

# Performance Of "Martha" Light But Charming

By JOHN HORNER

Large-scale music-making in Adelaide (or anywhere else) has always depended on the drive of dominating personalities.

We were agreeably reminded of this at the National Opera Company of SA's performance of Flotow's light opera "Martha" in the Norwood Town Hall last night.

The dominating personality in this case was Dr. John Black—Waite Institute scientist.

Last year he was responsible for giving us "Fledermaus." This year he has taken another leap forward, not only in giving us an opportunity to hear "Martha," but in creating a new orchestra of his own to go with it.

Last night's performance I am told was virtually the debut of the City of Burnside Symphony Orchestra.

## Very Musical

Good luck to it and congratulations to the City of Burnside. The orchestra is playing very musically already and is in most capable hands for the future.

Friedrich von Flotow was a gentleman-composer of first-rate culture. Actually, he had very little to say, but he said it with great charm and polish.

There are only two famous tunes in "Martha." One of these, "The Last Rose of Summer" was not by Flotow.

The other, "None so Fair," he imported into "Martha" from another of his operas in order to give a certain famous tenor something with which to

bring down the house. Besides these, though, there is much pleasant writing.

Two small numbers stick in the memory. There is a comic "Spinning Song" worthy of Sullivan and a beautiful "Goodnight" quartet sung by the four principals.

## Bit Clumsy

Ian Giles had the best over-riding voice, but was a bit clumsy in his quiet solo "May he not die." (However, he was meant

to be a "Farmer Giles" and a little clumsiness went not amiss.)

All the singing was musical, with Jean Daviess, Ruth Tonkin, Eric Smart and Trevor Rodger bearing the heaviest parts.

Indeed, the tout ensemble of soloists, chorus and orchestra was tonally lovely at times and the rhythm strong and gay.