**Alexander Kipnis on Singing Teachers, Vocal Technique, the State of Opera and More**

**This is a transcription of a remarkable recording that Alexander Kipnis made on reel-to-reel tape late in his life. This is essential reading for singers, voice students and everyone who is interested in singing and opera. It is a rare document.**

We have good singing teachers and bad singing teachers. We have them all over the world, in Italy, in Germany, in Switzerland, in Scandinavia, in England, and also in the United States. We have experienced singing teachers and just singing teachers who are playing the piano a little bit. Because singing lessons pays a little better than piano lessons, so some of them switched from playing accompaniment or giving piano lessons to giving singing lessons.

A singing teacher, an honest singing teacher, has a very important mission. A young man or a young girl is given to him into his hands, and he has to develop the voice. It is a great responsibility. If a singing teacher doesn't know the functioning of the human voice, he can easily break a tender voice or even a dramatic voice.

They used to say there are not good singing teachers. There is only, or are only, good students with good voices. This is true to a certain degree. A good voice and a good talent for interpretation needs guidance, and the better his voice and ability is, the more guidance he or she needs.

I have been told recently the following story. The famous Polish tenor, Jean de Reszke, when he retired to Paris, he started to teach. He accepted only voices, perfect voices, voices which had only to be coached a little bit. People, students who have been looking very well, had good figures and had good faces, have been accepted by him. After being coached, or possibly vocally instructed, for five, six months, Jean de Reszke went to the director of the opera and he said, “I have some very important young singer for you. Let him sing and I believe you will engage him or her.”

And this was the way I have been told by a former student of Jean de Reszke. This was the way Jean de Reszke became a famous singing teacher.

A singing teacher should also know the difference between stage opera singing and concert singing. Here are two different worlds of music. One can be a perfect opera singer and a very poor concert singer. The other way around, one can be a very cultured and very fine concert singer and not to be able to sing or to perform on the stage. It is not only a difference in the kind of music, but also in the approach to this two different forms of singing art, art of singing.

I had a singing teacher who knew a great deal about the art of concert singing. He had very good taste. He was very familiar with the classic music like Mozart, Bach, Handel, and also with a romantic style of music like Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, Strauss, etc., and he didn't know anything about opera. The result was after graduating the conservatory in Berlin, and also being convinced that I know a great deal of singing.

I didn't know anything about opera singing. When I was first engaged to the Hamburg opera house, I was like a blind man who needed guidance. More than that, I needed the secrets and I tried to find out the secrets how to sing opera and be successful. I realized that to sing a Schubert song or a Strauss or Schumann song is one thing and trying to sing the King in *Lohengrin* or King Philip in *Don Carlos* or Mephistophèles is another thing.

I'm not speaking about acting. I'm just speaking of pure vocal approach to a part of the music. I remember when I first stepped on the stage in Hamburg, it was as a Hermit in *Frieschütz*, and the big brass orchestra started to play.

The director came up and said, “Kipnis, we don't hear you. Can't you give a little bit more tone, more sonority?”

I did, and he came up and said, “We still don't hear you. Lift your head, sing toward the first balcony. Don't keep your head down.” So I did, and it was a little bit better. The quality was good, but the carrying power, the penetrating through a big orchestra, I didn't have it at that time. And little by little, watching other colleagues, hearing other voices, I realized what was wrong with me.

I was trained by a concert singer. This was my teacher in Berlin. I also studied with an Italian teacher. His name was Oreste Marini. He sang a great deal in Russia, and so I communicated with him in the Russian language.

This was in Berlin. He didn't speak any German. He was not young enough at that time, and he retired. He demonstrated to me many arias, like the opera *The Demon* by Rubinstein, like Lothario in *Mignon* and Freischütz, like *Favorita,* Donizetti's opera.

Snd I tried to imitate him, but I was not able to learn from him the production of tone. I had a natural feeling for a certain roundness of tone, a certain sweetness, a certain velvety, a certain velvety, silk, which I loved to hear.

