very successful American concert tour, back again with Moody Manners. He was the first Irish "Cavardossi" (Tosca) in 1910. This season was also notable for the Irish premiere of "Samson and Delilah" with Zelle de Lussac partnering O'Mara. This had a very big success and an alternative cast featured Philip Brozil and Bessie Weir. What a fine company was Moody Manners, with the very best of British singers as well as many overseas artists!

From Germany came Herr Richard Eckhold, the Wagnerian conductor, bringing with him Toni Selter as leading mezzo, who "grappled bravely" with the English words (Irish Times) of "Auzena" and "Amneris" (Aida), in which John Coates sang "Radames". Another conductor was the Italian Signor Sapio, his wife, Madame De Vere Sapio, late of the New York Metropolitan, shared leading soprano leads with Fanny Moody. Philip Brozil was an outstanding Dutch tenor, whilst two French mezzos, Rosina Beynon and Zelle de Lussac, the last a Carmen of world renown, also sang with the company.

OPERAS

O'Mara opened his first Irish season with "The Huguenots" in which (1913) he sang "Raoul". From that time until his retirement, he produced many operas of the beaten track, such as "Mignon", "Masked Ball", "Orfeo", "La Wally" (Catalani), "Tristan", Mozart's "Seraglio" (first performance in Ireland, as was the Catalani and Kiendl's "Der Evangelmann", as well as Puccini's "Manon Lescaut").

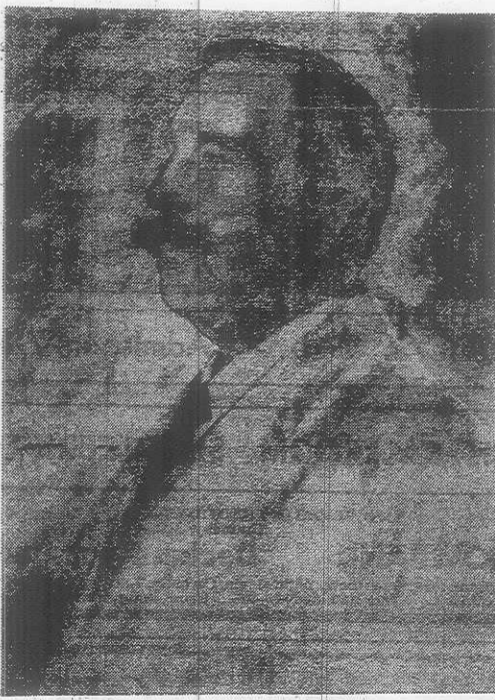
In lighter vein there was the success one season of three Balke operas: "The Furian's Daughter", "The Rose of Castle" and "The Bohemian Girl", which induced O'Mara to say in his farewell speech that next season he would give a "Balke Festival" for one whole week. This project, however, did not

materialise and the proposed other unfamiliar Balke operas were not heard. Seldom has the music of Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet" been so well sung as by O'Mara, though he put of fact his voice was more remarkable for his great gift of colouring to fit every different emotion than for its actual beauty of tone. He could bring a great depth of pathos to the old Irish melodies which was quite unforgettable, but the abiding memory of him is as a singing actor and the ability to dramatise through his voice every facet of the opera in which he sang. A gift rare enough among leading artists. The great singer died in Dublin on August 5, 1927.

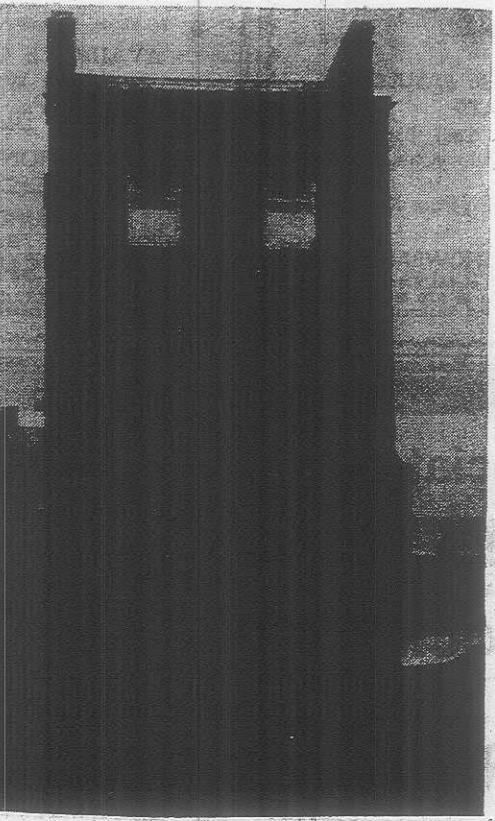
COLLEAGUES

Other colleagues of Joseph O'Mara in the Moody Manners Company were Olive Westwood, a leading contralto, happily alive, and the grandmother of our well-known "pop" star, Brendan Bowyer. Albert Bowyer was also a star tenor with the company, as was John Child who, after he ceased touring in opera, came often as top of the bill of Dublin's Tivoli Theatre (now the "Irish Press" office).

