

players live a life which is an artistic nightmare. An average of at least six concerts and three rehearsals a week must be given, with many miles separating the halls in which the performances are to be held. True, the same programme is often given on all six occasions, which makes the rehearsals less inadequate, but the strain no less great. Even this moderate increase of rehearsal and leisure has only been made possible by official aid through CEMA. Much more has to be done if we are to have pride in our London orchestra.

We must decide how much a symphony orchestra can do if it is to reach and maintain a first-class standard. My own plan is as follows. In every period of twenty-eight days, no more than fourteen concerts should be given (a few short concerts for children might be added). Of the remaining fourteen days, at least seven should be left free for leisure, private practice and general recreation, especially the latter, for instrumentalists, having devoted their youth to the one-track study of music, must make up a deal good of leeway in other directions. The remaining days would be occupied with rehearsal, or with chamber concerts, from both of which the players would derive a benefit which is now largely denied them.

What would this cost? An established, full-time orchestra costs, let us say, x pounds a day, whether it works or not, as the players are on a weekly salary. Whereas twenty-three days out of twenty-eight are now spent in revenue-producing work, the

plan I have indicated above would involve the loss of nine such days in the same period, or one hundred and eight each year. Yes, my arithmetic is correct; we are not yet able to pay our players for their four weeks' holiday. We should, therefore, have to make up a loss of $\pounds 108x$ every year. But that would not be all.

As I hinted earlier, attracting a maximum audience has involved some concessions to public taste, no bad thing in itself, but hardly calculated to encourage our young composers or the more enlightened among our audiences. We must be able to present programmes which our best advisers agree contain the most important items. This, at first, will mean a certain loss in audiences, although we shall not make the mistake of running away from them. And loss of audiences will mean a loss of money, which must be added to my figure of $\pounds 108x$.

The more curious among my readers will be anxious to know what the mysterious letter x really represents. Let me say this in conclusion. A well-supported London orchestra should spend its time playing in the capital, for which the L.C.C. might accept responsibility; in various South of England towns where there are suitable halls, a plan which might appeal to the councils of those towns; with occasional visits to those other areas to whose musical culture it has already made contributions, and for which, I am assured, CEMA. will acknowledge responsibility. If the reader belongs to any of these bodies, I shall gladly let him into the secret of the letter x .

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE drought has given way to the deluge, where chamber and instrumental performances in London are concerned. In the early stages of the war, the fare—mainly orchestral—was Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, or nothing. Now, the most assiduous enthusiast finds difficulty in keeping pace with everything that is offered. The Committee for the Promotion of New Music, the lately revived London Contemporary Music Centre, and the Boosey and Hawkes Concerts are all concerned busily and exclusively with 'modern' music (the word will be understood so long as it is not defined), while the programmes of the London Philharmonic Arts Club and those of the Morley College and French

Government concerts include a generous measure of the music of our day. The intention is laudable, but is the demand likely to keep pace with the supply? Over-supply leads to competition, and competition to elimination. Co-operation as to policy, dates, and programmes is obviously necessary if all these organizations are to survive.

Meanwhile, the enthusiast in the provinces starves as usual. With a far smaller population to draw on than in London, local concert organizers can only rarely risk a deficit by mixing Schoenberg with Schumann, Bliss with Brahms—even if they wished to do so. Entire programmes of modern music are naturally out of the question, except in the very rare instances

where a society has been created for that purpose. It cannot be said that wireless or gramophone provides the answer: the amount of modern music distributed through either machine is small and unadventurous; the difficulties that beset listening under perfect conditions are numerous; and that heightened quality of experience gained by the physical presence of performers and a like-minded audience is forgone. Admittedly, those who take an active interest in contemporary music are very much in the minority at present. (It was not always thus, and will not always be so.) On the other hand, it is neither untrue nor snobbish to assert that, fanatics apart, such people usually represent the most enlightened section of the musical community. The gratification of their demands would help to raise the standard of musical culture in this country.

Will not CEMA consider the possibility of lifting the provincial blackout? They alone have to hand the means and necessary organization wherewith to present a programme of contemporary music in a dozen or more places. And in this instance they would be justified in extending their activities to cities such as Manchester, Cardiff, and Birmingham, where the situation is not a great deal better than in the smaller towns. Moreover, if an artist or chamber ensemble were asked to prepare a complete programme of modern music with the guarantee of a series of concerts, it would be an added incentive for them to keep abreast of the repertoire. Too often at present it is done unwillingly for the sake of prestige, or, on the other hand, as a labour of love. CEMA's Art Department has long since sponsored exhibitions of purely modern paintings (not without hostility from some quarters, be it said). The Music Department would render a real service to our musical life if it would follow suit.

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Details of this year's Promenade Concerts will be awaited with more than usual interest. The inimitable Sir Henry has gone; but the cessation of the 'Proms,' which are part of our national life, would be unthinkable. Wood's successor, whoever he may be, will assume a heavy responsibility; and the public will take to him the more readily if he displays some measure of that zeal and enterprise, steadiness and good humour which were his predecessor's most endearing attributes. On artistic grounds there is much to be said

for sharing the work among 'associate' conductors—young men in particular should be given increased opportunity to display their talent—but a principal conductor, a figure-head who shall in time be regarded as the second 'father of the 'Proms' there should be. The success of the Promenade Concerts has largely rested on their long continuity under one respected musician: their future will be best assured by the observance of that tradition.

