



Mlle. Demougeot

Mr. Journet

At the Opera

THEATERS

During the winter season the number of Theatres open in Paris is legion and the bills change with a rapidity confusing to even the most alert play-goer. Only a few, however, are apt to appeal to the foreign visitor, who wishes to make the most of his time and to have an idea of the French theatre at its best rather than a mere knowledge of the multiplicity and variety of its activities at a given moment. During the summer season by contrast perhaps seventy five per cent of the houses are dark, but among those remaining open are the four great state subventioned institutions the Opera, the Opera Comique, the Comédie Française and the Odéon. From their combined programmes at almost any moment one can select a group of spectacles which will give a very fair idea of French opera and French plays, modern and contemporary as well as classical.

The Opera like so many other important artistic institutions in France was founded in the time of the Grand Monarque. The magnificent though not entirely satisfactory building in which it is now housed dates, however, only from the end of the Second Empire. Its architect, Charles Garnier intended that it should be the most splendid edifice of its sort in the world for many years to come, an intention which has been fully realized.

Before the War, going to the Opera was one of the great social rites of Paris. On subscribers' night, Friday,

(1) A detailed review of the most artistic theaters will be founded in "*Prismatic Paris*".

the whole fashionable life of the country seemed to center at the great lyric theatre. The more than four years of fatiguing effort to maintain France's national existence broke the even tenor of all this, people were shaken out of many pleasant habits of an easier time, Friday opera among them, and it is only now that there is a marked tendency to return to them. Friday has, of course, always remained subscribers' night, but the subscriptions had fallen off or changed hands and the signs of a restoration of the old order are still too recent to estimate the probable consequences.

M. Rouché, the director of the Opera, is a man of enterprise and determined to leave nothing to chance. To hasten the day when the Opera shall again be social axis of the fashionable life of Paris, he has revived the bals and carneval which contributed so much to its glory in the time of the kingdom and the empire. Already his efforts have been decidedly successful and they promise to be even more so in the future since there is an irresistible logic in their favour. No other institution exists, and it would be difficult to create one, capable of focussing the fashionable life not only of France but of all Europe as the Opera did in the time of its greatest popularity.

Considered from the artistic viewpoint alone the Opera is as important as ever. Its repertory is enormous, yet one has never long to wait for the opportunity to see the real classics. While maintaining on the boards the very popular pieces old or new, M. Rouché finds the means of reviving neglected chefs d'oeuvre and of presenting the best recent works of living composers. Since the War for example he has, to speak only of the most important in each category, given back to Paris Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* and staged very magnificently M. Vincent d'Indy's *Légende de Saint Christophe*.

The Opera Comique is not so different from the Opera as its name might lead one to suppose. While in general favoring a slightly lighter type of music it has not hesitated before works as lofty as the *Orphee* of Gluck, revived recently with a tenor in the principal role for the first time in a hundred years. There seems to be no marked tendency to revive the 18th century conception of the functions of the Opera Comique at the present moment, though some critics openly decry its over seriousness.

Although never so great a feature of the fashionable life of Paris as the Opera, the Opera Comique has also its subscribers and has perhaps held them more firmly through good and bad times than its rival. Its repertory is if anything the more fixed of the two. Certain pieces,

Manon, Werther, Carmen, La Tosca to name but four, are so popular as to leave but little place on the bill for newer works. Like the Opera the Comique has a large staff of prominent singers, the majority of them trained in the National Conservatory and at the same time extends the hospitality of its stage to the greatest foreign artistes, who may be for the moment at Paris.

The **Comédie Française** has long been considered the first theatre of the world. Like the Opera it dates from the time of Louis XIV and is very appropriately referred to as "the House of Moliere". The comedies of that great writer and the heroic tragedies of Racine and Corneille are never absent from its programme of the week. The *thursday* matinees especially arranged for the school children always feature the great national classics.

In a similar manner the plays of the most famous romantic writers of the last century Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset hold a permanent place of honor. Yet there remains time for intermediate writers and for many contemporary works.

The diction of the Comedie Francaise is a matter of French national pride as are its other traditions of acting. The effective reading of verse has always been greatly appreciated in France and the poetic matinees at the Comedie Francaise are an unique feature of the intellectual life of Paris.

To have one's work accepted for production at the great theatre is for the playwright like a foretaste of immortality and often an author consents to wait years for a first performance rather than give a piece to a private producer, once he has been assured that it will be mounted at the great state theatre.

In Wintertime tuesdays evenings abonnements are considered as the most select.

