

MUSIC REVIEW **Mais Oui, Mostly French, Despite Wagnerian Touches**

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Hiroiyuki Ito for The New York Times

The tenor Frédéric Antoun with the soprano Georgia Jarman in a concert performance of Lalo's opera "Le Roi d'Ys."

Opera is not the American Symphony Orchestra's chief concern, but Leon Botstein, its music director, has often turned his attention to neglected corners of the repertory. One niche has proved especially fertile: French opera in the period from Bizet's "Carmen" (1875) to Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande" (1902), when Wagner's influence was at its peak. On Friday night at Avery Fisher Hall, the orchestra offered a concert performance of Édouard Lalo's "Roi d'Ys," composed in 1875 and first performed in 1888, at the Opéra-Comique in Paris.

The story, inspired by a Breton folk tale, concerns a classic love triangle: the princess Margared, promised to Karnac, a rival prince, seeks vengeance after Mylio, her true love, marries Rozenn, her sister. Plot and psychology echo Wagner, but the sound is predominantly French; the choruses in particular borrow from folk melodies Lalo learned from his wife, Julie de Maligny, a Breton contralto for whom he created the role of Margared.

Dana Beth Miller, singing the part here, wielded a rich, substantial voice that tightened only slightly in its highest range, along with a winning stage presence that made her character sympathetic even in extremes of self-involved recklessness. The other standout voice was that of Frédéric Antoun, a charismatic Canadian tenor, whose sweet, sure tone made Mylio's "Aubade" a special treat.

Georgia Jarman, Eugene Brancoveanu, Curtis Streetman and Andrew Nolen made admirable contributions in other roles. The Concert Chorale of New York sounded ravishing, and the orchestra brilliantly captured the radiant colors and vibrant rhythms of this taut, appealing score.