The recent practice of employing two or three orchestras is desirable on the obvious grounds that no single body of musicians can be expected to retain their form throughout an arduous season of two months. But would it not be better—unless financial considerations were paramount—to employ two orchestras on alternate nights throughout the season, instead of working each of them every day for several successive weeks? That arrangement would place less strain on the players, and, by doubling the rehearsal time, would encourage a higher standard of performance and provide increased facilities for the production of new works in something like adequate interpretations.

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The recent visits to this country of Charles Münch, Sir Thomas Beecham, and Paul Paray are a prelibation of renewed international participation in our musical life after the war. In the orchestral field, particularly, it would be idle to pretend that there have been many performances of unusual merit since 1939. The fault is our own. England has not bred many outstanding conductors to date, and the barriers confronting what new talent there is are formidable. In the absence of the great conductors of the day—there are a few to whom the epithet may be conceded—standards of performance have declined all round; and, as in other walks of life, prolonged deprivation of the best is liable to foster lack of desire to have the best. The acceptance of secondary standards as normal comes all too easily.

It is therefore to be hoped that the Government will lose no time in facilitating the visits of other outstanding musicians to our shores. The matter lies solely in their hands at present. The big new public that has taken orchestral music to its heart should not be denied longer than is necessary the opportunity of hearing Mozart under Walter, Beethoven under Toscanini, Tchaikovsky and the moderns under

Koussevitzky. And if it be suggested to these conductors that they should visit the provinces, instead of clinging solely to London and the B.B.C., so much the better for all concerned. There are other conductors, unknown as yet in England except to record collectors, who should be given the chance to display their talents. Eugene Ormandy of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, and Artur Rodzinski of the New York Philharmonic may be mentioned among several names that have attracted the widest attention in America. If London is to become a World music centre after the war, they and others of similar stature should be heard here.

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Is it accidental, or is there some deeper reason why the repertoire of orchestral music apposite to Christmas should be so limited? Year after year our conductors dutifully produce the well worn 'Christmas' concerto of Corelli, the so-called 'Christmas' symphony of Haydn, and a few other works of no greater stature; but they would be hard put to it to discover much else of even equal merit. One would have thought that a festival so profound in religious and social significance, so varied in the op-

portunities it offers for subjective and descriptive treatment, would have formed the basis of a score of major orchestral essays. The composer may suggest that a work on the subject of Christmas will remain on the shelf during the eleven other months of the year. Surely not, if the work be good music in its own right, and the quotation of familiar carols be avoided. Perhaps it is untimely to discuss Christmas music just now? Not if our composers will give thought to the idea during the next eight months.

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By the death of Edwin Evans the world of music has lost an influential and life-long advocate of modern composers. Writer, lecturer, and sometime editor of several musical papers, Evans gave freely of his time in translating into effective action his enthusiasm for the music of his day. In 1938 he was elected president of the International Society for Contemporary Music, of which he was one of the moving spirits; and here, as in several previous executive offices, he displayed unusual qualities of tact and affability which were at all times characteristic of a picturesque yet dignified personality.

SIBELIUS'S PIANO SONATINAS

By Cedric Thorpe Davie

THE three little masterpieces collectively designated Op. 67, give the lie to those who incline carelessly to belittle the whole of Sibelius's small-scale compositions. They may, too, provide a surprise for people who instinctively think of Kuhlau whenever the word sonatina is mentioned.

Edmund Rubbra has defined a musical work of genius as one which "shows ideas of significance, stated with the utmost clarity and economy, and bound together by a lucid formal structure." No better description of these little works could possibly be devised, for their charm and spontaneity rest on a foundation of really beautiful ideas, and the superb craftsmanship displayed in the setting-out of the ideas is only what we expect from the composer. The sonatinas are admirably suited to the keyboard, although I have heard a contrary opinion, based, I think, on their appearance in print.

It is to be noted that, although obviously a sonatina is a 'small sonata,' there is much

more to the 'smallness' than mere shortness; otherwise we should have to call Beethoven's Op. 78 a sonatina, which it certainly is not. We must look for a subtler kind of 'smallness'; as Parry puts it, for something "shorter, simpler and slenderer than a sonata." Each of these works is just that; simplicity and slenderness are the keynotes of the style, while the longest occupies less than eight minutes.

Each sonatina has three movements. No. 1 in F sharp minor (miscalled A major on the cover of some copies) proceeds without ado to illustrate Sibelius's idea of 'sonatina form' which, be it noted, does not dispense with a 'development section.' The slow movement is simply a very lovely tune, repeated, after a few bars of bridge, in an exquisitely-coloured variation, and rounded off by an unexpected sequence of quiet chords. In the last movement the left hand's occasional dashes to the extreme bass are thrown into high relief by the fact