

From handwritten Radio Script presumably
prepared for WINS @ New York, c. 1936

The performances were probably at the
Kammerspiele or Neue Theaters, Berlin.
Eleanor Duse

I have not researched
further.

Eleanor Duse, of whom I'd heard and thrilled over
as a child came into my life in Berlin. I had the honour
of meeting her more than once, and not just casually.
The genius of this woman inspired me beyond words to express.
One could see the great Art pouring forth from her innermost
soul. She differed from Bernhardt greatly. Duse made no
concessions, while Bernhardt, a born show woman knew and
employed every trick of the stage technique and voice to
gather her audience under her spell as the need arose. Duse
forgot her public, Bernhardt never forgot it.

Great, glowing, and thrilling, this pale quite
slim woman, whose whole soul was filled with inexhaustible
love and beauty - some for each of us who were privileged
to be near her at every moment of the day - yes, throughout
her whole life span- whose emotions were steeped deep in
the secrets of worlds apart from the everyday one - was
truly the greatest actress of our time. Eleanor Duse!

Hers was a personality whose magic swept one off
one's feet, long ere she had spoken. She held one spellbound
with a glance from her deep dark eyes. She will be remembered
throughout all time, for she is immortal.

Her deepest sorrows were born of a love for a man.
She bore them bravely and silently. I am grateful to have
known her, to have talked to her and received her constructive
criticism and approval when deserved as I did.

Many of you will envy me my good fortune. It was
in Berlin when we played at the same theatre at the same time,
alternate nights and matinees. So we came together ~~together~~
quite often. I had seen her from the front when she wove
a magic spell over one, but in the cold unflattering light
of the rehearsal stage, to me she was even greater. She
was a born artist, not one created by the rigid rules of
the academy. She was Art. You may not know, but Duse never
studied acting. Born almost on the stage to travelling stage
parents, the wee babe brought with her God's precious gift
of greatness. Instinctively, she did the right thing; trans-
lated the character for us flawlessly. The lessons I learned
studying her at these rehearsals and the advice and help she
gave me in my own Art, will ever be treasures to guard
for evermore.

One day she said to me " Quiet movements and silence are often more expressive than violent action and many words." She honoured me with her presence at my recitals several times, and the memory of her humorous dark eyes and beautiful smile has carried me over many rough places during my career.

Even today, when difficulties alter my plans, I think of her and see her smiling approvingly and I regain my courage. When Duse died the World lost the shining example of what an artist should be and of what a Great artist is made.

There are thousands hoping for fame but they will ever remain just good workmen/ The Great Artist is born, not made. I realized this even more while watching Duse at rehearsal.

If many of the theatre schools closed to-day, it would not matter to the stage. It would be a good thing, and the disappointments of many who strive honestly and hard to reach the heights but who can achieve so little, would be spared them.

A true Artist knows instinctively how to respond to natural impulses and to give full expression to the spiritual state. No one can teach her. She listens to the "still small voice" and follows it. So it was with Duse, whose heart and soul were precious jewels.

When my mind dwells on the Art of Duse and of Duse the woman. I marvel at her calm, for even in her day the world was growing restless. Today it is restless and the restlessness shows in the work of the Artist. The frantic endeavour to portray life as it is now, completely without order, brings certain kaleidoscope effects and terrific speed - perhaps in keeping with this modern world - yet it is a pity to espouse this sort of tempo with its irregularities. All effort in Art must be directed to endure through the ages and bring peace and completeness with it. Of course the Great War is responsible, I presume, for these reckless impulses, for the crying out for change, something new, exciting, revolutionary! But it will, it must pass. The pendulum will gradually swing back to normal. All the while, the methodical smoothly flowing speed of the universe, always the same, unchanging in its rhythm yet accomplishing everything, is carrying on toward our Destiny's solution!

Announcer

Theme

Announcement of Artist

Maud Allan

Introduction

ELLEN TERRY

What vivid pictures glide all too swiftly before the eyes of Memory! I have been far, seen much, and met many interesting people in many lands, people from all walks of life, from Royalty to poor souls wandering foot sore from place to place, seeking food and shelter, from great churchmen to criminals in great cities.

In spite of the exigencies of my professional work, I found time to go into the byways and to inquire into the lives of some of the many unfortunates to be found there. But tonight, from the lowest rung of the ladder to more favored levels in the glades of happy Memories and leave those that would tear at our heart strings for another time.

While roaming the Earth gaining experiences I had dreamed of since childhood, I thanked my star of Fate that had given me a talent so universally understandable that my ambitions could be realized and realized in the most enjoyable fashion. My professional engagements paid handsomely for what otherwise would have taken a small fortune to do. I came in contact with some people to whom I gave my devotion almost at first sight for different reasons, and to some others just for their honesty, simplicity and real faith in mankind. Just such a grand personality was our own Ellen Terry.

