



Eva Turner, O.U.'s visiting professor of voice, instructs one of her pupils. At the University since 1949, her training is producing top-flight singers.

## ALL ABOUT EVA

In 1949 Eva Turner, England's great prima donna arrived at O.U. as a visiting professor. Her 7-year visit has given Oklahoma voice students a chance to be coached by a master.

By CAROLYN GOOD, '56journ

**A**T THIRTEEN, Eva Turner's father took her to her first opera. The bright-eyed little girl, tingling with the excitement of the performance, decided then to become an opera star. By 1937, she had received so much acclaim that she was asked to sing the British national anthem at Covent Gardens on the coronation night of King George VI. Today, she is at O.U. teaching voice production to some of Oklahoma's most talented young musicians.

Eva Turner, as one English writer said, "has attained a supreme place at the top of her profession." But success did not just

happen to her. She, like so many others, worked long and hard to earn it.

She was born in Oldham, Lancashire, England, the daughter of an engineer. As she herself says, the Turner family was musical "only in a simple way—hymns, and that sort of thing."

But with Eva, it was different. From the time that she saw the first performance of *Il Trovatore* with her father, she was "fired with the ambition to become an opera star and could think of nothing else."

Her father soon sent her to the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she

studied diction, harmony and piano. She was not an outstanding voice pupil, for it was suggested there that she might be able, if she really applied herself, to make the piano her career!

In 1916, she joined the chorus of the Carl Rosa Opera company for a year's experience on the stage. There she sang such roles as Kate Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly* and Musetta in *La Boheme*. Eva studied harder than ever under her coach Richard Broad, for now her voice was maturing and developing.

Then in 1924, a friend of Arturo Tos-

canini heard her singing in London and asked her to go to Milan to audition before the great maestro. She had only memorized one aria in Italian. This she sang for Toscanini, and, as Miss Turner puts it, she "was offered a contract forthwith."

She opened in November of 1924 in Milan at La Scala, one of the most celebrated opera houses in the world. She was an immediate success, and it was during this stay in Italy that she was urged to change her name. She refused, and has kept her own short, simple and very English Eva Turner.

Four years later, after touring Italy, Germany, South and Central America, she was invited back to England, where her voice had not yet been recognized. It was on this return that she sang her most famous role, Puccini's *Turandot*. Miss Turner portrayed in this great opera a beautiful and cruel Chinese princess, who decreed that any suitor must answer three riddles before he might marry her. If he were wrong on any of the three, he would be beheaded. The Prince of Tartary finally answered the riddles and won the love of the princess.

The music in the role of *Turandot* is very high, and, as one writer has said, "calls for almost superhuman power and effort." Eva Turner has been hailed as the world's greatest *Turandot*.

From that time on, success followed success. She toured the world, singing in such cities as Rome, Naples, Vienna, Lisbon, Athens, Copenhagen and Chicago. When she sang in Chicago, she received one of her most cherished compliments. Amelita Galli-Curci said, "I came out of curiosity to hear you in just one act, but you kept me to the end."

Even the most accomplished stars, though, can have their embarrassing moments. In the death scene of the opera *Tosca*, Miss Turner, as *Tosca*, had to throw herself from the top of Hadrian's castle. This meant landing on a mattress located behind the set below. During one performance, she threw herself from the tower with much more gusto than usual. So much more, in fact, that the dead *Tosca* bounced up again in full sight of the audience—and very much alive!

In 1940, when the war came, Miss Turner was in Italy. She was the last English singer to perform there before Mussolini entered the war and the last foreigner to leave Italy in February of that same year. Even though she could have gone to safer places, she chose to return to England.

There Miss Turner entertained the troops and broadcast many times from beneath the Memorial Theater at Stratford-on-Avon while the German planes were

passing overhead. Then one afternoon in July, 1944, a flying bomb hit and destroyed her home, but Miss Turner had fortunately gone out for a few minutes.

After the war Miss Turner received a letter from Joseph Benton, '20ba, '21fa, '41ma, an opera star she had known in Italy in 1929. They had met one very hot day in Milan, in the summer of 1929. Miss Turner had invited Benton up to her villa on the Lake of Lugano for a swim. They had become good friends and had written often until the war broke out.

Then in 1949, Miss Turner heard from him again. This time his letter told her of a vacancy on the music staff of the University of Oklahoma, where he was teaching. Would she come as a visiting professor for one term? She did come and has been teaching here since.

Miss Turner loves to tell the story that went around London's musical circles after she made her rather hurried departure for Oklahoma in 1949. The famous Rogers and Hammerstein musical, *Oklahoma!* had been playing down the street from Covent Gardens just before she left London. One day a group of Miss Turner's friends were talking, when one of them remarked that he "hadn't seen Eva's name at the Royal Albert Hall or Covent Gardens recently."

"Oh," the other replied, "didn't you know? She is in Oklahoma now."

"Good Heavens!" the first exclaimed. "What role?"

