

GREAT OPERA DAYS IN LIMERICK RECALLED

ONE of the great operatic eras in Limerick, spanning over a decade from 1957 to the late sixties, was recalled recently when Ann Lynch, a member of one of Limerick's most musical families, visited in England Pauline Tinsley, a star of that memorable period.

Ann, a chorus member of the Opera Society in those first-rate productions, formed a friendship with Pauline that has remained steadfast ever since and she and the well-known English soprano have exchanged visits several times over the years.

Pauline, who with such as Stuart Burrowes, Thomas Round, Gerald Davies, etc., were but some of the then young artistes whom the Limerick Operatic and Choral Society helped to set on the road to highly successful careers, sang in Wexford last year and this is what critic Rodney Miles wrote in the English publication *Opera* about her performance:

"The performance of *KönigsKinder* raised two questions. First, why is this glorious work not in the repertory of a dozen German opera houses, let alone one of ours? Can we afford to ignore music of such extraordinary beauty? And can there be a more senseless undervalued artist than Pauline Tinsley, who sang the Witch? Were she German, she would be would be a Kammer-sangerin four times over, and were our own land less block-headly oblivious to native talent, she would have been a Dame years ago.

"Dramatic sopranos of such natural gifts do not grow on trees: that we should have to



Pauline Tinsley

travel abroad to hear her *Kindry* or her *Isolde*, and that her appearances here over the last decade should have been limited to *Mere Marie* in the last revival of *The Carmelites* and her unforgettable *Farberin* in the WNO *Frau ohne Schatten*, which was for too long ago, together amount to national scandal. Bravo to Elaine Padmore, Wexford's artistic director, for engaging her."

Premier

The Limerick Choral and Operatic Society was formed in 1957 and from then on to

the late sixties produced all the great operas and was recognised with the Dublin event, as the premier festival of its kind in the country. Some wonderful performances were heard in those years at the then City Theatre and Savoy from such artistes William Dickie, Stanislav Pieczora, to mention but two great characters fondly remembered by the now older generation of music lovers.

Local artistes, also, in plenty, had their moments of glory on stage throughout those years. Sadly, poor seat occupancy plus huge costs, saw the end of that great era at the

approach of the seventies.

Tutor

Ann Lynch, who lives in Park Gardens, and who was a former champion Irish dancer, was present at one of Pauline Tinsley's practice sessions this year with her Italian tutor, Edwardo Aquerra. "He said Pauline, who is in her fifties, still had the voice of a 25-year-old."

● A reunion of the Operatic Society was held recently in Athlunkard. Organised by Jim Graham, a former chorus member, the evening proved a nostalgic but enjoyably musical one for those who attended.



Pauline



At a Bells Scotch Whisky reception in C (Firzgeralds), Michael Collins, president Association; Bill Gallagher (Bells),