When I was a very small child, I often heard my Parents speak of Sarah Bernhardt with the Golden Voice, of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving the great portrayers of the immortal works of Shakespeare. I was told how all the world held them within the glow of Divinity. And of Eleanor Duse, how in 1892 she took Vienna by storm with every critic and the great public at her feet in adoration of her genius.

Little did I dream then that I would one day know these wonderful people and that the great and beautiful Ellen Terry would be my champion in a Court of Law in Sydney, Australia. Or that the Divine Sarah would welcome me into her own theatre in Paris and express her sincere admiration of my Art, and Duse would be in the same theatre with me at the same time!! But all this came to pass!

Shortly before she passed from our midst, Eleanor Terry was making a "lecture Tour" in Down Under, as one says of Australia and New Zealand. I, too, was touring there

and our paths met in Auckland, in the same hotel. Her suite was on the floor below mine and for a time we could only pass little notes because Miss Terry was not very well, and I was rushed making ~~me~~ many appearances and keeping social engagements. I went to her when free to give her the local gossip which amused her very much. I attended her lecture and oh! how beautiful she was standing beside a small lectern upon which lay her manuscript- beautiful indeed in a flowing gown of rich material and soft rays of light ~~light~~ falling gently from above her proud head!

With eyesight failing reading was very difficult for Ellen Terry and as her memory was faulty the manuscript was necessary, and had to be written in very large script.

Her voice was weakened from illness, and had lost much of its clarity and elasticity yet, in an amazing way, she rose above these handicaps and delivered the lines with such beauty of tone, quality of emphasis and purity of diction that I wept. She was thrilling and wonderful. The audience at first was hushed; a sacred silence prevailed for several seconds, then broke into deafening cheers. Her gladness and appreciation is a cherished memory.

I had looked forward to the inspiration of her presence on my opening night. Alas, she was under Doctor's orders to remain in bed. Exhausted from the strain of a long sea voyage, train journeys, she had to conserve her failing strength for her Public. But a sweet note and glorious flowers brought me messages of Good Luck and best Wishes. After my concert, I hurried to her. How did I find this great artist? I found her propped up by many cushions, playing with all the odd souvenirs and dolls she had collected while on Tour! Quite as a beautiful child and as delighted and as delightful to see.

But that beautiful one knew how to bring curses down on the head of the "idiotic doctor" who had chained her to her bed when she wished to float away to the world of fairies with me!

I was so happy to be with her. We talked of our arts and how closely they were related and to music; of the many tours that had taken us to as many lands and to America. I told her it was there that I first heard of her when I ~~was~~ was but a child, and my parents were guiding my thoughts into the channels of the great people, and how I tried to envisage her while dancing in childish glee to the rhythm of the waving corn and the music of the rippling streams of California.

"America!" she exclaimed. "How I suffered on those one night stands I was compelled to make in that vast country. I rushed from town to town sleeping in the train and rarely seeing a comfortable hotel. bed or having a good hot bath for days or weeks on end! It made acting difficult but I loved the people, so simple, so generous, so honest. But I don't want to go there again, it is too far!"

she said this with a far-away glance, sad eyes. Memories of happenings we knew not of must have crossed her thought. I did not question her. She was not there for several moments. Then she said "How glad I am all that agony is behind me!"

But was it? Here now she was, doing almost exactly the same thing and without youth to help her. It made me sad to think it was necessary for her to be on tour at her advanced age and in a country even further away from her beloved England, with travel at that time no more comfortable than it was in America.

Dear, beautiful unforgettable Ellen Terry.

In Sydney, I met with an accident that was caused by a hole in the floor of the stage. It was a severe accident and interrupted my engagements for many weeks. When recovered, I went to Western Australia to take the dates that had been booked before.

When I returned to Sydney and opened at another theatre, the management of the first theatre sued me for breach of contract. The fault was entirely the theatre's, yet the case dragged on for several wearisome days. Just as the battle had been fought and the jury had filed out to deliberate, who should enter the Court room but Ellen Terry. Quite out of breath she almost-shouted-to-me-said "My dear, I have just arrived from New Zealand and hearing of this case I have come direct from the boat to you. Can I help any?"

Impatiently she waited for the Jury to return and then said for all to hear "Why, it is quite simple - you were injured and the stage did have a hole in it large enough to cause such an accident, so why on earth are the jurymen so slow in deciding?" She was quite willing to gate crash the jury room.

Of course the ovation she received was tremendous.

I had to rush off to give a matinee but Ellen Terry awaited the decision and about an hour later I saw her and the opposing Counsel, of all people, standing in the wings, smiling at me, Ellen waving her hands and blowing kisses to me while I floated across the stage to the strains of an enchanting Chopin Waltz. I didn't have to ask who had won!

In summing up the learned Judge side stepped and congratulated me upon my "tidy mind" - to quote him and of the way I helped defend myself. He then said "If ever you wish to give up dancing, Miss Allan, I suggest you read for the Bar. I consider you eminently fitted for such a profession." I was flattered indeed.