It is a matter of the greatest regret that the gramophone was only in its infancy when O'Mara was at the peak of his career. Only a handful of records remain and they are extreme rarities, notably "Ochone, When I Used To Be Young,"



Joseph O'Mara, from an oil painting in the Municipal Art Gallery.



Ozanam House, Limerick, where Joseph O'Mara was born in July, 1866.

from "Shamus O'Brien," and in which O'Mara sang the tenor lead at their Dublin premieres were "Ethne" (Robert O'Dwyer), 1910, and "Shaun The Post" (Dermot Mac Murrugh), 1924.

LAST CONCERT

JOSEPH O'MARA's last public appearance in Limerick was a grand concert in the Lyric Theatre on February 28 and March 1, 1927. The concert was held to commemorate the Sept. Centenary of the Limerick foundation of the Dominican Order, and in addition to Joseph O'Mara the artists were Miss Joan Bourke, Mr. J. C. Doyle, Mrs. J. Hartigan, Mrs. J. C. Griffin, Miss Erica King, Miss Marie Prendergast, Miss G. Lyddy, Mr. M. Quilligan, Mr. E. Hartney, Mr. T. Spencer, Mr. E. J. Bourke, with Hermann Piltzer, solo violinist.

The orchestra was conducted by Henri C. Begas and the members were: Piano, Miss N. O'Dea; 1st violins, Mrs. J. Geary, Misses N. Blackall, P. O'Donnell, E. Cantillon, Mr. Hermann Piltzer; 2nd violins, Miss M. Meade, Miss J. Kelly, Messrs. J. Kelly, T. Smalle, O. Dinneen; cello, Miss A. Hanrahan, Mr. D. Lanigan; double bass, fiddle, Mr. T. O'Donovan; oboe, Mr. B. Dillon; euphonium, Mr. E. O'Reilly; horns, Mr. J. Riordan, Mr. M. Kennedy; cornets, Mr. S. Prendergast, Mr. P. Whelan; trombones, Mr. P. Benson, Mr. J. Prendergast, Mr. O'Davern; tuba, Mr. O'Loughlin; drums, Mr. D. O'Donnell; bells, Mr. D. O'Donnell; Fitzgerald.

record by an American collector O'Mara in 1908 made a very successful concert tour of U.S.A. Alas that the present generation are deprived of hearing this great Irish singer. Two completely Irish operas

PRESS COMMENTS

Some Press comments on O'Mara's appearances in New York in 1908 are as follows: "New York Herald."—"If there is any man or woman in New York who was born in Ireland, or whose ancestors were Irish, or who ever was in Ireland, that man or woman ought to go to the Broadway Theatre and see and listen to Mr. Joseph O'Mara's presentation of Mr. Patrick Bidwell's new romantic musical comedy, 'Peggy Macree', presented for the first time in the city last night. 'The Tribune'—"Before the curtain was up ten minutes, Mr. O'Mara had won his audience with his fine singing of 'The Ould Plaid Shawl' and when he sang Moore's tender melody of 'Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms' the applause was tremendous. In the second act he sang 'The Exile's Return' and 'The Birds Fly South'. The triumph of the night came when he sang with fine spirit the old martial song of 'The West's Awake'. These songs are the pride of the nation. They are historic and so have a deep significance for intelligent Irishmen. What wonder then that the assemblage cheered O'Mara again and again. He responded with 'The Wearing of the Green', which he sang only as a good singer and a good Irishman can sing it." "New York Press."—"Gallery and orchestra went into ecstasies when the star set out his rich top notes in a sentimental solo about 'The Ould Plaid Shawl'. This was early in the first act and it established O'Mara as one of the best ballad singers that Broadway has ever heard. Naturalness and felicity mark his method. The singer reached deep into every regular weekly or monthly income whilst you are absent from work due to sickness or accident. A POLICY which enables a self-employed person to provide his own pension at retirement. Full Income Tax Relief on annual premium. (Pension can commence at age 60 if desired.) for a parent to meet the expense incurred in providing university or higher education for son or daughter. A POLICY which completely clears your house mortgage in the event of your death. A POLICY which gives you Comprehensive Fire Cover on your house and contents. A POLICY which compensates you against loss, accidental damage, fire and theft, to jewellery, valuable trophies, cameras, etc. A POLICY which provides the Holidaymaker with insurance cover against accident and sickness, loss of baggage, loss of money, medical and additional expenses. A POLICY which gives you the lowest Motor Insurance premium rate obtainable. Up to 40% No Claim Bonus allowed. You can save a considerable amount of Income Tax now by investing your £1 a week salary increase in a worthwhile Profit Assurance Policy for any selected term of years. Phones: Limerick 45815/47670

