

Opus 29, on which he is at present engaged and which is an extended work in several movements for soloists, chorus and orchestra, is not likely to be published until the war is over. However several new Bartok works will appear – the *Violin Concerto*, a *Divertimento* for string orchestra written for Paul Sacher's Basle Chamber Orchestra, the *Rhapsody* for violin, clarinet and piano written for Szigeti and Benny Goodman, *Mikrokosmos* for piano solo, the *Sixth String Quartet*, and the *Sonata* for two pianos and percussion.

Most English composers have not so far been greatly affected by the war, except that the chance of having their works performed is now greatly decreased. William Walton, I understand, is driving an ambulance; his *Violin Concerto* is complete and will probably be done soon by Heifetz in America. Constant Lambert is on tour in the provinces with the Sadlers' Wells ballet, of which he is the regular conductor; now, since it was impossible to take the orchestra along, he is playing the music himself on the piano. Alan Rawsthorne is at the BBC headquarters. Two British composers are still in America – Arthur Bliss and Benjamin Britten. Britten's *Violin Concerto* would have been produced this season by Antonio Brogo; he has also written a work called *Young Apollo* for piano and string orchestra and is completing a song-cycle, *Les Illuminations*, for soprano and string orchestra, to poems by Rimbaud. Two of these were produced during the short-lived Promenade concert season in August, and scored a great success. He is also writing some high school operas in collaboration with W. H. Auden.

Humphrey Searle

LETTER FROM FRANCE

Paris, October 23rd

IN France the war has already drastically contracted musical life. Only the lyric theatres continue their activity. The troupes of the Opéra and the Opéra Comique play alternately in the latter's theatre; it is easier to protect than the immense building of the Opéra. The Conservatoire carries on its courses but has transferred them to Fontainebleau. The orchestras and the great ballet troupes have been forced to interrupt their activities because so many of their members have been mobilized. Like all other musicians, composers are severely the victims of the new order, whether directly in their personal lives, or in their professional careers.

Honegger being of Swiss nationality, (although born in Havre forty-seven years ago) is unlikely to be called to arms. His *Nikolas von der*

Flüe, a new work of sweeping power, was scheduled for performance at the end of September, under the auspices of the National Swiss Exposition at Zurich. But mobilization there also affected many musicians who had rehearsed the piece, so that postponement was inevitable. It may however be given during the winter at Neuchatel and also at Vevey-Montreux where a large chorus is now preparing it. Another work composed by Honegger this year, *La Danse des Morts*, for soli, choruses, orchestra and organ, (text by Paul Claudel) has its premiere set for next March, in Basle.

Milhaud (also forty-seven years old) is not mobilized because of his health, and now lives in his native village of Aix-en-Provence. The new opera, *Medée* (text by Madeleine Milhaud) had an apparently successful premiere in the Royal Flemish Opera House of Antwerp. I do not at this time know what is the status of Auric, Delannoy, Françaix, Poulenc or Sauguet, all of whom are between thirty and forty and therefore probably subject to military call. Georges Dandelot, who is forty, was severely wounded in the last war and so is not likely to take part in this one. Ibert (at forty-nine) remains in Italy as director of the Villa Medici. Koechlin, the Alsatian, is now seventy-two.

Since the annexation of Czecho-Slovakia, Bohuslav Martinu has stayed on in Paris. Markevitch (not yet thirty) lives most of the year in Vevey; he will conduct a complete performance of Bach's *Musikalisches Opfer* at Lausanne this season. Switzerland also is host to Paul Hindemith — who now lives in the little village of Valois. He is to be soloist in a concert of the Basle Chamber Orchestra, already scheduled for March 2nd.

Arno Huth

SWITZERLAND CARRIES ON

Geneva, November 1st

WITH so much being overthrown or destroyed elsewhere in Europe, it is only the neutral states that can to any important extent maintain cultural activities. In Switzerland today the necessity of carrying on musical life has been realized in the largest way by all the producing societies and institutes. Despite the gaps which mobilization has created in the performing staffs, and in the musical public, despite the difficulties of engaging foreign artists and obtaining scores, all have embarked with courage on a really extraordinary season. No less than eight symphony and chamber orchestras, and fifteen choral societies are participating. In Zurich, Berne, Basle, Geneva and Lausanne, in Winterthur, St. Gallen, Solothurn, Neuchatel and La-Chaux-de-Fonds, great orchestral cycles will