

New Friends

Schoenberg Songs, Brahms and Mozart Trios Heard

By Jerome D. Bohm

The New Friends of Music gave their third concert of the season in Town Hall yesterday afternoon. The program held Mozart's Trio in B flat (K. 502) and Brahms's Trio in C, Op. 87, played by the Alben-eri Trio, and Schoenberg's Songs, Op. 6, "Traumleben," "Verlassen," "Ghasel," "Lockung" and "Der Wanderer," sung by Louise Bernhardt, contralto, with Dika Newlin at the piano.

A piano trio is, for this writer, one of the least satisfactory of ensembles because of the discrepancy between the sound of the piano and the stringed instruments and because the problem of achieving an adjustment of dynamic values whereby the percussion instrument does not outweigh the violin and cello is one which is seldom solved.

Although Eric Itor Kahn is an excellent musician as well as a skillful pianist, he was unable to subordinate his playing sufficiently, excepting in the larghetto of the Mozart trio, which was movingly set forth and with agreeable tonal investiture, to avoid the impression that both the Mozart and Brahms trios were piano works in which the violin and cello were of secondary importance. The blame was, however, not entirely his by any means, for Mr. Ciompi's violin tone sounded for the most part undernourished, and if one had not seen Mr. Heifetz actually playing the cello it would often have seemed as if that instrument were not being used so evanescent were its sounds.

Schoenberg's songs, Op. 6, although influenced by Wagner, Brahms and Mahler, already point the way to his later atonal products. They are sufficiently individual in style and sensitive in their realization of their poetic texts to be genuinely affecting. Miss Bernhardt sang them understandingly, but she has been known to handle her voluptuous voice more expertly; for while her lower and middle tones emerged for the most part well pointed her top tones were projected in disaffectingly spread fashion. Miss Newlin had memorized the accompaniments and played them with extraordinary musical perceptiveness.