New York Sun—"Joseph O'Mara's clear yet strong tenor voice is a delight to hear. He sings with an apparent love of the music which makes it all the more enjoyable and with a patriotic intensity." "New York Evening Herald"—"He is the true tenor; something of the rosy sweetness of the clarinet, sweetens without cloying his voice."

Junior soccer

- SUNDAY, JULY 10 Limerick Youth League: Hyde Rvs. v. Limerick "C", Caledonian Park, 11 a.m.; C. Barry. Prospect Ath. v. Weston Rgs., Caledonian Park, 12.45; P. Rockett. Fairview Rgs. v. Strand Utd., Fairgreen, 1.30 a.m.; A. Shaw. TUESDAY, JULY 11 Fr. Lyons Cup (semi-final): Janesboro' Utd. v. St. Michael's or Star Rvs. Stadium in Phear-saigh, 7.30; P. J. Meagher. WEDNESDAY, JULY 13 Prospect Ath. v. Strand Utd., Caledonian Park, 7.30 p.m.; P. J. Meagher. Strand Utd. v. Limerick "C", Shelbourne Park, 7.30 p.m.; E. Cleary. Fairview Rgs. v. Dominic S., Fairgreen, 7.30; J. Hartigan. THURSDAY, JULY 14 Limerick Youth League: Weston Rgs. v. Ballynanty Rvs., Caledonian Park, 7.30 p.m.; C. Barry. Pike Rvs. v. Janesboro' Utd., Fairgreen, 7.30; P. J. Meagher. FRIDAY, JULY 15 Final of the Fr. Lyons Memorial Cup at Stadium in Phear-saigh, 7.30 p.m.

INTER-FIRM FIXTURES

- SATURDAY, JULY 9 The Barrack Field. 2.30-B League (2): Danus B v. E. B. O'Connor. 7.00-B League (1)-Shannon Foundry v. S. Spinners; E. B. Cleary. 8.15-D League (1): I.A.W.S. v. Dalton Printing Co.; E. B. Cleary, Fairgreen Park. 3.45-C League: Progress B v. S.P.S. B; T. Kennedy. 7.00-B League (2): Shannon Dyers v. Callins Int; T. Kennedy, Cals. Park. 2.30-B League: Port Workers v. May Roberts; P. O'Connor. 3.45-B League: L.G.O. v. Rippen; P. Rockett. 5.00-A League: Ranks v. J. McMahon's; P. Rockett. 7.00-A League: Danus A v. Cement; P. J. Meagher. 8.15-D League (1)-M. McMahon's v. Krups; P. J. Meagher. FEARS STADIUM. 5.30-Progress Cup semi-final Progress A v. S.P.S. A; P. Kiely. MONDAY, JULY 11 Fairgreen Park. 8.15-D League (2): Post Office (Henry St.) v. Intercontinental Hotel; C. Barry. Cals. Park. 8.15-A League: Ranks v. Clover Meats; A. Shaw. TUESDAY, JULY 12 Fairgreen Park. 7.00-C League: Crescent C. v. Progress B; A. Shaw. 8.15-B League: May Roberts v. Post Office (Eng.); A. Shaw. Cals. Park. 7.00-C League: E.I. A v. A.E.D.; P. Kiely. 8.15-A League: L.O.C. v. Progress A; P. Kiely. Shels Park. 7.00-B League: Printers v. Rippen; E. B. Cleary. 8.15-D League (1): Krups v. S. Foundry; P. J. Meagher.

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