

# NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

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## POST-WAR EUROPEAN REVIVAL

*Geneva, January 1946*

NOW that the curtain has been lifted from the liberated countries we can see that the character of the Resistance was not only military and political but spiritual and cultural too. In France forbidden works such as the *Hymne à la Justice* by Albéric Magnard, who was murdered by the Germans in 1914, were secretly played at private concerts, under the very eyes of enemy occupation forces. Compositions by Berg and Milhaud were recorded at night in the very Studio d'Essai which was founded by Vichy Radio. Songs and poems of the Resistance were printed and distributed. In Belgium concert organizations refused to engage German artists; in the Netherlands the public refused to patronize the theatres and by their voluntary donations sustained the artists who refused to collaborate. Dutch actors displayed an admirable solidarity in 1941 by donating three percent of their income to Jewish artists who had been prevented from playing.

During these years many works were written. Some served as a means of spiritual escape, others expressed the hope of liberation. Among the latter is Poulenc's cantata, *Liberté*, composed to secretly published poems of Paul Eluard, and performed in London by the B.B.C., at the time of the composer's visit there.

Recently a concert given by the French Radio celebrated the memory of artists imprisoned in German torture camps, especially those who died there. Manuel Rosenthal and Maurice Hewitt, who spent fifteen months in Buchenwald, directed the program, which included fragments of Debussy's *Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Henri Barraud's *L'Offrande à une Ombre*, and *Chant des Déportés*, composed for the occasion by Olivier Messiaen.

Although the quality of performances in France today is uneven, the programs always contain interesting works. The Orchestre National generally includes at least one modern composition in each concert. Recently it has produced Virgil Thomson's ballet, *Filling Station*, the *Symphonie*

*pour les temps présents* by Marcel Mihalovici, *Poème Symphonique* by Léon Jongen and *Sonate du Sud* for piano and orchestra by Oscar Esplà. Whole programs have been dedicated to Milhaud and Hindemith. At the Concerts Lamoureux, Eugène Bigot performed Shostakovitch's *Seventh Symphony* and the Miaskovsky symphony which was awarded the Stalin Prize. And Rudolph Dunbar gave a festival of American music with the Padeloup Orchestra.

The Opéra is as popular with French audiences as with American soldiers on leave, many of whom appear to be balletomanes. Because of his friendly relations with the Nazis, Jacques Rouché, director of the Opéra, was replaced by seventy-year old Reynaldo Hahn, who is now assisted by Roger Désormière, Jacques Ruhlmann and Louis Fourestier. Hahn plans to add ballets by Stravinsky, Auric and Joseph Kosma to the repertory. Two folklore ballets have already been presented: Henri Tomasi's *Santons*, which is set in Provence, and Honegger's *Appel de la Montagne*, a pastoral inspired by popular Swiss melodies. A revival of *Pelléas et Mélisande* with new settings by the film producer, Grémillon, is eagerly awaited.

Belgium today gathers the fruits of her artists' noble efforts to keep musical activity alive throughout the occupation. In the *Revue Musicale Suisse* an article tells us that Brussels was such a center of spiritual resistance that the Nazis did not permit artists to leave the city for Antwerp. For instance, Paul Collaer, the musicologist who is once more musical director of the Belgian Radio, put on performances introducing works by Falla, Sauguet, Francaix and a novelty, *Moretus*, by Marcel Poot. The last is a modern interpretation of *The Flying Dutchman*. Collaer, however, was soon forbidden by the Germans to indulge in any public activities. . . . The "Jeunesses Musicales de Belgique" was founded by Marcel Cuvilier, director of the Philharmonic Society. In every school young music lovers gathered and formed chapters of this organization. For their benefit numerous symphony concerts were given. A similar group was established in France and, last summer, the two sections joined to found the "Fédération Internationale des Jeunesses Musicales." . . . The Belgian Radio Orchestra, conducted by Franz André and G. Bethume, has been reorganized and has lost none of its quality. Broadcasts include much modern music, and one program has been devoted entirely to works from the United States.

Holland not only experienced the cruelest oppression, its liberation was a long time coming. Among the artists, there was a limited number of traitors. For various reasons others submitted unwillingly to the enemy's demands. Special Honor Tribunals for each profession have been formed to study collaborationist activities.

One tribunal made up of Dutch musicians has decided that Willem

Mengelberg should never conduct in Holland again. His brother, Dr. Rudolf Mengelberg, director of the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, is also ostracized professionally but for only one year. Similar measures have been taken against the composer, Henk Badings, who accepted a director's post from the Nazis, and was active in the artistic life of Germany and Austria.

