

January 6, 1886 letter Robert to hear her in Galveston

Emma Abbott: American soprano (9 Dec 1850 - 5 Jan 1891): Debut London CG (1876) as Marie (*La Fille du régiment*). Married Eugene Wetherell (1875) and co-founded with him the Emma Abbott English Grand Opera Company. A cabinet card out of San Francisco.

Emma Abbott. Seen here as Linda. Tomlinson, Detroit. Photograph

http://www.historicopera.com/jearyl_other_usa_page1.htm Accessed 1/27/2010

“Linda de Chamounix contains an air for soprano without which no collection of opera arias is complete. This is Linda’s aria in the first act. “O luce de quest” anima” (Oh! star that guid’st my fervent love). The style of this aria is light and graceful.” “Opera in three acts by Donizetti, words by Rossi. Takes place in 1760 during the reign of Louis XV at Chamounix and Paris.”

<http://www.musicwithease.com/donizetti-linda-chamounix.html>. Accessed 1/27/2010.

Emma Abbott organized The Abbott English Opera Company,” which toured extensively for thirteen years in the north, northwest and South. Of the many operatic successes her company scored are “Daughter of the Regiment,” “Chimes of Normandy,” “Bohemian Girl,” “Martha,” and “La Traviata.” In 1884 she appeared at the Metropolitan Opera in New York to great acclaim. She died in 1891 from pneumonia contracted in Ogden, Utah where she was to perform in “Rose of Castile.” She was called “one of America’s more enchanting singers.”

<http://www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/IllinoisWomen/files/pe/htm1/peabi.html> Accessed 1/27/2010

The Operas Robert was attending: This is about Galveston Opera House.
January 6, 1886 letter

THE LUBBOCK OPERA HOUSE--A STUDY IN ASSOCIATIONISM
by

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However, opera music was not unknown to Texans even in the earliest days and on the unc cosmopolitan frontier, for many of the settlers (especially the Germans) came from areas in which opera was known and appreciated. p. 47

Texas opera houses, like those in the rest of America, flourished between the end of the Civil War and the decade of the 1920s, when movies began to overtake live theater in popularity. Over 400 theater buildings were built in Texas before 1930.³⁸ **The earliest opera houses included those in Galveston, Texas' largest city, and Houston, the first main capital of the Republic.³⁹ Their most common attractions were theatrical performances, including those by some of the most celebrated actors of that day, such as Edwin Booth playing Hamlet.** However, grand opera had appeared in both cities by the 1860s, giving Houston's Perkin's Opera House "an honest name." Even though Houston's support of the art was not as enthusiastic as Galveston's, Houston audiences saw, between 1867 and 1871, productions of *La Traviata*, *II Trovatore*, *Martha*, *Fra Diavolo*, and *The Magic Flute*.⁴⁻ In the 1800s, Houston boasted two opera houses, Gray's and Pillot's, while Galveston had the Tremont Opera House. In the 1890s, the situation was reversed, but operas and opera singers were still unusual treats.^^

Although, as noted, permanent operatic troupes were rare in America, permanent theatrical troupes were not. The efforts of the permanent troupes were augmented by travelling artists, who were, at many theaters, the only sources of entertainment. The players could

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be divided into three general categories. First, there were the repertory players, who worked in a theater (or chain of them) for an entire season. Second, there were the travelling players, who were hired for a specialty act or for an entire evening. Last were the "superstars," whose tours created their own box office excitement and on whose visits the reputation and financial success of a theater's entire season could rest. Sara Bernhardt, Lillie Lantry, and Adelina Patti all visited Texas during the heyday of the opera houses.^^ jn fact, there were even large, spectacular productions, inventions of the "scenic engineers," that were superstars themselves.^^

<http://etd.lib.ttu.edu/theses/available/etd-08272008-31295010064680/unrestricted/31295010064680.pdf>

Accessed 1/27/2010

See Rosenthal, Mapleson. pp. 172-173 and 182-183 for an excellent first-hand chronicle of the exigencies of traveling with an opera troupe across America in the 1870s and 1880s.