



THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER
Stage

SECTION THREE SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 1951 PAGE FOUR

THE CINCINNATI Symphony Orchestra, rehearsing this week in Music Hall for Friday and Saturday performances of Schonberg's "Gurre-Lieder," has been augmented to 150 players—most of them from the College of Music and Conservatory Symphony Orchestras. There will be a vocal chorus of 350 singers and six soloists.

Soloist Of First Rank Will Appear In CSO's 'Gurre-Lieder'

THIS WEEK'S performance of Schoenberg's "Gurre-Lieder," Friday afternoon and Saturday evening in Music Hall, by Thor Johnson and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra marks the first complete performance of the mammoth work in the Western Hemisphere. Mr. Johnson, in complying with the demands of the original score for instrumentalists, choruses and soloists, brings together one of the largest groupings of musicians to ever be assembled on the stage of Music Hall. The regular 85 musicians of the Symphony Orchestra have been augmented to 150 by students from the Conservatory and College of Music. The choruses comprise those from the Conservatory of Music, College of Music, Tri-State Masonic and Oola Khan Grotto and Mount St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio.

Soloists chosen for the performance, second of four concerts in the Cincinnati Biennial series were carefully chosen. Polyna Stoska, soprano, will sing the role of Tove; Nell Tangeman mezzo-soprano, the Waldtaube; Mario Berini, tenor, King Waldemar; Harold Haugh, tenor, Klaus-Narr; and Oscar Natzka, bass, the Bauer. The role of the speaker will be taken by Mme. Erica von Wagner-Stiedry, wife of the Metropolitan Opera conductor, Fritz Stiedry.

★ ★ ★
 POLYNA STOSKA went from Worcester, Mass., to the roster of the Metropolitan Opera.

Nell Tangeman, who began her vocal studies in her home town of Columbus, Ohio, is remembered for previous appearances with the Symphony Orchestra under Eugene Goossens.

Mario Berini, San Francisco-born tenor of both the Metropolitan and San Francisco Operas, has sung more than 350 opera performances since his debut with the San Carlo Company in New York in 1940.

★ ★ ★
 HAROLD HAUGH, tenor, hails from Cleveland where he began his voice studies.

Oscar Natzka, from New Zealand, served six years in the Canadian Navy. He was a blacksmith before he was a basso.

Mme. Erika Stiedry-Wagner was a noted actress in Vienna when she became associated with Arnold Schoenberg.

Schonberg's "Gurre-Lieder" Chosen As 20th Century Landmark By CSO

BY JOHN P. RHODES.

FOR THE SECOND PAIR of concerts of the Cincinnati Biennial, stressing art and music of the first quarter of the 20th century, Thor Johnson has programmed Arnold Schonberg's monumental "Gurre-Lieder." No survey of music written between the years 1900 and 1925 would be complete if it omitted this remarkable piece of music—one of the most ambitious ever written. It somehow sums up all the traits of the Romantic period which preceded it, and at the same time prefaces the trend of all the Modern period which followed it.

Like the Empire State Building, which tops the other huge skyscrapers of Manhattan, the "Gurre-Lieder" represents a point of artistic development and achievement, beyond which it seems impossible to go. Architects, since the Empire skyscraper, have begun building in other directions, and composers, since the "Gurre-Lieder," have adopted other more functional forms of music.

The cost of constructing another skyscraper like the 34th Street pinnacle, in these days of war budgets and staggering income taxes, is unthinkable. The imagination needed to project a performance of Schonberg's work, goes far beyond that of the conductor who is content to dazzle his audiences with revivals of Beethoven's Choral Symphony or even Wagner's music dramas.

★ ★ ★
 JUST AS the Empire State had its predecessors—the Singer and Woolworth Buildings, the Bank of Manhattan—so the "Gurre-Lieder" is the culmination of a period of great works—Wagner's spectacular "Nielungen Ring" and Mahler's "Symphony of a Thousand," and before them Berlioz's giant Requiem and two-part opera "The Trojans."

