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MUSIC

MILSTEIN WINS FAVOR

By NORMAN C. HOUK

The rondo theme of the last movement of the Lalo "Symphonie Espagnole" is one of those things that gallops all the way home with you after a concert, and possibly on into your slumbers. And the vivid impression Nathan Milstein made Friday night, playing the Lalo with the Minneapolis Symphony orchestra made the tune practically indelible.

For that matter, the whole of the Lalo was something to remember, the slow third movement in particular. The immaculate technique of Milstein allows the music to flow unimpeded by difficulties and equally unbeset by the distractions of virtuosity for its own sake. He gave the "Symphonie Espagnole" a hot-blooded authenticity, and the orchestra under Dimitri Mitropoulos provided support keyed perfectly to its spirit.

For encores he gave the Allegro from the Bach Violin Sonata in D Minor and the Paganini Caprice No. 24.

To Nancy Ness, Norwegian dramatic soprano, must go a heaping measure of credit for her part in presentation by the orchestra's strings of an arrangement of the controversial Schoenberg Quartet for Strings, No. 2 in F-sharp Minor, Opus 10, with soprano voice in the third and fourth movements. The vocal line is not only dissociated from the instrumental line but also at times in close conflict with it. Miss Ness, however, sang with assurance and dramatic fervor evidently based on the

closest study of the work and grasp of its significance.

The Schoenberg of this work progresses from the "Verklaerte Nacht," and is not so hard to listen to as it is hard to "hear," for although it is by no means inaccessible, it is music on an esoteric and mystical plane. Based on poems of Stefan George of Germany (1868-1933), the theme is weariness of the passion and strife of life and the tranquility of death. The muted strings and vague and shifting tonality (if any) of the transcendent final movement create an eerie unworldliness almost unbelievable. Miss Ness surmounted the difficulties with a competence which allowed her to give ample thought to interpretation and there were hints of her European opera background.

She also sang with sympathy and understanding two Grieg songs, "Solvieg's Slumber Song" and "From Mount Pincio," the latter, although Italian, bearing the stamp of the composer's penchant for the coloring of the folk music of his native Norway. It would have been nice to hear the singer in some standard operatic aria, but at that point it probably would not have been appropriate programming.

Other item of the evening was the Haydn Symphony No. 88 in G Major, which opened the program. Played with enthusiasm and good style, if not quite perfection, it was well received.