

HIS RUSSIAN WIFE SAVED ARENSEN FROM INTERNMENT BY THE FRENCH

Wartime Adventures of Tenor
Are Ended Through Inter-
vention of Colleague

CERTAIN pages from the career of André Enrico Arensen, the Russian operatic tenor, who appeared as *Don José* in the Cosmopolitan Opera Company's recent New York production of "Carmen," read like fascinating romance. The great war, after causing Mr. Arensen a number of tribulations which even threatened to jeopardize his life, was directly responsible for his marriage with Mme. Nadina Legat, the prima donna coloratura soprano. Both are Russians and had sung leading rôles together at La Scala, which was the scene of their first meeting. They lost track of each other when Mr. Arensen departed to fill an engagement at the Imperial Opera at Berlin and the soprano was summoned back to Russia.

The war's declaration virtually marks the beginning of the dramatic Arensen story. The tenor was still singing at Berlin and also at Vienna; Mme. Legat soon devoted herself to nursing at the Russian Hospital at Monte Carlo. Mr. Arensen, being a Russian, was seized and interned. All other appeals failing, the singer sent a letter to the Kaiser himself, before whom Mr. Arensen had frequently sung. The Kaiser released the tenor after the latter had signed an oath in German and Russian, vowing that he would never take up arms against the Central Powers or their allies. He was also to go to America as soon as conditions permitted.

Mr. Arensen had barely trodden French soil when he was halted by a frontier guard. His misfortunes now began anew. The French Government put him under strict surveillance. His associations with numerous prominent Germans were widely known, and the tenor's appeal to the Russian ambassador in Paris met with a cold reception. It seemed probable that he would remain practically a prisoner until the war was over. By a happy chance the tenor met a Russian soldier who, in the course of a



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André Enrico Arensen, the Russian
Operatic Tenor

conversation, told him that Mme. Legat was then at Monte Carlo, only a short distance away. Mr. Arensen lost no time in writing an appeal to his countrywoman and former colleague.

Marriage as Life Saver

Mme. Legat, herself a daughter of a Russian general, hastened to the embassy, where it was explained that Arensen's friendship in high German circles made it imperative that he be detained. Mme. Legat pledged her word that the tenor was a loyal Russian, but even that assurance was insufficient. Suddenly she said: "I'll give you the assurance of a wife; I'll marry him." The papers were signed and Arensen was free. All unconscious of the real lever which had worked his release, the tenor proposed to his rescuer and they were married just before sailing for the United States.

Mr. Arensen has sung at many important theaters, including Hamburg, Wiesbaden, Lisbon, Bergamo, Boston and New York. He possesses a large repertory, which includes "Aida," "Tell," "Huguenots," "Queen of Sheba," "Carmen,"

"Trovatore," "Otello," "Tannhäuser," "Lohengrin," "Masked Ball," "Tales of Hoffmann," "Louise," "Francesca," and others.