When Ellen Terry and I parted she went North and I, south. I did not see her again until I returned to London several years later [November 1916]

An Amusing Incident

In Melbourne several very amusing things happened during my fairly long visit there. One in particular might give you a good laugh. I'm sure it did me.

I remember being received with great ceremony by several important members of an Art Group at an afternoon reception given in my honor. The invitations had been sent out for some time and many of considerable social importance had accepted.

The red carpet was spread down the long flight of stairs leading from the very imposing entrance across the sidewalk to the curb - and there stopped and in all its glory waited for me.

I felt quite like royalty must feel when I arrived. Rows of young children dressed in dainty white frocks showered the steps with flowers and when I reached the top a tiny maiden gave me a lovely bouquet - and the Committee escorted me within the building with great friendliness. It was all very lovely - beautifully arranged and charming conversation with most charming people made me happy.

I responded to the greetings with my appreciation and also expressed admiration of the work of the children who had danced quite beautifully for me.

Between times I managed to refresh myself with a cup of excellent tea and all sorts of goodies - and plan my escape. It was already late and I had a recital to be ready for in two hours.

The amusing part of this little episode is that about three weeks later my Manager received the bill for the cost of this reception! Did we laugh! I have never to this day been able to find out why. Perhaps I had disappointed them or was it a way to collect funds for the group of artists who gave the reception? I don't know, but it was funny - and one on me, so we all had a good laugh. I must very quickly say, however, that that is not the usual Australian manner. I found them a most hospitable and friendly people, going far out of their way to bring happiness and comfort to the visitors within their gates.

Dame Nellie Melba

A pleasurable surprise awaited me on my opening night in Melbourne at the Auditorium. The atmosphere was electric, the large concert hall was packed with an eager audience, and I wanted to give of my best. But I was tired. We had had many obstacles to overcome, for appearing in a Concert Hall with only the usual lighting system is discouraging, and my electricians had to arrange a system of stage lighting installed in the corner boxes of the Circle and Centre back. Then it had to be all tried out and that is a fatiguing business at best.

Just before I stepped on to the stage my Company Director brought me the news that Madame Melba was in the audience. I nearly passed out because I was so tired I suppose.

I had appeared before many great people and for Nellie Melba many times in London, but Melba in her home town seemed somehow different. I can't say why - just something one feels and words can't describe. With her came that charming, handsome and gallant Lord Richard Neville whom I had met many times in London.

All went well, and I turned at the close to bow to the Queen of Song. To my embarrassment she was leaving her box! Can you imagine my feelings? The blood rose in my cheeks and I wanted to cry but bowing bravely to the enthusiastic audience I left the stage.

Continued applause made my return to the footlights necessary and then I saw Mme. Melba and a bevy of young ladies laden with flowers coming smiling down the centre aisle. At her command I was showered with these gorgeous blossoms from the stalls, more from the corner boxes of the circle, till the stage was a huge flower drift in which I was standing almost knee high.

It was only later when I came to the footlights to express my thanks that I saw several huge laundry baskets which had contained hundreds of roses and petals, and now empty. Such was Nellie Melba's offering from her home called Lilydale. She did this and showed her real appreciation of my Art.

I visited with her at her beautiful home Combe Cottage - not far from Melbourne. The large living room opened on to a terrace leading to her heavenly garden. I heard the hum of the bees, the songs of the birds, and inhaled the heavy scent of rare flowers. In her room, exquisitely furnished with antiques, were proudly displayed the trophies of her triumphs & Royal appreciations.

Melba possessed the purest voice, I think, that ever was, a voice as clear as the light from the brightest star and as cool as the water from a crystal fountain; white - pure white - as a snow drift.

Yet she never stirred me with her singing. She seemed never to have lived, never to have loved and experienced love's heartaches, yet we know she had loved - but her voice remained cool and calm. At the time I was with her at Lilydale she was going through trouble that touched her deeply. She wept as she told me in the seclusion of my Hotel room one day when she lunched with me, of the sorrow disturbing her peace of mind yet with it all, it never touched her voice. Strange.

One day I came near giving up. Four troubles caught me and everything seemed at sixes and sevens. I wanted to leave everything and go back to England.

I sent for Melba, and bless her, she came and said "my dear, go on! Never let the public know your difficulties and never your sorrows. They pay to see you at your best - free from back stage difficulties - and if they think you are not in form they are hurt to have spent money on you. You must remember money does strange things to some people, so keep your own counsel, smile and keep on smiling. And if you must give way to tears, do so in secret, when the lights are out and before the sun comes up."

Much is true of what she advised me.

I was happy in her company during that Melbourne visit. Just at this time her thoughts seemed to be constantly with her son whom she loved beyond all others, even beyond her Art.

When Dame Melba passed away I lost a friend ever ready with helpful advice to smooth out the rough places over which an Artist has to travel. It is not all with us stage folks as the audience sees us - bathed in the lights of the world in which our Art carries us. On the stage we give you the finished work after days and months, even years, of hard work striving for perfection through disappointments, heartaches and tears.