The **Odeon** on the Left Bank opposite the Garden of the Luxembourg is likewise state-subsventionned and is usually referred to be as the "Second French Theatre". It caters largely to a student public and has a repertory practically identical with that of the Comedie Francaise. It recruits its acting personnel in the same manner and many of the great stars of the larger theatre have made their debut on its stage. Recently the Odeon has passed under the direction of M. Firmin Gemier an actor-manager of world-wide reputation, whose methods differ considerably from those of the majority of his predecessors

Under M. Gemier's administration the Odeon has become particularly hospitable to foreign plays. Shakespeare seems destined to be only a little less popular

there than Corneille, Racine and Molière; and contemporary Scandinavian, Italian, Spanish, English and American authors are having for the first time the satisfaction of seeing their plays presented in France under a species of governmental patronage. Going even further M. Gémier has actors to appear upon his stage, notably the great American tragedian, Mr. James K. Hackett, and has secured the aid of various organizations abroad, the Drama League of America for instance, in the choosing of representative contemporary works for the Odeon's repertory.

The **Théâtre des Champs Elysées** is a remarkable specimen of advanced contemporary architecture and may be said to be the most beautiful theatre in Paris. Its uniu location in Paris within a few minutes walk from the Champs-Elysees, is itself an attraction. Of practically the same dimensions as the Opera, it includes an immense auditorium, the Théâtre des Champs-Elysees properly speaking, and a much smaller one, the Comedie des Champs-Elysées destined for concerts of chamber music, small performances of visiting companies, matinees of esthetic dancing and other spectacles requiring no great amount of stage.

M. Jacques Hébertot, director of both houses has an entirely international conception of the theatre as an institution and draws upon the entire world for his programmes. He believes also in alternating music and the drama and each week during the season turns over the larger of the auditoriums to the Padeloup Orchestra.

Among the foreign companies which have appeared recently in Paris as M. Hébertot's guests are the Moscow Art Theatre, the Theatre Kamerny also of Moscow, the famous Swedish Ballet of M. Jean Borlin, the Shakespeare Players of London, Signor Zacconi's Italian dramatic company, M. Pitoeff's Franco-Russian Players, the young dancers of Miss Loie Fuller, the Duncan sisters, and the Russian and Ukranian Choire.

Every foreigner who remains for any time in Paris visits sooner or later the Théâtre des Champs-Elysees.

M. S. GOLDMANN.



Refer to the **Alphabetical Index**
at the end of the book for
PRACTICAL INFORMATION, concerning theaters
(booking, programmes, cars, buses etc.).



ARTISTIC CAFES

Paris, from the time of Francois Villon, and possibly from a much earlier date has boasted a series of wine-shops and cafés which have acted as the true intellectual centers not only of French creative genius, but also of the genius of most of the world. Like everything else in this world of changes, these centers are continually on the rise or the wane, and the waning process being completed, are frequently being replaced by new-comers.

Gone is the *old Vachette* on the Boulevard St-Michel, once the rendez-vous of poets, painters, and dilettantes. The *Closeries des Lilas* has faded, although an attempt is being made to restore it to some of its former glory. As the invasion of modern life and activity drives the artists further and further from the Ile de la Cite, the old gathering places have been obliged to give way to new ones which accidentally find themselves in the geographical center of the artist colonies.

The foremost of the artistic cafes of Paris to-days is **Le Caméléon**, 146 Boulevard Montparnasse. This cafe with its air of a village auberge and its large chameleon climbing along its walls has nothing of the wax-work exposition for foreigners of a ten-day tour. There the tourist will receive a nod of welcome from the courteous though intensely busy poet, Alexandre Mercereau, and he will have the privilege of sitting through an intensely serious lecture on one of the younger french poets or schools of poetry. In any case, he may feel sure that what he saw was genuine and in no way a catch-penny for the uninitiated.

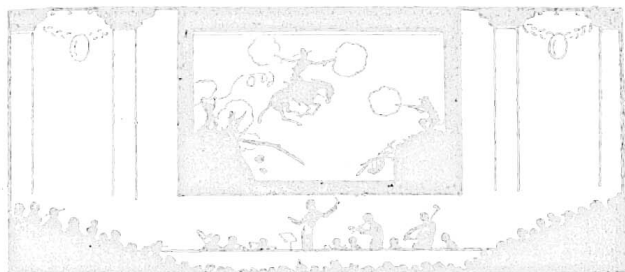
The Lapin Agile, 4 rue des Saules, in one of the most picturesque part of Montmartre, is now a pilgrimage for tourists. The white-bearded proprietor, with its guitar and its songs of old France and old Montmartre is still there, but Haschisch has given way to maraschino cherries: poets have gallantly yielded their chairs to American ladies from Kinoshia, Wis., U.S.A. but the Lapin Agile still remains a point of interest.

On the other side of the river, the twin cafes on the opposite corners of the Boulevards Raspail and Montparnasse are chiefly known as the haunts of the international colony of artists who inhabit the new Latin quartier.

The Rotonde, 105 Bard. Montparnasse. Tél. Ségur 26-82, is the most famous of all the "quartier".