And I was tracing my own sound, but he didn't tell me how to bring out my tone in front of my teeth. Later on, when I went over to another teacher in Berlin, he called attention that my voice was not enough in front, but also *he* couldn't tell me how to sing, how to bring my voice forward.

I did not have the ability at that time to sing piano. To be able to diminish a big tone into a soft tone. To diminish the tone to such a degree that the tone begins little by little to disappear, and little by little to switch over from a chesty tone into a head tone.

I was not able to use the so-called *voix mixte*. I was not able to combine the chesty tone with falsetto, which we very often need, even in dramatic operas. My teacher was the product of studying with a woman, and there were many, many things he didn't know, and consequently he couldn't explain to me the reason and the secret of a covered tone.

A woman, no matter how great a singer she might be, doesn't have the problems of a covered tone, like male singers have to have it, unless the male singer is an Irish tenor.

An Irish tenor doesn't have the problem. He sings up to the highest tone, highest range, with open... tone and there is no break. A normal European or American singer needs when he goes up to a certain point to begin to cover up his tone.

I was associated with some very important institutions of music teaching. I was surprised, yes flabbergasted, to find out how many teachers are teaching singing and they don't know anything about singing. There's one class of singing teachers who are thinking of getting out a few dollars from the student. They don't know really what singing is. They have never been in the position of singing concerts or opera. They are former accompanists. They don't know really what it means to stand on the stage in being burned by the fire of music and singing.

We have this sort of teachers *everywhere*. They can talk. They can talk from books. They know their knowledge from books, reading about singing, reading about this and that, calling something *bel canto* which is not *bel canto.*

Some of the so-called musicians have their own idea about *bel canto.* Somebody who can sing fast, a coloratura run, they call it *bel canto.* We had many, many great singers who could not sing coloraturas, who could not bring out a real trill, and still they don't classify as *bel canto* singers.

I know Battistini was a *bel canto* singer, but in the mind, in the present judgment of some of the musicians, they wouldn't say he's a *bel canto* singer.

My advice to young male singers would be take lessons from a man, not from a woman. No matter how famous this woman might be, I have heard the products of some of the teachers of women, of great singers, women singers. It came to the point that these singers have ruined their voices because they didn't know what to do with their high tones.

They could sing falsetto or shout open tones. After a while, they landed as teachers in some schools, in some universities. Although, by nature, they had very, very fine, good voices, and they've been very musical people. You can hear them and see them everywhere all over the world.

I would like to repeat again what I said in the beginning. A singing teacher has a great mission. He has to bring up young talent. Every generation has its share in producing first grade, first class singers.

When people are speaking about the Golden Age of the Metropolitan Opera and they are mentioning a few names of great singers, every generation has a number of great voices. Every generation has a golden age of good singers.

It depends with whom those young singers have been studying. You hear very young voices. In young years, their voices begin to tremble. They shake, sometimes a very fast tremolo and sometimes a very slow shake so that you don't even know in what key they are singing.

Then a singing teacher should also have the knowledge what his students should sing. He should be able to advise a boy or a girl, a man or a woman what part they can sing and what part they should sing.

And the main thing, what part they should *not* sing, a lyric soprano with a very sweet quality will never be able to sing Brünnhilde or Fidelio. A tenor with a very beautiful, sweet, silky quality will never be able to sing, shall we say, Siegmund or Tristan or Florestan in *Fidelio* or even Radames or Otello.

I realize it's very tempting for some singers to sing those beautiful parts, but they have to stay away from those parts. And the teacher of these singers, he is the man or the woman to advise the student what to sing and what not to sing.

I would like to talk about the limitation of certain voices. A bass, for instance, should be able to sing an open scale up to a D. But when he approaches the E flat, he should start to cover up this range.

From E flat to E natural and to F and possibly to F sharp. And only so, he would be able to retain his voice. He will keep away from this typical open tones, with one exception. If the drama of a sentence or of a word requires an outbreak, then he can sing possibly an E flat or even an E open.