That was in 1949, and she is now entering her seventh year as professor of music at O.U. When asked how much longer she intends to remain here, she only re-

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Eva Turner as she appeared in *Turandot*. As the Chinese princess in the opera, she sang music that "calls for almost superhuman power." Miss Turner's *Turandot* is considered world's best.

ber of Sigma Chi fraternity at O.U.

Lieut. Lee R. Bondurant, '54bus, Edmond, has graduated from the basic infantry officers course at Fort Benning, Georgia. Lieutenant Bondurant was industrial engineer for Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Company before entering the Army. He is a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity.

Lieut. James G. Grissom, '54bus, Oklahoma City, graduated recently from the infantry officers course at Fort Benning, Georgia. Lieutenant Grissom was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity at O.U.

Paula Bucy, '54bfa, Norman, is playing in the cello section of the Houston Symphony this winter. Miss Bucy had been playing with the Oklahoma City Symphony.

R. Clarke Mullen, '54bfa, Cushing, presented a special recital at O.U. late in November. The program he presented was the one he prepared as his project while studying in Paris last year on a Fulbright Scholarship. Mullen won the Wichita Falls Symphony Young Artist competition in 1954, the first time the award had been won by an Oklahoman.

**MARRIAGES:** Miss Patricia Ann Payne, '54 Lib.sci, Bethany, and Clarence Darrow Colley, Memphis, Tennessee, were married November 25 in Putnam City. The Colleys are living in Waco, Texas.

Miss Janet Stewart Myers, and Henry Beauford Taliaferro, Jr., '54ba, both of Oklahoma City, were married November 23. Mrs. Taliaferro attended Southern Methodist University where she was a member of Pi Beta Phi sorority. Taliaferro, a senior in the O.U. Law School, served as president of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. The couple is living in Norman.

**BIRTH:** Lieut. David B. Wilson, '54geol, Enid, and Mrs. Wilson have chosen the name Madeline Louise Wilson for their daughter born December 11 in Oklahoma City. Mrs. Wilson is the former Miss Carolyn Peek of Oklahoma City.

## 1955

Nancy Widener, '55bfa, got right "into the swing of things" recently when she supervised the senior class play at Classen High School in Oklahoma City. She directed the production of "Curious Savage." Miss Widener, who studied drama, had a leading role in the same play during her undergraduate days at O.U.

Alan F. Griffith, '55eng, won the national paper competition sponsored by the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineering this fall. Griffith is employed by the Great Plains Development Company in Calgary, Canada.

Clark LeGate, '55Law, Ardmore attorney, has formed a law partnership with Wilson Wallace, '37ba, '39Law, with offices in the Champion Building.

Ensign Max W. Dixon, '55eng, Enid, recently made his first solo flight at Whiting Field Naval Auxiliary Air Station at Milton, Florida.

James A. Robinson, '55ma, Blackwell, won a first-place award for research given by the Daughters of the American Revolution. He was presented a \$50 savings bond for his thesis on "Loyalty Investigations and Legislation in Oklahoma."

George H. Anderson, '55bus, Tulsa, recently passed the certified public accountant examination given by the state board of accountancy.

Ensign Larry B. Flood, '55ba, Norman, recently completed his first solo flight at Whiting Field Naval Auxiliary Air Station in Milton, Florida.

Joe Shirley, '55m.ed, Holdenville, is teaching in the elementary grades at Holdenville. Shirley received his bachelor's degree from East Central State at Ada.

Lieut. Paul L. Babiak, '55bs, Tulsa, graduated

this fall from the Army's basic infantry officers course at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Lieut. Henry D. Johnson Jr., '55ba, has graduated from the basic infantry officers course at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Marine Lieut. Edward L. Apple, '55bus, Tulsa, has graduated from the Naval Pre-Flight School at Pensacola, Florida. Lieutenant Apple is a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

William E. Feemster, '55eng, is now employed by the Stanolind Oil and Gas Company as a junior petroleum engineer in the company's Odessa, Texas, producing department.

Miss Betty Dahlgreen, '55ba, Oklahoma City, is now the field director of the Sowela Council of Camp Fire Girls at Lake Charles, Louisiana. She was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority at O.U.

Lieut. Forrest Dale Harper, '55geol., Oklahoma City, is stationed with the Army at Abredeem Proving Ground, Maryland. Mrs. Harper (the former Phyllis Nan Baird of Yukon) accompanied her husband to Maryland.

**MARRIAGES:** Miss Nancy Belle Goudelock, '55bus, Oklahoma City, and John Arthur Wheat, '52-'55, Marlow, were married November 22. Mrs. Wheat served as president of Alpha Delta Pi sorority and Wheat was associated with Kappa Delta Rho fraternity. The couple has established a home in Norman, where he is a junior in the O.U. School of Pharmacy.

Miss Mary Lou Kirk, '54-'55, Norman, and Richard Peltier, '55bfa, Purcell, were married recently in Norman. The couple is making its home in Norman until Peltier enters the Army in December.

