

# "Il Trovatore"

Wellington Orpheus Society

to present

Concert Version from 2YA

WHEN an opera is given in concert ver-

sion, and consequently deprived of all stage action as well as the spectacular assistance of costume and scenery, it is important that the listener should be familiar with the story in order to fully enjoy the performance. It is with the desire to help the listener in this enjoyment that the following summary of "Il Trovatore" has been written.

The story of "Il Trovatore" (which means "The Troubadour") is a particularly complicated one. Some years prior to the War a morning rehearsal of this opera, which was to be performed the following night, had taken place at Covent Garden. The soprano, tenor and baritone were lunching together afterwards, when the question of the story of the opera cropped up. Not one of those leading principals, who were all well-known Italian grand opera artists, could tell the tale, and it was only the fortunate arrival of the contralto, who was to play Azucena, who gave them the story correctly, that stopped their very heated arguments and probably prevented a serious rupture in their friendship.

The libretto of the opera was written for Verdi by Cammarano, who took the plot from a Spanish drama, "El Trovador," by Gutierrez. The latter was only 17 years of age when he wrote the drama. He was just about to be called up as a conscript in the Spanish army when his drama was accepted, so, with the money he received for his drama, he was able to pay for a substitute.

When the opera was first produced in English it was appropriately called "The Gipsy's Vengeance," but the fame of "Il Trovatore" be-

came so great that a change to any name other than the original Italian became impossible.

The action takes place about the middle of the 15th century.

Years before the time when the opera commences a former Count de Luna had two sons, the elder being the Count de Luna of the opera, and the younger, a child called Garzia, who was visited, while his nurse slept,

by a sinister looking old gipsy woman, who, 'twas said, cast a spell upon him, as he sickened from that day. The Count's followers pursued the sorceress, captured her, and burnt her at the stake. Her daughter, however, disappeared with the child. It was generally supposed that the daughter, for revenge, had thrown the child into the burning pyre of her mother, but the elder Count de Luna, on his deathbed, ordered his son, the Count of the opera, to search for his brother, as he believed he was still alive.

The story is now continued in the opera.



HARISON COOK,

Conductor of the Wellington Orpheus Society, who will direct the presentation of "Il Trovatore" from 2YA on Tuesday, December 15.

## "IL TROVATORE"

Cast:

Leonora (Soprano) ..... AMY WOODWARD  
Inez (Mezzo-Soprano) ..... RUBY EVERETTE  
Azucena (Contralto) ..... CHRISTINA YOUNG  
Manrico (Tenor) ..... EDWIN DENNIS  
The Count de Luna (Baritone) .. KEITH GRANT  
Ferrando (Bass-Baritone) ..... ROY DELLOW  
Ruiz (Tenor) ..... CHAS. A. WILSON  
Accompanists: ADELINA McGRATH, F.T.C.L.,  
L.A.B.; HARRY BRUSEY

Directed by:

HARISON COOK

who relates the story of the opera in this article.

It has become a fashion among musical poseurs to sniff at Verdi's earlier operas, among which "Il Trovatore" is a favourite butt of much cheap sneering. Be that as it may, "Il Trovatore" contains vital qualities that will sustain its hold on public favour long after the critics are dead and utterly forgotten. The story of the opera as told by Harison Cook is more than a little bloodthirsty, but then most romances of old Spain would be considered incomplete without at least three sudden deaths—as incomplete as a modern detective mystery without a corpse in the opening chapter.

THE first scene, in the concert version, is laid in the gardens of the Palace of Aliaferia. The Lady Leonora tells Inez, her confidant, how she fell in love with an unknown knight at the tourney as she placed the wreath of honour upon his brow, and how he then went to the wars and she saw him no more. On a recent night she heard a troubadour singing in the garden, and, on looking out, she found he was her unknown knight.

Inez advises her to forget him, but Leonora breaks into an ecstatic love song, which ends the scene.

Before the next scene opens, Count de Luna, who also loves Leonora, has found the troubadour, who turns out to be Manrico, in the garden, and, in spite of Leonora's intervention, has fought a duel with him. Manrico has retired to the mountains on the borders of Biscay, where we now find him, in the next scene, among his gipsy friends and seated beside his supposed mother, Azucena, the daughter of the sorceress who was burnt by the followers of the former Count de Luna.

The gipsies carry on their work to the well-known "Anvil Chorus," and Azucena, brooding over the past, sings of the burning of her mother and tells Manrico that instead of burning the child of Count de Luna she, in her frenzy, had thrown her own child instead into the flames. Manrico then asks if he is not her son. She, suddenly realising what she has told him, protests that he is her son, and urges him to assist her in her vengeance upon Count de Luna.

He agrees to do this, and a messenger arrives bringing him the news that he is to go and defend the fortress of Castellor; but, alas, also tells him that the Lady Leonora, believing him dead, was entering a convent. The scene finishes with Manrico seizing his helmet and sword and rushing off to the rescue of Leonora.

The next scene represents the cloisters and grounds of a convent. Count de Luna, Ferrando and several followers have climbed the walls in order to abduct Leonora. This they attempt as she crosses the grounds with the nuns. She is seized by the Count (Concluded on page 10.)