Russian Opera Hailed as Great

by Harry McCraw, ’63

Whoever said, “The trouble with Russian opera is that they all seem to be written by a committee” obviously had in mind the operas of Modest Moussorgsky, perhaps the most original composer Russia has ever produced. Practically none of Moussorgsky’s works are known to us today in their original form and any discussion of his music must include, first of all, Rimsky-Korsakov, and then Glazunov, Cui, Ravel, Leopold Stokowski, and in the present context, Shostakovich.

The history of “Khovantchina” is a typical example of the cause of this state of affairs. When Moussorgsky died (at the age of forty-two) he left “Khovantchina” as an unny mass of sketches, unordered scenes, and rough drafts in various stages of completion. Rimsky-Korsakov first took these in hand and rewrote them into a viable opera; but, since then, several others have decided to try their skill at this, and thus we now have a new version completely orchestrated by Dimitri Shostakovich.

“Khovantchina,” in the film version now showing at New England Mutual Hall, turns out to be a powerful and deeply absorbing work. Made in the Soviet Union by the renowned Bosshi Opera Company, it has English subtitles and it uses the latest film techniques to remove any sense of the confinement of the opera stage. Skillful camera work, even during choruses and arias, keeps the film moving and dramatically alive. Russian work as a whole remains great. I recommend it highly.

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Cherchez la Femme: The Word on Wenches

Yes, they’re back en masse and en vigueur. Wellesley, Radcliffe, Simmons, Wheelock, Garland, Smith and ever so many more. Regardless of the school, the girls are unanimous in thought present, for they all want to meet YOU. And how do they accomplish this? By asking you to come to meet THEM, of course.

Endicott First

Per usual, Endicott College was the first to enter the rush and started their galas last Friday night and will continue these dances for weeks to come. Anytime you have a spare Friday, Endicott is always a spot. Only problem is distance.

Simmons got the Freshman Dances out of the way quite quickly this year at the Statler Hilton last Saturday night. All upperclassmen, though, should note that the Simmons upperclass mixer will follow in a few weeks.

Wellesley has a record crop of freshman girls this year and reports have returned from early birds from Harvard and Tech, describing these girls as “delightfully feminine but rather precocious.” Although Wellesley blind date are usually good, it is better to scout the territory yourself. The mixers begin this week at Bates-Freeman, Clarion, Severance, the Quad, and other dorms. Be sure to arrive early, for the ring around the dance floor is usually about five deep. N.B.: Red is the freshman color at Wellesley this year, so dance only with those girls having red name tags. If you find someone particularly appealing, you might suggest a coke at the WeIl or HoJo’s (Howard Johnson’s), for the competition at the dance is usually keen.

If you don’t like mad-rush mixers and crowded dance floor, you might try the Mt. Ida Junior College or the Chamberlain School of Retailing at 90 Marlborough St., Boston. Mt. Ida is in Newton Center, and a car is a necessity.

These are the main mixers in the Boston area outside Tech. Radcliffe “jelly-ups” are a thing of the past, but any wandering Techman will find a royal welcome at Smith and Mt. Holyoke those weekends. Disregard the “Yale only” signs at Smith.

Although it’s best to start early, don’t be disappointed if you can’t join in the mixer madness this weekend, for there’s more to come. Good Hunting.

—L.M.A.

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