

## **Verbundkatalog Kalliope**

**Yank about Italy.**

**Mann, Klaus**

**Florenz, 1945-02-14**

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# YANK

## About

# ITALY

Special to The Stars and Stripes

FLORENCE—There are many kinds of jobs in this big, colorful Army of ours. S-Sgt. Hans Busch, for instance, has a rather unusual one: He directs operas at the *Teatro Verdi* in Florence.

When I asked him how he liked his assignment, he grinned: "Do you know what my father says? The theater is a madhouse, and the opera is the department for the incurable."

His father should know; he is Fritz Busch—one of the outstanding operatic and symphonic conductors of our time, formerly the musical director of the famous Dresden Opera. When the Nazis came to power, in 1933, Busch Sr. felt that he no longer wished to stay in Germany—notwithstanding the fact that as a 100 percent "Aryan" he had been offered a nice, profitable position. He left the Third Reich, together with his brother, Adolf Busch, the distinguished violinist, and with his son, Hans, who was about 19 years old at that time.

### Theater First . . .

While the elder Busch opera is above all a musical affair, Hans is primarily and professionally interested in the theatrical aspects of operatic production. The first *Maestro* under whose guidance Hans worked, or rather studied, was no less than Toscanini. The next stages of his theatrical career were at Stockholm, Sweden, where he produced operas at the Royal Opera House, in collaboration with his father; Glyndebourne, England, where the Buschs, father and son, contributed to the success of the summer Mozart Festivals; then South America, and finally New York. It was there that Hans Busch worked under the auspices of the New Opera Company.

When the U. S. entered the war, Busch—a passionate anti-Nazi—was anxious to join the Army, but not yet being an American citizen at the time, he had to wait until he was drafted. He has been overseas for two years—first with AMG, then with the Allied Commission—and has seen quite a bit of the Italian campaign, especially at Salerno where he arrived with an advanced party. At Naples he was stationed as a chief clerk at the *Municipio*. After a short stay in Rome, he was transferred to the Allied Commission and was sent to Florence.

"It was like coming home," Sgt. Busch said. "I had been in Florence before. In fact, it was right here, at the Florence Opera, that I had my first tryout as a director—12 years ago, in 1933, when they were still having here their famous spring festivals. So, of course, I knew everybody connected with the opera, from *Maestro Serafin* down to the last stage hand."

### Normal Reunion . . .

It was only natural, then, that Sgt. Busch came in contact with his old friends again—and it was hardly surprising that they asked him to work for them. The necessary arrangements were made, and the *Teatro Verdi* had a new director—or rather, had found one of its old directors again—"by courtesy of the U. S. Army."

"Frankly, it's the last thing I expected to do in the Army—to go back to my old job," the GI opera director confessed. "In fact, I tried to keep away from Special Services for which I was earmarked at the Induction Center. I thought my knowledge of five languages could be utilized more effectively in some other branch of the service. But there we are: It seems to be my fate . . ."

During the past few weeks Sgt. Busch has directed Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, a lovely humorous opera, not yet sufficiently known to American friends of music—and Verdi's popular *Traviata* and *Aida*. Right now, he is busy preparing a new production of *Carmen*, starring an American singer, Edwina Eustis, of the USO.

Sgt. Busch's "ideal" of an operatic production is imaginative and unconventional, without being excessively experimental or revolutionary. To him the opera, as a very special, quite unique form of art and musical-dramatic entertainment, is something very much alive—something that can be, has to be, developed and improved. "After all, the theater is not a museum," he says. "There are so many obsolete traditions that have to be overcome, so many trite clichés that must be done away with."

—Sgt. KLAUS MANN