

Fodor-Mainvielle, Josephine. 1793-

A celebrated singer; born in Paris; the daughter of a composer and violinist, Joseph Fodor. She early showed a taste for music, playing the piano and harp when only eleven. She made her debut at the Imperial Theatre, St. Petersburg, in 1810, and when nineteen years old was married to M. Mainvielle, an actor at the Theatre Français. Shortly afterwards she made her appearance as a singer at Stockholm and at Copenhagen. In 1814 she sang in Paris at the Opéra Comique, and afterwards succeeded Catalani in Italian Opera. She was introduced to the London public in 1816 at the King's Theatre, and the engagement was a successful one, Mme. Fodor-Mainvielle making her bow as Griselda in an opera of the same name. She appeared for three seasons at that theatre as prima donna, singing to great applause in The Marriage of Figaro, as Zerlina in Don Giovanni, and as Rosina in The Barber of Seville. She sang with great success in Venice also, was crowned and complimented by having a gold medal struck in her honor. Her greatest successes, however, were made in Italian Opera at Paris, where she achieved a series of triumphs lasting several years. Her voice was then of exceeding sweetness and faultless intonation and flexibility. It suddenly left her in Paris, while she was singing in Semiramide. After a sojourn in Italy for her health it returned, but was never again as beautiful and its charm was gone. Finally, Mme. Fodor-Mainvielle retired to Fontainebleau to pass her remaining years. Her last appearance was made at Bordeaux in 1833. In 1857 she published a work entitled Reflections on the Art of Singing. Her style is said to have served as a model for Sontag, and was held in the highest esteem by musicians of her time, Mendelssohn having a great admiration for her.

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