Miss Nancy Elizabeth King, '55, Oklahoma City, and Ensign Gerald Leo Glahn, '55eng, Bartlesville, were married November 26 in Oklahoma City. Mrs. King is a member of Gamma Phi Beta sorority and Glahn served as president of Theta Kappa Phi fraternity. The couple is living in Norfolk, Virginia, where he is stationed at Portsmouth Navy Base.

Miss Bettie Sue Hill, Oklahoma City, and Tommy Lyle Tolbert, '55bs, Minco, were married November 19 in Oklahoma City. Mrs. Tolbert is a member of Alpha Delta Pi sorority and Tolbert is associated with Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. They have established a home in Norman.

Miss Joe Ann Keeley, '55nurs, Norman, and Norvall Reed Clark, Oklahoma City, were married this fall in Norman. The Clarks are living in Oklahoma City, where Mrs. Clark is an assistant instructor in general nursery at the University Hospitals. Clark is studying engineering at O.U.

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plied, "Well, dear, I *do* seem to stay on, don't I?"

Why has she chosen to stay? Miss Turner says, "Because I love the people of Oklahoma, and I enjoy so much working with young people. They are very enthusiastic, you know."

Since she began teaching, Miss Turner has turned out some very successful, as well as enthusiastic, students. Bill Harper won a Fulbright scholarship last year, and this year it was renewed. He flew home from Italy in December to sing the lead in the *Student Prince*, presented at Oklahoma City's Municipal Auditorium.

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Another pupil, Dick Anderson, sang this past summer with the Pittsburgh Opera Workshop, where he was immediately chosen for the principal roles.

Judy Coleman won the Catherine Long award and is now teaching at Kansas State college. Nelva Templeton, another successful student, received a Rotary International scholarship in 1954 to study one year in Italy.

Miss Turner is as dedicated to teaching as she has always been dedicated to everything she does. As one of her pupils says,

"Yes, she's a hard taskmaster, but her own vitality and enthusiasm make you *want* to work and to succeed. She's a perfectionist, but you love her for it, because she is so wholeheartedly interested in every one of her students."

Eva Turner is a dynamic and forceful, yet a warmly sympathetic person. She has had a fulfilling life. As one critic said, "No English singer, man or woman, has earned greater admiration and respect in the opera houses of the world than Eva Turner."

Yet she is humble and unassuming. She

wants most of all to see young people realize their own potentialities.

As she expresses it: "If you want to achieve, everything else must be put aside. You must go straight ahead, always toward your objective. This must be your goal, and you must keep to it. There is *no other way*."

For Eva Turner—prima donna, teacher, and person—there was no other way. For those who follow after her to achieve the full measure of success, there will be no other way.

## The Student and the Museum . . .

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perts." Every month a new object of scientific or historical interest is put on display in a special case in the Museum. Students may buy entry blanks to the contest for a dime. The winner who identifies the object collects all the money accumulated during the month from the sale of these entry blanks.

- d) The Museum lecture and conference room is open for use by student clubs that are also free to use the screen and projector of the Museum while in this room.
- e) Since the students have so little time to visit the Museum during class hours, the Museum is now open from 7-10 on Monday evenings. This has resulted in a significant increase in student attendance (489 individuals in five months). The Museum is also open before and after foot-

ball and basketball games and spot announcements are made to this effect during the games.

- f) The University Museum co-operates with the student newspaper. Student reporters visit the Museum twice a week for news items on museum activities. Whenever possible, photographs of new exhibits or acquisitions to the Museum are made with pretty and popular co-eds or campus sports heroes.
- g) Members of the Museum staff frequently participate in the University radio and television programs. On the television program students appeared in costumes and displayed objects from the Museum collections.
- h) There is a bulletin board by the main door of the Museum which displays comic cartoons related to Museum matters. This proved to be an attraction to students passing by and frequently served to draw them into the Museum.
- i) The installation of a sales desk created quite a bit of interest among the students because of the attractive replicas of ancient jewelry. Besides attracting students to the Museum, we also succeeded in selling numerous Museum publications on scientific subjects to those who came to see the jewelry.
- j) The University Museum has inaugurated a monthly Lecture Series in which scientific subjects relating to material in the Museum are presented in a semi-popular form, frequently with the aid of slides and movies. At the beginning of the series faculty and townspeople far outnumbered the students in the audience, but this situation has gradually reversed itself during the course of the year.
- k) Personnel of the Museum frequently are invited to give talks to student clubs at which time special mention is made of current museum activities.
- l) Each semester the University Museum holds an "open house" in the evening and serves simple refreshments. Faculty, students, and townspeople are invited. We have noticed that student attendance is steadily increasing.

Since these efforts have been made for a closer and freer cooperation between students and the University Museum we have received a correspondingly greater number of gifts and loans from students who have collected items of interest while abroad or from foreign students who are studying in this country. Several students have even come into the Museum to inquire what they could collect for the Museum while on vacation in Latin America, Canada, or Europe. We consider this to be an unexpected success and a direct result of our efforts to bring the Museum closer to the students. Another point which must not be underestimated is that the student who becomes interested in his Museum while at the University will one day become an alumnus and a potential patron of the University. We certainly want him to be proud of his museum as he undoubtedly is of his football team.

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