

JENNY LIND AT MADISON IN 1851.

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The queer old town of Madison stands to-day as the Mecca of Indiana, the gem of the Ohio valley, toward which the people of all Hoosierdom look with pride and wend their way when in search of health and pleasure. There is nothing in the history of dear old Madison that caused such a furore as the coming of Jenny Lind, the Swedish nightingale, in 1851, and Madison was fortunate in catching the beautiful songbird, as she sang in but eighteen cities in the United States. The late P. T. Barnum, the great showman, had Miss Lind engaged for the season. She gave thirty-five concerts in New York City, eight in Philadelphia, seven in Boston, one in Providence, four in Baltimore, two in Washington City, one in Richmond, Va., one in Natchez, one in Memphis, five in St. Louis, two in Nashville, three in Louisville, one in Madison, Ind., five in Cincinnati, one in Wheeling and one in Pittsburgh.

When Jenny arrived in Louisville an enterprising citizen of Madison named William Wilson made arrangements with Mr. Barnum for a concert in Madison. Mr. Wilson agreed to take the management in his own hands and pay Barnum \$5,000 for the receipts. As the mailboat from Louisville for Cincinnati would arrive at Madison about sundown and would wait at the wharf until after the concert, Barnum agreed to his proposition. Mr. Wilson returned home and engaged a corps of men to put an old frame porkhouse that then stood on the southeast corner of Mulberry and High streets, in a condition for the reception of the beautiful Swedish nightingale. The greasy, dirty building was thoroughly mopped, scrubbed and whitewashed. It was a one-story structure, about fourteen feet high to the eaves, with an ordinary pitch to the roof, no ceiling in the auditorium and was about fifty feet wide by one hundred and fifty feet

long, occupying the length of half a block. Time was short, but Billy Wilson was equal to the emergency. Rough seats were improvised and many enthusiastic ladies of Madison volunteered to assist in the work of decoration and soon everything was placed in order for the coming event.

On Friday evening, April 11, 1851, the magnificent mail steamer rounded in at the Madison wharf, having on board M'lle Jenny Lind and troupe, accompanied by Signor Phineas T. Barnum. All Madison turned out and gathered at the river to welcome the distinguished visitor, and her advent was hailed by the firing of cannon, the cheers of the populace and other demonstrations of joy.

Madison being the only city in Indiana in which Jenny would sing, reporters and public men from all parts of the State were there. They came from as far north as Peru, and also from Cincinnati, Louisville and New Albany. The fine steamers, Hoosier State, Ben Franklin, Telegraph, Mary Stephens, Swiftsure, Blue Wing, Prairie Bird and Courtland all laid at the wharf until after the concert. It was advertised that skiffs would leave certain points for the Kentucky side of the river after the concert.

Tickets were sold at auction at the Grand Opera (or Pork) House before the concert, and the first ticket put up was bought by Captain David White for eighty dollars, the remainder of the tickets offered at auction being bought at an average of seven dollars each. Tickets were also sold at Dutton and Adams' bookstore and at the box office, and gentlemen passed through the crowd on the outside offering them at one dollar, while curbstone tickets were in great demand, as the singing could be plainly heard through the thin weather boarding of the building, almost as well as from the inside.

The following is a verbatim copy of the

program rendered in the porkhouse on that memorable occasion:

M'LE JENNY LIND'S

—only—

GRAND CONCERT

FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 11, 1851,

In Madison.

PROGRAMME.

Part I.

Overture—Itallana in Algeri.....Romini
 Duetto—Voglio dire (L'Elisir d'Amore)Donizetti
 Signori Salvi and Belletti.
 Aria—"I know that my Redeemer
 liveth" (Messiah).....Handel
 M'le Jenny Lind.
 Cavatina—"Bella adorata," Gul-
 mentoMercadante
 Signor Salvi.
 Scena—"Ah non credae".....Sonambula
 Aria—"An non gulgue".....Bellini
 M'le Jenny Lind.

Part II.

