

'Folk' — or a fine anomaly

THERE is a curiosity in translation in the programme notes of this very attractive double bill that intrigues me. Anton Goosen is described as "the father of the Afrikaans chanson" and the term "chanson" is further clarified by the words, in Afrikaans: "ons eie luisterliedjies" and, in English: "our very own folk tunes".

Now, as any South African knows, a folk song is not necessarily a "volkslied". The Afrikaans term could be understood as meaning a "national song"; even, more specifically, a national anthem. It could also, in a more colloquial sense, signify a song of the "volkies", a term once applied affectionately to black or coloured servants or tenant farmers.

Equally, one recognises, the contemporary folk song, as exemplified by the Folk Revival of the Sixties, was held suspect by the conservative Afrikaner, partly because it had become synonymous with the protest movement and partly because of its unfortunate associations with the drug scene.

The curiosity — and the miracle — is that, appealing (and appropriate) as the term, "luisterliedjies" may be, Goosen's

work could fit any of the above definitions of the term "Folk".

It is national in that it has its roots in the musical traditions of the Afrikaner (a fact which attains an ambivalent acknowledgement most particularly when he is sending them up). It is colloquially "folk" in that it draws much of its inspiration from the people — all shades of the people. And it is "contemporary folk" in that, in both idiom and sentiment, it is very much geared to what is happening here and now.

Indeed, there is something in the styling (and often in the content) of many of the songs of this highly original young man suggest the wayward gypsy, the sardonic satirist or even the anarchist (not for nothing

SONG

Raeford Daniel
Laurika and Anton
Anton en Laurika
Arena, Rosebank

has he been labelled the Afrikaans Bob Dylan, although in the scope of his activities — flitting back and forth between composing and lyric writing — he might more appropriately be compared to Stephen Sondheim).

His current programme contains much of his most popular repertoire, including "Boy van die Suburbs", "Kruidjie-roermy-nie" and the marathon "Waterblommetjies", but the

unexpected Goosen regales us with some bouncing, up-tempo new numbers, many with a decided boogie beat. Here he gets excellent support from the dexterous fingers of young Garth Erasmus, who also provides a fine piano obbligato to some of Goosen's more lyrical inventions.

Laurika Rauch, who shares the bill, is a superb artist deserving of a more detailed study than I am able to accord her here. I never tire of listening to her sensitive transcriptions of the works of such illustrious poets as I D du Plessis, Ingrid Jonker or Boerneef, to say nothing of her fine interpretations of the works of fellow writers Hofmeyr, Koos du Plessis, or the great Anton himself.

The setting for Hennie Aucamp's "Die Lewe is 'n Grenshotel" has been wrongly attributed to her. No matter. With her definitive rendition, she makes the work her own.

Like Anton, Laurika has a delicate feel for that which is intrinsic to the Afrikaner. She also has the rare facility for making her statement universal. A consummate musician, her range extends beyond ethnic and environmental boundaries and her penchant for mediaeval or early Renaissance styling — exemplified here in her setting to I D du Plessis' ballad, "Die Koning se Dogter" — is delightfully refreshing.

Laurika has some choice accompaniment from guitarist Little John Ferrier.