

Opera Society Remembers O'Mara

MEMORIES of the great Limerick operatic tenor, Joseph O'Mara, were recalled on Thursday last when at a very pleasant ceremony a plaque erected to his honour by the Limerick Choral and Operatic Society was unveiled at Ozanam House by the Mayor of Limerick, Alderman G. E. Russell.

Members of the O'Mara family were present, and were welcomed by Mrs. Frances Con-dell, President of the Society. Subsequently, with the spon-sors, guarantors and members of the Press, they were guests of the Society at a special re-ception in Cruise's Hotel.

The Mayor, in the course of a most interesting address after the ceremony, said that Joseph O'Mara was one of Ireland's greatest operatic figures and one of Limerick's most dis-tinguished sons. He studied in Milan under famous teachers, and at the early age of 25 sang a very important role in the English Opera House.

O'Mara was at once recognised as an artiste of great skill and power, with a striking gift for dramatic interpreta-tion.

In 1893 his growing reputation came under notice of the celebrated Sir Augustine Har-ris, and under his patronage he toured Ireland during the following three years.

From this stage onwards his career for many years was a record of unbroken successes. At Denny Lane and Covent Garden his delightful voice drew thousands of music lovers, many of them were astonished to find an Irish-man superseding the Italian celebrities.

In the English concert world, then occupied by the greatest singers of the day, he achieved further fame and enjoyed the distinction of having songs specially writ-ten for him by some of the principal composers.

He became leading tenor with the Moody Manners Opera Company, with which he toured extensively in Ireland.

In 1912 his fame was consoli-dated by the establishment of the O'Mara Opera Company, with which he was leading tenor and managing director. He retired from the operatic stage in 1926.

Thursday's ceremony marked the 40th anniversary of O'Mara's death, and the open-ing of the Limerick Choral and Operatic Society's Festi-val of Grand Opera. At the Savoy Theatre, "La Boheme" will be presented on Novem-ber 15 and 17, and "La Traviata" on November 16 and 18. International guest artistes have been engaged for the performances.