In performance, the "Gurre-Lieder" demands a chorus of at least 350 and an orchestra of 150 musicians. It calls for three four-part male choruses and one eight-part mixed chorus. The orchestra includes 25 woodwind players, 29 brass instruments, 12 types of percussion including a set of clanking iron chains, four harps and an appropriate number of string-players.

Only once before has an American conductor attempted to assemble the musical forces necessary for the "Gurre-Lieder." That was in April, 1932, when Leopold Stokowski gave three concerts devoted to the Schonberg score at the Metropolitan Opera House, with the augmented Philadelphia Orchestra.

★ ★ ★
 THE PHILADELPHIA Orchestra performance was considered so important that it was recorded by RCA-Victor engineers for an album which was soon bought up by collectors. Only recently, because of renewed interest in Schonberg's music, a new issue of the disks was released.

The forthcoming performances by the Cincinnati Symphony—Music Hall are considered so unusual, that one of the concerts will be recorded for broadcast to European countries by the "Voice of America." It is hoped by a number of disk-collectors that, if tape recordings made of the broadcast are of sufficient high quality, they will be put on vinylite by London Records—with which the CSO has a current contract.

In any event, the production

planned by Thor Johnson and the orchestra is one which is attracting large audiences Friday and Saturday. Orders for tickets are being received from a large area outside of Cincinnati—as far away, in fact, as England, where several professional musicians have decided it worth traveling that distance to hear. Mr. Johnson will have had six orchestra and four choral rehearsals, besides five with orchestra and soloists.

★ ★ ★
 A WORD ABOUT the background of the "Gurre-Lieder" is not out of place. It is based on the legendary love of King Valdemar IV of Denmark for a beautiful woman named Tova. Its scene is the now ruined castle of Gurre, five miles north of the even better-known fortress of Elsinore, scene of Shakespeare's "Hamlet." Gurre castle, built of huge granite blocks in the Viking period, dates from the days of an earlier King Valdemar I of Denmark.

Thor Johnson, on a visit to Denmark this summer, was shown the ruins of Gurre, now a rubble of stone situated on the marshy shores of the Kattegat sound, facing the Swedish port of Helsingborg.

The castle has an outer fortification with four stone towers, surrounding an older structure—the first probably built in the 14th century, the latter in the 12th. The over-all structure is hardly larger than the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, but it served the purpose of an impregnable stronghold in the Middle Ages. The debris on the site includes a quantity of clay bricks, suggesting there were several upper stories. The whole, in times past, was surrounded by a lake, which has since disappeared.

★ ★ ★
 THE APPOINTMENTS of Gurre castle may have been meager, even for a Viking empire-builder of so remote a period as the 12th century. They certainly were modest for the entertainment of a lovely paramour like Tova, who caused great jealousy on the part of Valdemar's Queen Helveg, daughter of the Duke of Schleswig, whom the King married for political reasons. The royal visitor, when-

ever he paid nightly calls on the lady, arrived by ship, like a true Viking lover.

Valdemar IV was known as "Atterdag," because he was frequently heard to say "There will be a new day"—indicating his hopes for the glory of Denmark, which he painstakingly and with many battles united as a kingdom after defeating the Viking barons of the period. Throughout his reign, Valdemar was at war with the famous seaports of the Hanseatic League which opposed his unification of the country.

Valdemar aimed at the union of the islands of Zealand (on which Bishop Absalon founded the city of Copenhagen), with those of Laaland, Scania, Falster and Moen, and the peninsula of Jutland. He defeated all ship-born adversaries who fought him with "shoot engines" (cannon). Finally he cemented victory with the marriage of his daughter Margaret to King Haakon VI of Norway, who later became Queen Regent of Sweden—thus forming the Kingdom of the Three Crowns.

★ ★ ★
 THAT VALDEMAR IV, the "empire-builder," had time for a courtship with even so lovely a girl as Tova, defeats the imagination of modern historians—though they may recognize his need of love. Legend says that the jealous Queen Helveg built a mass of heated stones under the tower at Gurre in which Tova awaited her lover, then poured over them cold water to form huge clouds of steam—thus suffocating her rival.

