

Composers' Debt

To Liszt

FOR all the recent exploitation of the popular appeal of the more spectacular features of Liszt's life and music, little tribute has been paid to the more profound qualities in the art of this composer during this, the year of his sesquicentenary.

In Australia devotees of the great 19th century romantic are few; and here, as in Europe, the variety and splendor of his music remain for the most part unknown and undisclosed.

Apart from performances of some of the showy and quite unimportant transcriptions and Hungarian Rhapsodies, we hear only one or two of the more popular symphonic poems, and perhaps a concerto—nothing of the works dating, for instance, from Liszt's last and most prophetic years as a composer.

It is the more welcome to learn that at the Burnside Symphony Orchestra's next concert, on August 15, Dr. Black has included in the programme one of the Funeral Odes—No. 3, "Le Triomphe Funebre du Tasse"—to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth.

This work, dating from 1866, is based on themes from the earlier "Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo" (after Byron). It is almost completely unknown. It is also apparently, almost as equally inaccessible, at least to Australian players, since Dr. Black had to copy out all the parts himself for the coming performance.

Whether one likes Liszt's music or not, there can be no disputing the effect his work has had on the history of music. His influ-

ence will probably prove greater and more lasting than that of any other composer.

Not only did he put his extraordinary interpretative gifts to the service of his predecessors and contemporaries; he shared with his contemporaries and his successors the fruits of his creative artistry.

If Haydn is accounted the father of the symphony, Liszt can be reckoned no less justly the father of modern music.

There is not a composer of rank in the latter part of the 19th century, and the first part of the 20th, who remained uninfluenced by him.

Beginning with Wagner, the list of composers who were indebted to Liszt includes R. Strauss, Brahms, Saint Saens, Cesar Franck, Dohnanyi, Rachmaninoff, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Glazounov.

It embraces nationalist composers as widely different as the Bohemian Dvorak, Spanish Azeniz, and Norwegian Grieg. Even the atonalist, Schonberg, and Stravinsky, still a dominating figure in the 20th century, owe something to Liszt.

Yet some of the greatest masterpieces of the man—the most potent germinative force in modern music—remain unplayed.

MUSIC

by DR. ENID
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