The second conductor of the Concertgebouw, Edouard van Beinum, has been allowed to resume his position. Under his direction, at the end of last July, the orchestra gave its first concert since the liberation. Fifteen of the orchestra players had been repatriated from the Theresienstadt concentration camp. A later concert was devoted to Mahler's *Second Symphony*, another entirely to battle songs composed secretly during the occupation. Since September concerts have been given regularly.

But one loss is irreplaceable: two hundred and twenty-five organs in Dutch churches have been completely destroyed, among them the one from the Big Church of Rotterdam, which dates back to 1798, the one at Arnhem with its famous rococo wood carvings, and those of Eindhoven, Wageningen and Ginniken.

### III

In Germany artistic life was paralyzed long before the country collapsed. After the capitulation hardly any opera groups or complete orchestras were left, nor were many theatres and concert halls usable because heavy bombings during the last months of the war had destroyed or badly damaged most buildings of any size. In spite of this, artistic life has picked up rapidly, thanks chiefly to aid from the allied occupation forces. In several large cities symphony orchestras and opera companies now give performances. The Berlin Philharmonic had a regular concert series this season. In Hamburg, musicians who belonged to the old Bruckner Orchestra of the German Radio have formed a symphony orchestra. Radio Munich has a small instrumental ensemble; originally it played only light music but has already scheduled more serious works and expects to develop into a symphony group. The radio stations of the military governments have become artistic centers, especially in the American zone.

On recent programs new names have appeared from time to time, but too often one finds those of musicians who were friendly with the Nazis. Certain conductors and other artists who were faithful servants during the twelve years' reign remain in the same positions. But a list of six hundred names has been drawn up, which includes artists prominent in the Nazi set-up; their outlook and activities since 1933, with emphasis on their record for the war years, will be carefully scrutinized. Measures have already been taken against Giesecking, who has been forbidden to play in Germany (simultaneously the Dutch authorities ruled him out of the Netherlands), and Hans Knappertsbusch is no longer director of

the Munich opera.

Richard Strauss is being treated with consideration by the Allies, probably because of his age. He was, however, a pillar of Nazi cultural propaganda, and his collaboration was exploited as a spur to lesser-known musicians. In 1941 he wrote *Japanische Festmusik* and in 1942 he received – just as Pfitzner did one year later – the Beethoven Prize offered by Gauleiter Baldur von Schirach. *Die Weltwoche*, the Swiss weekly, has published an interview with Strauss which is very revealing about his state of mind. He declares that he saw no reason to shun the Nazis as long as they continued to play his works. He refused several offers to go abroad, giving as a reason the fact that eighty opera houses in Germany and Austria were giving him performances, and that he had very few outside of Germany. His only complaint about the Nazi regime was in reference to Goebbels' order to close the theatres. "Imagine!" he exclaimed. "Since the first of September 1944 I haven't received a pfennig in royalties!" . . . He was all praise for the former governor of Poland, Hans Frank, who, according to him, had proved his artistic understanding by prohibiting victims of bombings from settling in his villa.

Opera programs, as is natural under the circumstances, are rather restricted in interest, for works are given which are easy to put on and which appeal to the public. When the Sadlers Wells troupe of London undertakes a two month tour through Germany some novelties can be expected. On the other hand, concert programs offer innumerable scores which have not been heard for a decade. The favorite composer, especially beloved by musicians suspected of pro-Nazi feelings, is Mendelssohn. Over Radio Munich German musicians actually played Bloch's *Schelomo*.

In Austria, concerts and plays can again be enjoyed, though here too there could be purges of former salesmen of Nazi propaganda who continue to occupy important posts. The Salzburg Festival does not of course compare with past ones, yet it is still a sign of renaissance. . . . The Vienna Opera, having moved from its destroyed quarters, gives its performances in the Volksoper or in the Redouten Saal. . . . As a tribute to Gustav Mahler, whose works were of course forbidden by the Nazis, his *First Symphony* was included on the first Vienna Philharmonic program. A commemorative plaque was installed at the concert hall, and the old Gustav Mahler Street has reassumed its name.

Arno Huth

## INTERNATIONALISM AGAIN IN VIENNA

Vienna, December 1945

THE end of the war in Europe was not two months past when the Austrian section of the International Society for Contemporary Music