

MUSIC

By OLIN DOWNES.

The League of Composers.

Much new music was presented by the League of Composers at its opening concert last night in the Klaw Theatre. The work, of which most had been said in advance, was a composition, "Die Maschine" for chamber music and piano, four hands, by Herr Fritz Klein. Miss Jeanne de Mare, in a brief address to the audience, explained the nature of the piece. It is presumed to be a parody on dynamism, polytonality and the other 'isms of the modern and Austrian composers of recent years. Strauss, Schönberg and others are parodied. Miss de Mare told the audience that it had laughed at times when it was not supposed to laugh; and now it was supposed to laugh, and, if it did laugh, the composer had achieved his purpose. There were instances when the audience did laugh.

Some laughed, perhaps from mixed motives. Sometimes a joke is so poor and flat that its mere presumptuousness makes one laugh. Perhaps this piece is so funny because it had not the slightest idea that it is so deadly, dully serious. A modern German joke!

Alexander Tcherepnine, son of Nicolai Tcherepnine, who wrote some charmingly fanciful and exotic music, has composed a sonata which is melodious but quite conventional in a first movement, and thereafter inconsequential. This sonata was brilliantly played by Mme. Helen Tschner Tas, violinist, and Miss Katherine Bacon, pianist. Of more interest were two pieces by Arthur Honegger, "two fragments," as they were called, for chamber music orchestra. The composer had entitled them "L'Ombre" and "L'Homme et la mer." "L'Ombre"—whatever its conception may be—gives an interesting effect of growing light, and there is a fine part for a solo trumpet. In "L'Homme et la mer" the composer uses not only drums, but, in place of a xylophone or some such pulsatile instrument, a "battery" of bottles! There they were, four of them, on a small table, played by a music-maker with sticks in his hands. Was Mr. Honegger, far from the land of prohibition, inspired by the rumors of the rum fleet? But the bottles were empty; their resonance would in no way have reassured a thirsty man. For

the rest, the sea raged and sang a sonorous song.

Frederick Jacobi's "Assyrian Prayers," for chamber orchestra and tenor voice, are based upon translation of cuneiform texts of very ancient origin. But the setting is not, after all, so very unconventional. There is much ado about comparatively little, in spite of sonorous orchestral effects. The music was sung by Judson House, with Mme. Jacobi assisting at a piano and Mr. Jacobi conducting.

Three of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's songs, given by Mme. Raymonde Delaunois, have freshness and idiomatic quality to commend them, and they are effective, properly sung. After all, the master of the evening remained Stravinsky, with the firm hand and the sure technique and the sardonic quality which distinguishes him in a certain vein. Mme. Delaunois sang his "Myodotis" and "Le Pigeon," and his "Concertino" was played by the Lenox Quartet. There was a large audience and the cordiality and informality which mark these entertaining occasions.

Mr. Rachmaninoff's Recital.

It is testimony to the power of the man, as it is testimony to the responsiveness of the public, that such a composer-pianist as Sergei Rachmaninoff should have the following that he has in this city, and, indeed, in most of the music centres of this country. For Mr. Rachmaninoff is not a showy person. In appearance and in performance he is singularly unadorned. His personality is one that suggests thought and much reserve power, but it is not romantic or picturesque. None of the tricks of the virtuoso or the press agent have been his. When he plays, he plays almost in grim earnestness. There is no leering at the heavens, or smirking and ogling after applause. There is no pose of any kind; simply a very tall gentleman in regulation attire, who sits at the keyboard, absorbed in his task to the exclusion of every other consideration.

Inner force, commanding intelligence, and a feeling felt the more because it is not worn on the sleeve, characterized the remarkable performances by Mr. Rachmaninoff of two chief works at the outset of yesterday's matinee. The introduction of the Bach-Liszt organ prelude and fugue in A minor was nothing short of superb, profoundly moving the audience assembled in Carnegie Hall. There was Bach's own simple D minor prelude from the "Well-Tempered Clavier," between the sonorous transcribed composition and Liszt's most ambitious independent work, the B minor sonata. Mr. Rachmaninoff put into Liszt's music a laconic mastery by which it seemed, at moments, transfigured; as if, indeed, the living artist endowed it with a beauty a sincerity not shown outwardly, but subtly conveyed by the spirit of the playing.

An audience enthralled followed the later Chopin pieces and a group by Rachmaninoff himself—including the G major and G flat major preludes—with a finale, the Strauss-Godowsky "Artist's Life" waltz, which was the signal for vociferous and prolonged recalls.

Walter McNally Sings Irish Airs.

Walter McNally, baritone, sang Irish airs at the Longacre Theatre last evening, in a second concert here before his further American tour. A "Pater-noster" by Neidmeyer and Allison's "The Lord Is My Light" preceded popular favorites, including "The Donovan's," "Wicklow Mountains," "Exile's Return," "Maureen" and "The Minstrel Boy." Mr. McNally advanced himself as an artist on second hearing, his pure diction and tonal delicacy in high baritone range justifying his friends' comparisons to Irish singers heretofore. He sang, too, in a well set frame of golden curtains instead of the previous crowded stage. An assisting violinist was Madeleine MacGuigan.

Ministers at "Simon Called Peter."

A special ministers' matinee of "Simon Called Peter" will be given at the Klaw Theatre on Thursday. William A. Brady announced yesterday. A debate, among four ministers of different denominations, will follow the play. Admission will be by invitation only and no tickets will be sold for the performance.