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Music

Doc 5, 1949

Perlea Scores Again With Fine 'Rigoletto'

By ROBERT BAGAR.

Not one Italian name graced the program for the "Rigoletto" given at the Metropolitan last evening. The performance was the best I have heard of this work in quite some time.

The above statement must be considered separate and totally unrelated ones, from which no misleading conclusions may be drawn. If they reflect, however, changing times and waning conventions, which they most certainly do, we may then be permitted to congratulate ourselves upon our coming into an operatic majority.

This "Rigoletto," first of the season and given for the benefit of the Yeshiva University Women's Organization, was rendered so very skillfully and effectingly, because it was compacted of elements that were all in harmony, all beautifully integrated. And the great credit for that went to the superior job of conducting turned in by Jonel Perlea.

Versatile Batonist.

So far this new director has been in charge of two productions at the Met—"Tristan" and "Rigoletto." Next Wednesday evening he turns to "Carmen." And when the Metropolitan has last had so competent and versatile a man of the baton I cannot out of personal experience recall.

Mr. Perlea labors with a minimum of physical effort. To watch him, when the opportunity provides, is in itself a pleasure, for he is all outward calm, giving every cue cleanly, leading into the beat at just the right instant, making

gestures with his hands that are understandable to singers and musicians.

That he gets exactly what he wants from them implies a vast conducting technique. That the results are so musical, so artistically just implies a vast knowledge of the score.

First-Class Exposition.

So it was with a whole joy that one listened to this venerable old work getting a first-class exposition, especially since the separate parts of that joy were evenly distributed over the various excellences being provided by cast and orchestra.

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New Friends of Music.

At the New Friends of Music concert in the Town Hall late yesterday afternoon Arnold Schoenberg was given another 75th birthday tribute by way of a performance of his "Das Buch der Haengenden Gaerten." Also performed was Mozart's Serenade for Wind Instruments in E flat (K. 375).

So sing the 15 songs comprising the Schoenberg cycle, based on poems of Stefan George, there was the Metropolitan soprano Rose Bampton. And Erich Itor aKhn played the piano parts.

This work, which is the first of Schoenberg's to depart from tonality, is a most interesting one, and one which calls for interpreters of very high musical gifts. Miss Bampton and Mr. Kahn, by their soaring musicianly qualities, were exactly that.