But this is only an exception. A baritone, usually a dramatic baritone, should sing the same way, except he shall start to cover his voice a half a tone or a whole tone higher. A tenor should be able to go up with an open clear tone up to F and even F sharp.

Very often, one can hear a tenor singing “Celeste Aida “ and by the first phrase, he goes up to F. which sounds very lovely and very open. And the second phrase, when he goes up to the F sharp and then to the G, if he doesn't know how to sing the F sharp and the G in a covered range, then he is going to be lost.

His B flat will be very strained, and he will not be able also to sing the B flat at the end of the aria, pianissimo, the way Verdi really wanted the aria to be finished in a long, sustained B flat, double piano.

With a women's voice is an entire different matter. The teacher should be able to judge according to the range of this young singer what she should sing. Some mezzo-sopranos can go up as high as a B natural and C. But the range does not decide the character of the voice. The color of the voice decides what one is, a mezzo soprano or a soprano, a mezzo soprano or a contralto, a lyric soprano or a dramatic soprano, the character and also the ability to sing.

The teacher should also be able to train those singers little by little to learn how to sing piano. Piano and soft singing are two different things. One can achieve a soft tone by putting in a little bit of breath into the tone, but piano singing is something else.

This is a quality of tone which is exactly concentrated as the loud tone, but it is controlled by the diaphragm. If this singer doesn't have the ability to sing piano up to the highest range, the teacher should train this singer up to the point where she is able to diminish a tone, and little by little, step by step, go up half a tone, and one month later possibly another half a tone, or possibly two or three months again another tone, and still be able to sing those tones with open mouth and with open throat.

A human voice is not a machine. It has its long or short life. It depends how the person is using his voice. If a lyric voice begins to sing dramatic parts, as long as she or he are young, they can withstand the force of a big orchestra.

But the time comes for everyone if they have sinned against nature, then it won't take very long and they will notice what is going on in their voices.

When a singer has a slight cold, she or he should not sing until they are in good and in perfect condition. Singing with a cold will take away a year or possibly more of their career. They should not be influenced by a throat doctor who is telling them, “Oh you are going to do all right, don't worry about that. The main thing you are going to perform.”

Many years ago, I was cast to sing Leporello in *Don Giovanni* at the Met. I had at that time, a very bad cold. The performance took place on Saturday afternoon and the performance was broadcasted.

My throat doctor, who wanted to show Mr. Johnson how great a doctor he is, assured Mr. Johnson, “Mr. Kipnis is going to sing. I will treat him and I will bring him into the form that he will be able to sing.”

Well, he put on some electric wires around my neck. He gave me injections, which I believe a horse could not withstand, and the day came and I sang this performance. This performance has been recorded by several amateurs and they could hear that my voice was not what it usually is and could be. The result was the following. A week later, I had to sing a performance of *Boris Godunov* in concert form in San Francisco.

I tried to sing the performance. I could not. I had to stop in the middle of the performance. Montreux was the conductor. I was sick, vocally sick and mentally sick and physically ill for about five or six weeks later after that. This was the result of trying to sing when one has a cold. I warn all the young singers not to do that.

I would like to say a few words about young singers who are planning to sing concerts.

They should make their programs, build their programs in a way so they sing a dramatic song and followed by a lyrical song in order to give the voice a little rest and again a loud song and then again a fast song.

Not to strain the voice. A recital can be very strenuous and can be very satisfactory if the balance of a program is weighed in the right way. To make a program interesting one has to have a great deal of variety in style, in speed, in languages and in interpretation.

For instance, a baritone, or a tenor, or even a bass, or a soprano, are putting on four or five arias in succession. This might be a very great strain for the voice, and also very monotonous for the audience to listen one aria after another aria, possibly with the same character, with the same results, with the same effects.

One loud tone after a loud tone, one high tone after a high tone, one B flat, followed by another B flat, which can be very interesting by itself, but not in succession. The same thing would be to sing four songs, all of them soft and piano and slow.

People are getting tired of monotony. This should also be part of the teacher's advice to the student how to put a program together. I would also like to say a few words about my own career as a teacher.