Overture—"Felsenmuhle"Reissiger
 Duetto—"Per Piacere alla Signori" (Il Turco in Italia).....Rossini
 M'le Jenny Lind and Signor Belletti
 Romanza—"Spirito onde Palma" (La Favorita)Donizetti
 Signor Salvi.
 Bird Song.....Taubert
 M'le Jenny Lind.
 Barcarole—"Sulla poppa deo mio bric" (Prigioni Edinburgo)Ricci
 Signor Belletti.
 Home, Sweet Home.....Bishop
 M'le Jenny Lind.

Conductor.....Mr. Julius Benedict

A first-class orchestra, comprising the best talent of New York City, led by Mr. Joseph Burke, and under the direction of Julius Benedict, Esq., was engaged.

The day following the concert the Madison Daily Courier had this to say editorially:

"The great event is passed. Jenny, the

peerless, the divine, the nightingale, the everything else you may please to call her, has given the concert in Madison. The crowd was great, the singing greater and the city of Madison the greatest! Of the singing of the gentlemen Signors we have nothing to say. We do not understand Italian. The English songs by Jenny more than realized our expectations, but the singing did not intoxicate. Haldeman of the Louisville Courier was intoxicated—the house was full! The press was well represented from Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Lawrenceburg, Aurora, Shelbyville, Rushville and Columbus. Our country friends of the press have had their ideas of matters and things enlarged by their visit to the metropolitan city of Madison. M'le Lind was taken from the boat to the concert in a carriage, consequently she stumbled over no bricks, and we are warranted in saying that none of the corps editorial carried away any such relic in their hats. To sum up, we were delighted with the singing and so was everybody else."

From the following communication, which appeared in the Madison Courier the day the concert took place, I would infer that the high price of tickets run all the city beaux into their holes:

"Mr. Garber—In behalf of a number of the ladies of the city I am requested to say we are anxious to go to the concert; but our beaux seems to have forsaken us since the Jenny Lind excitement commenced. We don't even hear of them. If they will just accompany us we will pay all expenses.
 —Anna."

Seven dollars a ticket—fourteen dollars for two tickets! Why, that would buy a fellow a good overcoat. No wonder the young fellows all stowed themselves away until the close of the concert.

The receipts for the concert were \$3,693.25, leaving Mr. Wilson \$1,306.75 short of his agreement, which loss Mr. Barnum stood and let Mr. Wilson down easy in consideration of his enterprise and pluck in assuming such a great responsibility.

Though financially Mr. Wilson's enterprise in bringing the Swedish nightingale to Madison was not a success, it did much toward advertising the old town abroad, as every newspaper in the United States had

something to say about Jenny Lind singing in a porkhouse at Madison, some of them even converting it into a slaughterhouse.

At this time Madison was putting on metropolitan airs. Indianapolis was a little country town without a daily paper—the *Weekly Journal and Sentinel* were only talking of starting dailies, while Madison could then boast of two first-class daily papers.

Jenny Lind was truly the greatest and sweetest singer of the nineteenth century. Neither Europe nor America have yet produced her equal and her like will not be seen or heard again. The following tribute to Miss Lind from *Our Dumb Animals* gives one an idea of the gentleness of character and the angelic inspiration in song that softened the heart of marble and conquered her bitterest rivals:

"We have recently read a beautiful incident. Jenny Lind and Grisi were rivals for popular favor in London. Both were invited to sing the same night at a court concert before the queen. Jenny Lind, being the younger, sang first, and was so disturbed by the fierce, scornful look of Grisi

that she was at the point of failure, when suddenly an inspiration came to her. The accompanist was striking the final chords. She asked him to rise, and took the vacant seat. Her fingers wandered over the keys in a loving prelude, and then she sang a little prayer which she had loved as a child. She hadn't sung it for years. As she sang she was no longer in the presence of royalty, but singing to loving friends in her fatherland. Softly at first the plaintive notes floated on the air, swelling louder and richer every moment. The singer seemed to throw her whole soul into that weird, thrilling, plaintive "prayer." Gradually the song died away and ended in a sob. There was a silence—the silence of admiring wonder. The audience sat spellbound. Jenny Lind lifted her sweet eyes to look into the scornful face that had so disconcerted her. There was no fierce expression now; instead a teardrop glistened on the long, black lashes, and after a moment, with the impulsiveness of a child of the tropics, Grisi crossed to Jenny Lind's side, placed her arm about her and kissed her, utterly regardless of the audience."