Ramon GUTRHIE.





CINEMA

Motion pictures are so nearly uniform throughout the world that the visitor will need but little introduction to the cinema in Paris. Charlie Chaplain, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and the other stars of this newest art are as familiar to the Parisian public as they are to their compatriots: all the latest American or European films are shown in Paris shortly after their release in the countries of their origin. In fact, thanks to this means of intellectual commerce, the average French child has an intimate acquaintance with the American in his native haunts and can follow him step by step throughout his workaday life, from the moment when he wakes in the morning and jumps from his tenth story window to the back of a galloping horse until, having thrown the sleek-haired villain off the cliff, he fades out in the summer twilight with the heroine in his arms through a hundred celluloid feet of kiss.

Unfortunately French productions are comparatively rare. French actors, on the screen as on the stage, are infinitely superior to their American rivals; but French producers do not seem to take their profession as seriously as it is taken on the other side of the Atlantic. Nevertheless, with such triumphs as the film versions of "Tartarin sur les Alpes", "Les Trois Mousquetaires", and "Vingt Ans Après" to its credit, the future of the French motion picture industry seems assured.

The finest, and most select, place for moving pictures in Paris, is the **Colisée** 38 Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Tel: Elysee 29. 46 — It usually begins as 8.30. Closed in August & September.

Buses C — AC — AQ.

Tram-cars 28—33.



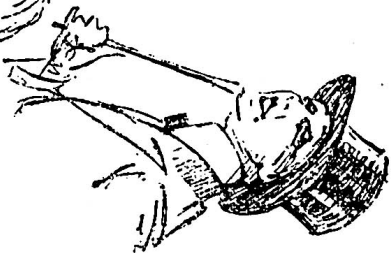
Mistinguet



Maurice Chevalier



Spinelly



Renée Fagan

Cliché Marin.



OF CERTAIN MUSIC-HALLS

Whether the music hall owes its advance as a form of entertainment to the artistic excellence of the revues that certain producers have put forth of recent years or simply to the disgust that the public has come to feel toward the puerile romanticism and the unreal "realism" of the modern legitimate theatre, is hard to say. One thing is certain — that no form of dramatic art has a more deserved success to-day than the music hall.

To the foreign visitor, particularly if his French has fallen into disrepair, the music halls of the capital will have a particular interest. Nowhere in the world has this form of entertainment been brought to as high a point of perfection as in Paris. In the matter of magnificence of conception and realization, even the colossal productions on which New York prides itself have much to learn from their Parisian rivals; and certainly no city in the world can boast *many* such artists as Mistinguett or Maurice Chevalier.

The revues produced at the *Casino de Paris* under the direction of M. Leon Volterra deserve special mention, not only for their uniform splendor of decorations and costumes, but also for the superb artistry that marks their entire program. One may almost say that M. Volterra has given the term *music hall* a new meaning. The heavy humour of earlier days has been replaced by a tenor of fine irony, mere excentricity has given way to bold originality, and the *risqué* element that was once a feature of this sort of entertainment has been put away without leaving a noticeable void.

Like music, this is a form of art that has no language; though of course an understanding of French will enlarge one's scope of appreciation of the revue.

Ramon GUTHRIE.

Casino de Paris, 16 Rue de Clichy. Tel: Central 86-35.

BARS

Henry, rue Volney, is probably the best known to Americans. It has a small room at the back where one is always sure to find Americans before the meal hours. Bar at front where only men are admitted.

New York Bar, rue Daunou. Tel: Gutenberg 59-26. In the old time New York style only men admitted, although the rule is less strict in the room downstairs, where men and women can sit and listen to songs and music by two young Americans. It is well known to newspaper men, and is more of an after theater place than the others.

Maxim's, 3 rue Royale. Tel: Elysées 25-58, is a great meeting place for newspaper men just before dinner.

The Ritz, Tel: Louvre 34-50 to 54. **Claridge's**, Tel: Elysées 48-13. **Ciro's**, 8 rue Daunou. Tel: Central 44-08. Smarter element. English and American notables are often to be found at these places, particularly Ritz and **Ciro's**.

The Chatham, 17 Rue Daunou, Tel: Louvre 02-24, is less exclusive but also well known.

The Bodega, 1 rue de Castiglione, is known for its wines, particularly port and sherry.

Le Cardinal, Tel: Gutenberg 32-95. This café which is located at the corner of the Boulevards des Italiens and of the Rue Richelieu (neighbourhood American Consulate and Am. chamber of Commerce) is well known to many members of the American Expeditionary Forces. A resort for literary men—Balzac, A. de Musset, Alexandre Dumas were wont to dine there. — Now, it is here that the American Club of Paris holds, its weekly luncheons.



This design has been drawn by B. Boutet de Monvel for Barclay's tailors.