I was teaching in two institutions through my teaching career. The first one was a very old institution called the New York College of Music. Fortunately or unfortunately it doesn't exist anymore. It was a small conservatory with very few rooms and we did not have an accompanist.

So I engaged my own accompanist and I paid him. The material which we had there was less than mediocre. It is a small institution, it was not very well known, and only students who have not been accepted in the other schools went to the New York College of Music.

I didn't stay there too long, I quit one day. I could not take so much mediocracy. The years after that, I was asked to teach in Aspen. Aspen is very beautiful, as everyone knows, and people are coming from all over the country to study there.

They had a number of very good teachers, instrumentally as well as vocally. Unfortunately I could not stand the height, and I left after five weeks. I was a sick man. I couldn't sleep, and I couldn't eat. One day, in Aspen, I received a telephone call from the dean of the Juilliard School.

If I am free, he asked, and if I would be willing to join the Juilliard School, the faculty of the Juilliard School. Since the Juilliard School is one of the most famous institutions in the United States, I said I would be interested.

When I arrived in New York, I had an interview with the president, Mr. Dr. Peter Mennin, and he expressed the pleasure to have me and to join the faculty in Juilliard. I stayed there in Juilliard for seven years, or was it six years, I don't remember.

During the interview, I tried to find out from Mr. Mennin, and so I became a member of the faculty in Juilliard. I have received a fair and insufficient share and numbers of students. Some of them were good and some of them mediocre.

I realized we cannot have all the best students and among of this students which I received was a young Black girl. She was nice looking, very intelligent, very musical with a lovely silver soprano voice. She studied for three years with me. We worked on different classical romantic music and also a great deal of Russian songs. Somehow Black people believe that Russia is a sort of a paradise and they devote all their time, intelligence to associate themselves with Russian culture, with Russian music, with Russian literature and so forth.

During these three years, this girl who had a scholarship, a full scholarship, in Juilliard. But she didn't have enough money to cover her living expenses. I recommended her to a society in New York who are helping and supporting musical talents.

She has received twice a grant of several hundred dollars each time. And she was very happy. Then she graduated. She was also at that time accepted to the Juilliard Opera. Not school, but opera group, or they don't know how they used to call it, because they still call it.

And the director at that time was Mr. Capobianco. He personally assigned to her some very important parts. The opera group was part of the Juilliard School, and they paid to these young singers a modest fee, so they could also exist.

A short time after her graduation, there was a competition in Moscow, a competition for singers. I don't know how they used to call it, maybe Tchaikovsky Prize, or Tchaikovsky Competition. Anyway, this young girl set her all desire and belief on one thing.

She wanted to go to Moscow and to sing. She didn't have the money. I remember I coached with her all the arias and all the songs which they required, but somehow, she got the money to fly to Moscow, and there she sang.

I am corresponding with a man in Moscow whom I never met. He's a musician, and he lectures music. And he reported to me that she sang excellently. She should have won the first prize. But art and nationality are two different things.

In Russia, I understood they give already the prizes they decided to whom they give the first and second and third prizes even before the competition has started. And the prizes have been given that year only to Russian people.

This girl came back. She was completely destroyed. I have never seen and never heard anybody who was so disappointed. She probably has built her entire future on having won the Tchaikovsky Prize. She wrote us a letter thanking me for all I have given her and she expressed in that way her disappointment that she will never sing again in her life.

She will give up music and singing entirely and as a matter of fact we have never heard anything of her and about her.

Julliard of course has something which no other school has. First of all the rooms, the studios, are of exceptional beauty. They have beautiful, marvelous new Steinways in every good studio. A beautiful view into the plaza. The air conditioning is working beautifully. Besides this, they are supplying, the administration is supplying, the singing teachers, with quite good accompanists.

So it was always a great pleasure to be there, to sit and to teach in a studio, which is very lovely, beautiful, fine acoustics, pleasant, and satisfactory.

