

## Barati Leads Local Group Before Flying to Honolulu

By ALEXANDER FRIED

TODAY THIS city's George Barati will go by plane to be guest conductor of the Honolulu Symphony for two months.

Before leaving, he conducted his Barati Chamber Orchestra with characteristic keen ability and enterprise in an interesting concert of unusual music Monday night at the Veterans' Auditorium.

Apparently his two most unfamiliar selections—Schoenberg's "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte" (after Byron) and Richard Strauss' "Metamorphoses" for twenty-three strings—had hogged his rehearsal time.

Hence the Bach C minor Two-Violin Concerto (written originally for two pianos, in fact) came off hurriedly and unsteadily. But the other two performances were sure and absorbing.

"Metamorphoses," a late Strauss work, is in the 'Rosenkavalier' style of flowingly full, complex sonorities, romantic glow and exaltation. At first it seemed garrulous, but soon became quite beautiful and warm.

Words and music, when combined, tend to fight each other. If you listen closely to the words, you forget the music, and vice versa. In this connection, American music lovers have long since decided that music is more important than words. That is why they actually prefer opera and Lieder in foreign languages, in which the words are there but don't bother them.

Barati did a good thing, at public request, in playing the "Ode" twice. The first time I concentrated on Byron's text, with its vigorous attack on dictatorship. The second time, I listened to the music.

Written in the famous atonal style (totally dissonant by past standards), Schoenberg's score undoubtedly has some queerly novel, interesting sounds spread through it. Since it is so strange,

the atmosphere that it added to Byron's words was anything but banal.

Yet in the long run the piece developed little emotional fascination. While it had its own sort of tonal shapes and impacts, they seemed capricious to the point of eccentricity, and even of triviality.

Reider Torsen spoke the text clearly and intelligently. But a deeper, more drastic sound of voice might have served the work still better. In the Bach, duettists were the excellent Frank Houser and Felix Khuner.