

so successful last spring, and that is certainly something to look forward to.

Few new works have as yet made their appearance this season. At the Philharmonic Jaromir Weinberger repeated his *Schwanda* success with *Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree*. The same kind of fugue in the same kind of rhythm topped off the variations, only this time an English tune stuck its incongruous head up through the musical comedy Czech atmosphere.

Of quite different stuff were the two Castelnuovo-Tedesco works, introduced here by the same orchestra. The *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2* is charming; it reveals great sensibility and deftness. This is the work of a man who, though his idiom is to a certain extent reactionary, has revived some of the lightness and humor of Rossini and Bellini, in short of the best recent period of Italian music, and adapted them to his own ends. Castelnuovo-Tedesco, however, like many Italians is less at home in abstract music than when he is describing something, which is what he did very gracefully in his *Overture to Twelfth Night* (also on the program). Though without the depth of Malipiero or the occasional wit of Casella, his music has the attraction of work well conceived and executed.

Elliott Carter

## NEWS FROM BRITAIN

London, November 1st

MUSIC in England is only just beginning to get on its feet again. Immediately after the declaration of war the remaining Promenade concerts and the Russian ballet season were abandoned — under the ban on all entertainments; in fact the only music to be heard at all during September was provided by the BBC. Similarly nearly all provincial concert societies cancelled their arrangements for the season, and though now a limited number of concerts is announced and various organizations have issued revised programs, there is naturally nothing approaching the peacetime scale of musical activities.

As a class, musicians have been very severely hit by the war. Thousands are now out of work, their contracts cancelled. Owing to evacuation, concert audiences have decreased, the number of concerts has diminished. Broadcasting contracts also have been severely cut down. A number of artists have been absorbed into some kind of national service, and a few

have managed to get on ENSA, the organization which provides concerts for the troops, but by far the greater number have nothing to do and no chance of employment. Let us hope that promoters will become more enterprising as time goes on; there is still an enormous public for music — all the concerts given so far have been packed.

The BBC has moved to the country and taken with it the greater part of its symphony and theatre orchestras; it has also kept on some of the regional orchestras. But as there is now only one program for home listeners, the former policy has been drastically altered, the general idea being to play nothing which is likely to seem "high-brow." That is to say, we are allowed an occasional Beethoven symphony or concerto, but orchestral programs are usually not longer than half or three-quarters of an hour, and consist mostly of Rossini and Delibes. The only modern work of any importance played so far is Ravel's *La Valse*. Of course the projected series of contemporary concerts has been dropped.

On the other hand, there is no anti-German bias; recordings of German artists singing in German are frequently broadcast, and, though no Strauss has so far been played, there have been occasional Wagner excerpts and even Von Webern's orchestration of Schubert's *German Dances*. For the first month of the war the BBC relied entirely on artists under permanent contract to them, but recently they have found it possible to engage outside soloists.

Now public concerts are once more under way on much the usual lines, although they are greatly reduced in numbers. The only direct "war result" so far has been the revival of Elgar's *Alonia*, which was written during the last one and is a not very successful work that introduces themes of Chopin and Paderewski. Practically all contemporary music has disappeared except for the enterprising efforts of Alan Bush, who is giving two concerts with the London String Orchestra. At the first of these — an all-English program — he is playing John Ireland's recent *Concertino Pastorale* and his own *Dialectic*, and at the second he hopes to give a *Prelude and Fugue* by the Roumanian, Marcel Mihalovici, and Bartok's *Roumanian Dances*. Bloch's *Violin Concerto* will be performed at the Hallé concerts in Manchester.

Another cheering piece of news is that the English publishing house of Boosey and Hawkes has recently taken over the publication of all the future works of Webern and Bartok. They have already issued Webern's *String Quartet*, Opus 28, but since he is officially an enemy subject, his

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*