And then there is the beautiful library, the green carpet, and the chairs, and the sofas, and all the beautiful binding in the books and everything, which is there. It is unique. I don't know any other conservatory which has such a luxury quality for...

But after six or seven years of teaching in Juilliard, having to travel twice or three times a week from Westport to New York, the trains were most of the time in the summertime hot and in the wintertime cold, and very often not on time, so I couldn't keep a schedule.

And I decided I have enough of teaching in New York, even if it is Juilliard School. And I resigned. Their administration was surprised about that, because people don't resign in Juilliard. They die. This is their last thing they do. I decided I would rather stay here in Westport, and so some people who are interested to hear my advice, or to come here and to be repaired in a way, I do it very, very nicely here in Westport.

And since I really didn't need Juilliard, so it was very easy for me to say goodbye to the administration and to the president, and that is that. He offended most of the faculty members of the opera.

It came to the point that he also resigned. Then we had a series of introductions with Callas. I cannot say anything about that. I didn't hear and I didn't see any of the classes which she had in the school. But it didn't last very long and I don't know what was the reason that she was not re-engaged or she left. I don't know. The opera department as such is guided mostly by unexperienced people. At present time I understand they have Mr. Adler who is an experienced man and I am sure he knows what he is doing. But at my time it was the story like one blind man is leading another blind man. Neither the students were happy nor the teachers were satisfied.

Why and how this whole thing has been arranged who were engaged whom, who decided whose whom, nobody really could know.

There was a time when singers, opera singers, were the stars of a performance.

You went to the theater because Mr. So-and-So d’Andrade sang Don Giovanni. Or you went to the opera to hear *Don Giovanni* because Bonci sang Don Ottavio, You went to the opera to hear *Boris Godunov* because Chaliapin sang.

You went to the opera to hear *Thais* because Mary Garden was singing. This has a little bit changed. The conductors took over the regime. It started already with von Bülow and after that came Gustav Mahler and after Gustav Mahler came Klemperer and Furtwängler.

It came also to the point that all those conductors not only they took over the entire regime, they also engaged producers or directors, stage directors, in order to stage their operas. I remember for instance in Buenos Aires, Klemperer engaged a Russian woman to stage *Marriage of Figaro.*

We were all puzzled what does a Russian woman know about Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro.* Well, this was Klemperer's wish and she turned out to be acceptable. In Vienna, we had a regisseur, his name was Wallerstein.

And he directed all the operas. He was very close to Franz Werfel. Franz Werfel at that time was the prophet of Verdi. I remember when we staged *Don Carlos.* Franz Werfel was sitting in the audience and having conversations with Wallerstein, and Wallerstein brought up to the stage the ideas which Franz Werfel told him.

Same thing happened by *La Forza del Destino*, dir Macht des Schicksals. Franz Werfel was in the opera and told Mr. Wallerstein what to do. Then came Mr. Graf. Mr. Graf was also engaged to stage *The Magic Flute* in Salzburg. He was a very nice person. I don't believe he was a very great stage director. He was a very pleasant person and he could work very well hand-in-hand with Toscanini. I remember one performance in Berlin which was staged by Reinhardt.

This was in a circus. It was a very beautiful performance from the point of view of theatrical art, but it had very little to do actually with the music of Offenbach. And so it went down. We came to the Met, and in the Met, there was Mr. Wallerstein, and there was Mr. Graf. And the scenery it was not very outstanding. Everyone brought his own costumes. There was often a very mixed mishmash between different styles in one opera. For instance, Traubel had her own costumes designed by a designer from the film industry, a designer in Hollywood. Mr. Melchior had his own costume. I brought my own costume from Berlin. Now you can imagine, from three different corners of the world, we had different costumes.

In *Parsifal*, in *Tristan*, and in Walküre. Everyone was his own designer. But somehow, musically and vocally, we came together. And I'm sure the audience has forgotten the difference of the styles of the different costumes.

I remember, in *Rosenkavalier*, we had also the same problem. Lotte Lehmann had her costumes. I had my own style of costumes. Octavian had her own style of costumes. But the music is so magnificent and so beautiful that you forget all the styles. It was very, very lovely.

