

The Lyric Trio Makes New York Debut

A FAR from classical trio combination of piano, violin and the speaking voice made its New York debut last night in Carnegie Recital Hall with—it must be admitted—startling success.

The group consists of Robert Mann, first violinist of the Juilliard String Quartet, Leonid Hambro, one of the most accomplished chamber musicians about town, and Lucy Rowan, who in private life is Mrs. Robert Mann. They call themselves The Lyric Trio, but they are more than lyricists. All three are gifted dramatists and Mr. Mann is a gifted composer as well.

But even with this combination of personalities and gifts to look forward to, this listener for one was skeptical. Despite half a dozen famous exceptions, the combination of music and the spoken word is rarely effective. Mr. Mann, however, won a hilarious triumph with his "Three Fairy

Tales" (after Hans Christian Andersen) composed especially for The Lyric Trio.

The first two, "The Emperor and the Nightingale" and "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," had considerable sentiment as well as wit. Perhaps for this very reason, they sometimes did not seem to fuse into organic unity. But the finale "Princess on the Pea" was an enchanting mixture of childlike fantasy, adult satire and sheer musical slapstick.

The program opened with Mozart's B flat major Sonata (K. 454) for violin and piano and closed with Bartók's First Sonata for the same combination. The Bartók was an irresistibly exciting piece of teamwork by two sensitive and brilliant artists. During the wild finale more than one person in the audience must have felt an impulse to stand up and yell. And at the end that is just what the audience did.

E. D.