

MUSIC AND PLAYS

THE San Carlo Opera Company performed in Toronto last week.

The operas were, on the whole, well done, but afforded no striking sensations. It is getting to be a fact that to make grand opera succeed as it deserves some better scheme must be found to educate people up to the value of it. The minority who continue going to operas become blasé. The majority who stay away are quite willing to keep on doing so and to let the opera "fans" have their innings. This is not fair to opera, to opera producers, or to the stars and the general members of the companies. Good opera is too fine to be treated as a fad. It should be a pastime for the people. The only way to make it so is to make it popular by demonstrating what it amounts to as a popular entertainment.

This is not to say that the San Carlo are not a good average company. It means that they brought to the production of opera nothing that has not been done here before, and in many cases done better. An interesting local feature was the appearance of Madeline Carreno, who in private life is Mrs. Elizabeth Campbell, of Toronto. Mme. Carreno has a glorious voice, but has not yet come to her own in opera—though she spent one season with the Century Opera Company and took a minor role in the ballet in Canada last year with the Boston company. She undoubtedly has a future—and it may not be far off.

Coming Seitz Programmes.

ERNEST SEITZ is getting ready for a series of piano recitals which promise to be as different from the average recital of that kind as Seitz usually manages to achieve. Since his settling in Toronto as a teacher and a virtuoso, Mr. Seitz has gone into the work of perfecting his medium very seriously. He had a big medium when he left the Lhévinne studio in Berlin two years ago. It is much bigger today. He has been working. And with the initiative he has work was the one big necessity. He has always been a worker, and he has a clear, authoritative message to deliver. The forthcoming series will show an advance even on his work of last season, some of which was better than his big Canadian recital debut in Massey Hall.

For his first recital, on the 18th of October at the Toronto Conservatory, he has chosen a splendid programme, commencing with the ever popular Moonlight Sonata, followed by a group of Chopin, including the F Minor Fantaisie and several Preludes and Studios. A more modern group, consisting of short compositions of Grieg, Debussy, Scott and Liadoff, and closing with the "A" flat Sonette of Liest and the same master's legend, St. Francois de Paule walking on the waves.

No lover of good music should miss this opportunity of hearing one of the finest artists of the day, whose annual recitals are outstanding features recorded in our local musical achievements. Tickets are obtainable at Toronto Conservatory of Music, where plan will be open Monday, Oct. 9, or through W. E. Emson, personal representative, 26 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.

Larsen in a Series.

RUDOLF LARSEN, violinist virtuoso at the Toronto Conservatory, will also give a series of recitals this season, commencing with

October 20. Mr. Larsen is now entering his fourth season in Toronto since he left the tuition of Auer in Petrograd. His style is becoming definitely known—though he is still in the making, dependent upon his own enthusiastic and forceful programme of development.

Straussism Gets a Whack.

MUSIC, says Sherlock Bronson Gass, in the October issue of the Atlantic Monthly, has out-topped the other arts in a certain kind of insidious extravagance. Architecture, when it strays too far, is brought back to sanity by its alliance to vulgar usefulness. Sculpture may go a little mad, but it is still responsible to something outside itself. Painting may have periods when it out-Hamlets Hamlet—is indeed passing

against the excesses of its criers in the market-place.

It is on the word of the criers that music has been taken with solemnity into the body of that curious thing called culture. And the particular note that recurs in cultural circles is that music has something to impart, some content—"message" is the word that will be recognized both by those who talk of culture, and by those who shudder at it. At all events, this content is a part of the serious regard in which music is held. It is reasonable, therefore, to inquire into the nature of those impartations—to search for "messages" among the musical, in programmes, and in those thumb-nailed octavos that attest the seriousness of the cult. But a wide perusal ends in mystification.

"Wagner first set the fevers of the flesh to music. . . . In the music of Strauss the Germans have discovered the fevers of the soul. And that is indeed what Strauss has tried to interpret."

So writes another crier in the mar-



Ernest Seitz, who is to serve up a choice menu of great piano music this season.

through a period when the wind is far from south. But it too has an external check, an anchor in reality, and is safe to come back eternally in its lucid intervals. Music, however, is free, is responsible to nothing. It is a closed circle, not accountable even to that most irresponsible of sciences, aesthetics.

The emotions are the old emotions, the spirit the old spirit, dulled perhaps to old noises and eager for new stimulants, but with no new powers and no new scope. There is nothing outside the voices of the criers themselves to make us believe that we have ampler spirits than the old Greeks, for all their simple music; or that Beethoven was of a poorer spirit than Humperdinck.

Change and decay! We like the new sounds, or we do not; and our emotions respond to what we like. Music is simply a pleasure in sounds. But music has the strongest hold on our mystic credulity, for it lays the surest hands on our intangible feelings. And it is at the door of the musical shop that I should like to make a few protests, not against music, but rather in its defence

ket-place. Whether music can do such things is another question. But if it does is there not some room for doubt as to its health, even its sanity?

"And such an exposition," comments a crier on the composer's orchestration of his "snarling, sorry crew of critics," "it is safe to say has never been heard since saurians roared in the steaming marshes of the young planet, or when prehistoric man met in multitudinous and shrieking combat."

"The conception is breath-catching," writes a crier of his hero, "for it is the chant of the Ego, the tableau of Strauss's soul exposed as objectively as Walt Whitman's when he sang of his Me."

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