

A father's curse disrupts the Duke's party and begins Rigoletto's tragedy. The opera will be presented tonight in Rudder Auditorium.



Unaware that her suitor is the infamous Duke of Mantua, Gilda vows eternal love in the Texas Opera Theater's thrilling new production of Verdi's "Rigoletto," sung in English. MSCOPAS presents "Rigoletto" tonight at 8 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium.

A night at the opera can be enjoyed by all

by Tim Foarde
Battalion Staff

Take a dark and gloomy story of an accursed jester driven by revenge and smitten by fate. Add a masterpiece score by one of the world's greatest composers. Bring in a cast of American singers to weld the two together, and you've got the opera "Rigoletto."

The Texas Opera Theatre will perform Verdi's "Rigoletto" tonight at 8 in Rudder Auditorium.

Opera lecturer Simon Sargon was on the Texas A&M University campus last week previewing "Rigoletto." Sargon said that the action-filled plot of "Rigoletto" — performed in English — is well-suited for college students.

"Rigoletto is a very good opera for a first opera experience," Sargon said in an interview before the operalogue. "Verdi believed in being concise. His great maxim was 'never bore an audience, keep everything short.'"

Sargon said people should realize that opera is a theatrical experience and not just performed to hear superstars produce beautiful vocal sounds.

"An opera like "Rigoletto" plays like a very finely honed play with a series of carefully varied scenes," Sargon said. "The interactions between the characters constantly enrich your appreciation of the characters and their depth."

Opera was never intended to appeal exclusively to the upper-



class, Sargon said. Rigoletto, which has been popular since 1851, was intended to entertain the masses. The opera can be understood and enjoyed by more people, Sargon said, when it is performed in English.

"Many people feel opera is a strange world outside the American experience," he said. "Opera is caricatured by fat singers singing in a foreign language while the audience sits bored for two hours."

Sargon said he would much rather see operas such as Verdi's and Mozart's in English.

"The worst thing is to go to a comic opera that really is humorous and people are sitting there like stones because they can't get any of the jokes," he said.

"The most important thing is that the opera play is a theater piece. If value is lost in terms of the sounds of the Italian, it is greatly outweighed by what is gained in terms of audience involvement with the action."

What makes opera special is the fact that the words, action and music contribute to the emotional effect of the story,

Sargon said.

"Rigoletto is a marvelous example of this. All of the lengths are calculated so you never lose interest in what's happening. There's a constant panorama of change on the stage. Musically, of course, there is a succession of beautiful melodies."


"The arias are set against the ensemble numbers, the choruses against the solos. It keeps your ear constantly engrossed at the same time as the story plays on stage."

Sargon said the stereotype of a boring, upper-class opera performance is being disintegrated by touring groups such as the Texas Opera Theater.

"The Texas Opera Theater is taking opera out on the road," Sargon said. "They're taking the most attractive young opera talent and changing the stereotype of flamboyant opera singers with capes and furs."

The story, music and emotion of opera will appeal to anyone who loves good music and drama, if it's presented in a fresh, intelligible way. This is what the Texas Opera Theater hopes to bring in "Rigoletto."

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