

Rita Hunter at St David's Hall

Display of exquisite control

By IFAN PAYNE

THE YOUTHFUL freshness of voice which poured out of her even, indeed especially, at the very end of *Gotterdammerung* made Rita Hunter the most glorious-voiced of all Brunhilda's on record.

Or at least so I find in close comparisons of performances of Wagner's *Ring on Record*.

If Miss Hunter was in magnificent voice for the EMI Ring recording during August, 1977 her performance three months later during the recital at the Wyndham's Theatre, London, was more variable.

That recital has also been preserved on record and the mixture there of light and heavy music was continued in Rita Hunter's recital in St David's Hall yesterday.

Dich Teure Halle would not be every singer's idea of a warm-up opening number but the way in which Miss Hunter

launched into this Wagnerian greeting, showed that the voice had changed little over the years.

Except for a slight tinny thread in the tonal make up and a slightly greater separation of the chest register, the slightest broadening of *librato*, the voice is substantially the same as that the beheard on the 1977 recital record.

From Giorani's *Caro*

mio ben to *The Gipsy Baron* she displayed exquisite vocal control, exemplary diction but unfortunately little feeling for the ballad style which led to an air of blandness to the lighter songs.

A stronger personality would (despite her lovely but languid *pianissimo* have pushed her along in *Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair*.

Victor Morris was the

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accompanist, and Mike Schirn, as vocally reticent as Rita Hunter was outward going, added his tenor contributions to the recital.

But Miss Hunter is still effective when she hammers out the tone and opens up to full force as she did for Verdi's *La luce langue*.

Rita Hunter is not the greatest of song interpreters but anyone who has heard her greet the wun in the last act of *Siegfried* knows that she has exceptional vocal gifts.

And these gifts were heard at their best during her wonderfully even-toned accurate and generously voiced singing of the vocal and artistic climax of her recital, *Allein, Weh! ganz ao allein* from Richard Strauss's *Electra*.