

Composers Try Ballet For Rhythmic Music

Of late years many composers of much merit, both in America and Europe, have turned their attention to dramatic forms of the ballet. Besides the Russians, who had shown

what could be accomplished in this direction, musicians of genius in France, Strauss in Germany, and at least one American, Henry F. Gilbert, who wrote music for the "Place Congo," presented at the Metropolitan not long ago, had composed ballets. No one who has seen the dances in the "Snegourochka" of Rimsky-Korsakov is likely to forget

the impression they produced—the marvelous life and rhythmic fury that informed them. Debussy once contracted to compose music for what was to be known as a "symphonic drama, with dances, choruses, and soloists" to a scenario invented by the man who writes these lines. The composer of "La Mer" and "Pelleas" himself declared that he loved bal-

let. He even said one day in Paris that "if he were offered a commission to devise a new 'Excelsior,' he would accept the offer." The success of "Le Coq d'Or," at the Metropolitan, was really a triumph for the theory of a ballet in its modern transformation. The action was reserved for mimes and dancers. The music was sung off the stage by

a chorus and picked soloists seated as for an oratorio. No one was more surprised than Mr. Gatti-Casazza, the manager of the Metropolitan, by the quick popularity attained by "Le Coq d'Or." It may—must, indeed, have given him food for thought. It may have led him to reflect on what some writers and composers have said might be a future form

of opera—a return to stories told by mimes by gesture, to an orchestral accompaniment. The idea is not so wild as it may seem. Nor is it madness to foretell that, fifty years from now, voices may, in some kinds of lyric drama, become part of the orchestra. There might be some of this plan at intervals.

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