This was in 1917, during the war. I started my career in Wiesbaden. There was not very much to do except to look for a laugh. Life was very sad and the people didn't have enough food. The only thing we had enough was Rhine wine. At that time we had an American baritone. His name was Harry de Garmo. He had a good sense of humor. Besides having a very good voice and a very acceptable actor. I was engaged to sing leading parts and also small parts until I was able to learn the entire repertory. Among the smaller parts which I had to sing at that time was a part in *Tales of Hoffman.* The name of the part is Schlemiel.

Schlemiel is an individual who lost his shadow to a very peculiar man. His name is Dapertutto, Captain Dapertutto. He is collecting shadows of men. Schlemiel is in love with Giulietta, a courtesan, a prostitute, a Venetian, and at one point Hoffman wants to have the keys of the chamber or of the apartment where Giulietta lives and Schlemiel refuses to give him the keys. So a duel develops. And Dapertutto offers his sword to Mr. Hoffman, and Hoffman is fighting with Schlemiel, and Hoffman kills Schlemiel. During this dual, the orchestras playing the beautiful, the beautiful barcarolle.

Schlemiel is falling down, he has been deadly stabbed by the sword, and he's lying on the floor. The orchestra is still playing the barcarolle roller and Harry the Garmo came over to me, bent over me and rubbed my face with something which I couldn't see because I was dead, and the barcarolle was going all the way up to me, and he's lying on the floor, and he's lying on the floor, and Giulietta is leaving the stage, and the curtain is still open. But Hari de Garmo bent down to me and said, get up, the curtain is already down. So I got up and I had a big laughter from the audience. I later on discovered he rubbed my face on with black makeup, so I looked like a Negro, certainly.

And shortly after that, the barcarolle was over and the curtain really fell down. So I realized that Hari de Garmo played a joke on me. The following stage, the following scene or act is the act of Antonia. The same evil character of the Dapertutto is transferred into the character of Dr. Miracle. And Dr. Miracle is an evil character, any shrine to make Antonia sing, knowing very well that when she sings, she's going to die.

And there's a very lovely trio. And in this trio, the Dr. Miracle is singing, trying to induce in a melody to bring Antonia to sing, and if this would not be enough, he grabs a violin which is hanging on the wall, and he starts to play this luring melody to induce Antonia to sing. I at that time, before the act started, I took away the violin, and I replaced the violin with an old trumpet. Dr. Miracle running to the wall and trying to grab the violin. There's no violin, so he grabbed the trumpet.

But the orchestra's playing violin. And so there was, again, a big laughter, not for me, but a laughter for De Garmo. So this was the end of the opera. She played a joke on me, and I played a joke on him.

And the result was De Garmo, as well as I, were punished. Each one had to pay ten Marks. So this is my little episode in Wiesbaden. This was in 1915. I sang an audition for Dr. Löwenfeld, and he engaged me to the Hamburg Opera House. A municipal opera house. It was an important institution, and this was my first engagement. I was at that time an enemy alien. I still had my Russian passport, and attention was called to me that I will not be able to go to Hamburg because Hamburg is a very important naval station in Germany.

During the war, only Germans could enter Hamburg. Dr. Löwenfeld said to me, it would be very simple if you write a letter to the commander of the army in Berlin and tell them your intention to become a German citizen. You will not be able to be naturalized during the war. That's the law in Prussia. But if they see your intention to become a German citizen, they will give you the permission to come to Hamburg and to sing with us.

I sat down and I wrote a long letter to the commander of the army, the army in Berlin, explaining my love for Germany and how much I would like to be a German citizen. And I'm asking for the permission to go to Hamburg.

So they gave me the permission to go to Hamburg. I also had the assurance that I will not be naturalized as long as the war lasts. I came to Hamburg. Being an enemy alien, I had to register with the police and I had to go every day to register to indicate that I didn't leave Hamburg.

