

The B'ham Eccentric's News Camera Records Melton's Concert—Rehearsal and Performance

The Birmingham Eccentric

Thursday, June 18, 1959

BIRMINGHAM,
MICHIGAN

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Are you, now and then, influenced by a desire to do or purchase something in order to satisfy an inner urge? Is this urge a sound one, the satisfying of which may bring you sound pleasure and/or profit . . . or is it motivated by a sense of vanity? It is well to think over the nature of your desire . . . because only when vanity is throttled is the urge sound.



Popular singer and former metropolitan opera tenor James Melton arrived at Birmingham high school's auditorium about four hours before his Arts Festival concert time. He seems to be saying, "Okay, Bert, let's start rehearsing." He was talking to accompanist Bert Farber, musical director of the Peter Lind Hayes shows.



Melton leaned on the piano, sang to try out the acoustics.

As the rehearsal progressed, the effort and the temperature caused Melton and Farber to take off their coats, loosen their collars, roll up their sleeves.



"How did that one sound?" Melton, Farber and Soprano Barbara Meister ask a rehearsal watcher. Meanwhile, "stagehands" continue to position spotlights, hang drapes and curtains.



In a midnight blue tuxedo, Melton gives out with his best during the evening's concert. He started by making the audience more comfortable in the auditorium's heat which at 8:30 p.m. was nearly 90. "Take off your coats, boys—that's the best we can do!" the famous tenor insisted. The coats came off without further urging.



Pretty Miss Meister "stole the show". Melton good naturedly accused her of it in front of the audience. But he was pleased to see the audience reaction. He has been helping train her since he "discovered" her four years ago.



After the performance, Miss Meister and Melton went to Bloomfield Hills where they were the honor guests at a small party given by Mr. and Mrs. Max Fruhauf (at left).



At the Fruhauf party to welcome the Arts Festival headliners were (from left) Festival Chairman Harvey A. Kresge, internationally-known sculptor Marshall Fredericks, and Festival Trustee Robert A. Thom.



An extra added attraction at Melton's concert was his friend, actor Walter Pidgeon, in Detroit for a commercial movie. He was met and welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Kresge.