There is another version of Tova's death—a more symbolic one—in a long poem of 19 stanzas written by the Danish poet, Jens Peter Jacobsen, in the 1870s. The epic poem was translated into German by Robert Franz Arnold, a professor of literature at the University of Vienna, and it was this version of the "Gurre-Lieder" which Schonberg set to music.

Jacobsen described Tova's murder by a wild falcon, trained by the jealous Helveg. He told of the grief-stricken Valdemar, riding by night with phantom warriors through the sky, until his own death and the rising of a golden sun. Much of the poem may suggest through legend, the King's devotion to Denmark (Tova), the rival schemes of the Hansa (represented by Helveg), and his continual raids by land and sea until another sun and an "Atterdag" (new day) should arise over his united kingdom.

★ ★ ★
 SCHONBERG TOOK Wagner as his model in the orchestration of the "Gurre-Lieder." Like Tristan meeting with Isolde, the Danish Valdemar is given a long and passionate duet with Tova. And, as in the case of the Wagnerian hero and heroine, there is a sense of foreboding and warning. The messenger who announces Tova's death is a Wood Dove, and there is a grief-stricken monologue for Valdemar, as for Tristan in the last act.

At this point, however, begins the wild night ride of the King, accompanied by his faithful huntsmen, to the awe of terror-stricken Danish peasants—and Klaus, a fool, who gibbers incoherently of the King's madness. Finally comes the closing narrative of a "Sprecher" (speaker), and the chorus—which a new day smiles on Denmark.

Concert Today

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra with Thor Johnson conducting and Artur Rubinstein as piano soloist, will present the following concert of the Cincinnati Biennial series.

Overture "In Bohemia," Opus 28...Hadley
 Symphony No. 1 in D Major,
 "Classical," Opus 25.....Prokofieff
 Symphonic Impressions, "Nights in the
 Gardens of Spain".....Falla
 Artur Rubenstein, soloist
 Orchestral Movement,
 "Pacific 231".....Honegger
 Rhapsody on a Theme of
 Paganini, Opus 43.....Rachmaninoff
 Artur Rubinstein, soloist

Soloist

Of First Rank Will Appear In CSO's 'Gurre-Lieder'

THIS WEEK'S performance of Schoenberg's "Gurre-Lieder," Friday afternoon and Saturday evening in Music Hall, by Thor Johnson and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra marks the first complete performance of the mammoth work in the Western Hemisphere. Mr. Johnson, in complying with the demands of the original score for instrumentalists, choruses and soloists, brings together one of the largest groupings of musicians to ever be assembled on the stage of Music Hall. The regular 85 musicians of the Symphony Orchestra have been augmented to 150 by students from the Conservatory and College of Music. The choruses comprise those from the Conservatory of Music, College of Music, Tri-State Masonic and Oola Khan Grotto and Mount St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio.

Soloists chosen for the performance, second of four concerts in the Cincinnati Biennial series were carefully chosen. Polyna Stoska, soprano, will sing the role of Tove; Nell Tangeman mezzo-soprano, the Waldtaube; Mario Berini, tenor, King Waldemar; Harold Haugh, tenor, Klaus-Narr; and Oscar Natzka, bass, the Bauer. The role of the speaker will be taken by Mme. Erica von Wagner-Stiedry, wife of the Metropolitan Opera conductor, Fritz Stiedry.

★ ★ ★

POLYNA STOSKA went from Worcester, Mass., to the roster of the Metropolitan Opera.

Nell Tangeman, who began her vocal studies in her home town of Columbus, Ohio, is remembered for previous appearances with the Symphony Orchestra under Eugene Goossens.

Mario Berini, San Francisco-born tenor of both the Metropolitan and San Francisco Operas, has sung more than 350 opera performances since his debut with the San Carlo Company in New York in 1940.

★ ★ ★

HAROLD HAUGH, tenor, hails from Cleveland where he began his voice studies.

Oscar Natzka, from New Zealand, served six years in the Canadian Navy. He was a blacksmith before he was a basso.

Mme. Erika Stiedry-Wagner was a noted actress in Vienna when she became associated with Arnold Schoenberg.