After a short while I received a letter from the city hall in Hamburg, they call it, they have a senate. Hamburg is a free, they call it the free Hansa State and has nothing to do with Prussia. This letter indicated that I will be naturalized in Hamburg as soon as I will be there, as soon as I will come there and bring 50 marks a witness that I am I and principally my birth certificate.

I came to the appointed time I brought a witness and I brought 50 Marks, but I didn't have a birth certificate. And the clerk there said to me, you cannot be naturalized without birth certificate. Why don't you have a birth certificate?

I said I was born in the Ukraine and I cannot communicate with my mother because this part where I was born is still in the Russian hands. So he said to me, will you please come in four weeks? Our army is marching forward.

“And in four weeks I am sure the city of Zhitomir in the Ukraine, wherever you were born, will be taken over by us, and you will be able to communicate with your mother.”

Four weeks later, I came again to the Senate building, and I said to them, I'm sorry I couldn't communicate with my mother. The city is still not occupied, and this is not my fault. So, he said, all right, then come in about two weeks, the latest in four weeks, and then we will naturalize you. I realized at that time, if I will be naturalized, I will be immediately taken into the army and sent to the front.

After four weeks, I came again, and I told them, Zhitomir is still in Russian hands, and your army has not been able to take the city. And he said, “All right, I will give you another four weeks, you come then and tell us.”

Time has passed, and a year passed, and I was singing all sorts of operas in the Hamburg municipal opera, and Zhitomir was still not taken, and I was saved, and I was not naturalized. This is my first attempt to be a singer and to be free. I got my passport approximately at the same time before I went to Hamburg. But the passport was only a piece of paper to identify me. I lost my citizenship and I was stateless.

The passport was not recognized. In other words, it was not considered as a legal document to allow me to travel from one country to another country. So I was staying and living in Hamburg until later on I went to Wiesbaden.

I sang the part of Prince Gremin. Prince Gremin is comparatively a short part, except he has to sing one of the most beautiful arias in the bass repertory. After finishing this aria, Prince Gremin leaves the stage and he's through. After that comes a short scene and this was the end of the opera. In the meantime, I took up my makeup and I left the opera house and in front of the opera house there was a bus waiting and I took that bus to go home.

The bus was waiting for the end of the opera until some passengers, people, are going the same direction where I was going. I was smoking at that time and I went up to the second floor. They had buses with two floors and there I was sitting in my civil clothes without a beard and without a wig and nobody could recognize me.

The opera was over and all the passengers going my way, my direction, went in and filled the passengers. I was sitting there in a corner and smoking my cigarette. And I overheard several times the same remarks. Some people like the opera, some people like the story, some people like the music, and they were discussing what is the best in that opera. And I remember one man said, “If there wouldn't be anything else except the aria which Kipnis sang in that opera, it would be worth my money I paid for the ticket.

And I enjoyed hearing that. And every time I sang this opera and I went up to the first floor smoking my cigarette, I heard similar remarks. This was a very pleasant criticism.

In Buenos Aires, under the musical leadership of Fritz Busch, we had several performances of *Arabella*. I sang there a short part, Count Waldner. It's a very charming character. A nobleman has two girls and no money. And through a fact that his older daughter is meeting a very rich bachelor. And somehow through this acquaintance with that rich bachelor, the Count Waldner gets some money. And he's very happy to have this money.

And he has a special porte monnaie, which he takes out every few minutes and is singing to himself “Teshek bedim bich.” A little Purse. A little purse and he takes out and he begins to flirt with the bank notes.This is in short, the part is very, very is humorous, not very big and well it's a very lovely story but this has nothing to do with Wagner.

Mildred Kipnis speaks:

February 23rd, we left Vienna. our Vienna on the first lap of the long journey to Australia. Am I talking too fast? Little did we realize that it was truly farewell for always. The trip was beautiful, scenically, as one passed through Carentan and saw the dolomites in the distance. The first night, a stop of several hours in Venice, a Venice that had little glamour or romance, for it was cold and wet, penetrated.