

Oct. 22, 1948

I am writing a letter of protest against this lying, ridiculous review! H.C.

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Szigeti Plays Brahms With the Philharmonic

By JOHN BRIGGS

Dimitri Mitropoulos led the Philharmonic-Symphony last evening in a Carnegie Hall concert

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which in one listener's opinion, did not reflect much glory on anyone concerned.

There was a Schoenberg work, his "Five Orchestral Pieces" composed 39 years ago and now a dated Museum piece. Mr. Biancolli's program note describes amusingly the furore created by the work at its first performance. But nowadays everybody has heard Schoenberg ad nauseam. The shock value of the work is gone and with it, apparently, most of the reason for playing it.

Pieces of this sort always remind me of one of those imitation fireplaces to be found in city apartments. It gives off light but not heat. It is phony, contrived, a simulation rather than the real thing. If a reviewer who attends concerts regularly is any judge of audience reaction, the lukewarm spatter of applause that followed meant that last night's audience found the "Five Pieces" merely something to sit through

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before getting down to serious business with Schumann's "Rhenish" Symphony.

The latter, however, proved to be a rather routine performance, hardly up to the level of the orchestra's best doings under Mr. Mitropoulos.

Next came the Brahms Violin Concerto, with Joseph Szigeti as soloist. Mr. Szigeti is in his way one of our most gifted violinists, and the Szigeti cult is a numerous one; but I hope I may be forgiven the observation that the Brahms Concerto calls for endowments of rather a different sort.

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Mr. Szigeti's playing of the opening movement was rhythmically unsteady, frequently out of tune, not cleanly articulated in general the sort of thing which in a younger and less distinguished artist would be called

untidy performance. The found things more to his in the adagio, though even his playing was sometimes ed, lifeless and at variance the manner one generally it played.

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