

HARVARD SOIRÉE

STRAVINSKY is filling the Charles Eliot Norton chair of Poetics at Harvard, and filling it gloriously. He says that his lectures run midway between an academic course and an apology for his own music. Actually they are a series of brilliant social events.

Around 7:30 on Wednesday evening, October 18, cohorts of ushers in black ties lined the walls of Harvard's New Lecture Hall, usually the scene of *History I*, *Economics A*, and that anathema to freshmen called *English A*. In about fifteen minutes early intellectuals trickled in, to be sure of a seat at Stravinsky's first lecture. Then followed a rush of more intellectuals — Harvard and Radcliffe esthetes all. And they all looked like Harvard and Radcliffe esthetes. Next came the big names of the Harvard music department, with their wives. This kind of an audience was what we had expected — musicians and music lovers from in and around the University. But then, to our amazement, black, sleek limousines began to drive up to the New Lecture Hall, Beacon Hill dowagers, radiating white hair, evening dresses, diamonds, and dignity entered and added a *ton* of glamour to the affair. No sooner had we settled down to Beacon Hill than the New Lecture Hall rustled again. This time it was for Koussevitzky. The Doctor was beaming, surrounded by friends and admirers in the aisle; the friends and admirers sat down; Koussevitzky was still standing. He was looking for a friend.

Eager, tense, the audience waited for Stravinsky.

At a moment of psychological tenseness he made a sweeping entrance, in tails. He was followed by Professor Edward Forbes, director of the Fogg Art Museum, in tails. Stravinsky made a low, courtly, athletic bow to the warm, dignified applause.

Dr. Forbes introduced Mr. Stravinsky. More applause. Stravinsky grasped Forbes by the hand, bowed to him and again to the audience, and began his *Prise de Contacte*. Reading a manuscript of beautifully written French, he spoke slowly, distinctly, in a quiet Russian accent. He looked up from his paper infrequently, and then only jerkily.

But the manuscript was meaty. This *Prise de Contacte* — getting acquainted — was packed with erudition. He spoke of his feeling of privilege in occupying the chair of Poetics, of the purpose of his lectures, and of the outline of his course. "My course will only be an explanation of music," he said apologetically. Is that all, we thought.

In addition to justifying his own music in the course of lectures, Stravinsky said he would speak later "Du Phénomène Musical;" of musical composition; of "Typology," (this is the subject of the fourth lecture, which will also discuss, "snobbishness, the patronage of the Maecenases"); of the "two disorders of the two Russias" and the degradation of musical values under the Soviet Government (Prokofieff, beware!); and finally of the deep meaning and essential aim of music. He really means business.

Francophiles in the audience could understand the French of Stravinsky's magnificent manuscript. For the unlinguistic a brief English synopsis was distributed before the lecture. This was rather helpful, but even the most learned were apt to wrestle with a statement like "Poetics is the study of work to be done." To Stravinsky's witticisms the audience reacted like a grove of aspens; a few trees quivered at first, and eventually the foliage of the whole grove was alive. The assembly looked distinguished and cultured, however, and we may be wrong about its collective linguistic attainments.

Wild, but dignified, applause greeted Stravinsky as he concluded his first lecture. Harvard and Radcliffe intelligentsia, beaconesses of Beacon Hill, Koussevitzky — all were wildly, but dignifiedly, enthusiastic. Stravinsky bowed low, almost to the ground, and shook Dr. Forbes warmly by the hand. He breezed out, his tails flying behind.

Frederick Jacobi, Jr.

PHILADELPHIA GREET'S THOMPSON

THE first month of Philadelphia's music season is history and we have had, with the exception of Randall Thompson's *Symphony Number 2* which Mr. Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra introduced late in October, no new music to speak of. As these lines are written Mr. Stokowski has not yet arrived for his autumn stint. He has made no announcements about repertory, but it may be assumed that new music will flow freely during his tenure.

Mr. Thompson's symphony is now some eight years old, but Philadelphia had had no previous acquaintance with it. The performance was admirable, and the symphony was, on the whole, very well liked. Certainly there is much in it to admire. It is expertly and resourcefully scored, compactly made and endowed with a full measure of native flavor. The first and last movements are uncommonly vigorous and spirited, and in the last movement there is a good deal of sly humor. The slow movement