

from the Liverpool première under Dr. Malcolm Sargent, is a highly ingenious score, admirably suited to its purpose, though of less distinction than Britten's recent works for the stage and concert hall.

E. C.

The new Kodály Concerto for orchestra, conducted by the composer, is a fine work in one longish movement not of symphonic design but beautifully balanced and coherent, for all its diversity of effects. This elegant and effortless music, interesting and serious without being overweighted emotionally or intellectually, made a great impression.

Eugene Goossens was also heard in a new work—his Symphony No. 2. There is introductory music, cadential music, and noise, but there is no musical movement, no beauty and development. Such symphonies are plentiful, but it must be confessed that the Goossens work, carried to this length, with this enthusiasm, proved unusually exhausting.

C. M.

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# News of the Day

## Forthcoming Events

The London Contemporary Music Centre has been reorganized, and its future concerts will be held publicly at Wigmore Hall, instead of privately as hitherto. Forthcoming programmes include a number of works new to London, among them string Quartets by William Walton and Darius Milhaud (February 4th), Poulenc's Sextet for piano and wind instruments and Roberto Gerhard's Quintet for wind instruments (March 4th), Rubbra's 'cello Sonata and songs by Denis Ap Ivor (April 1st) and, on a date to be announced, Elisabeth Lutyens's Dramatic Scene by Dylan Thomas for tenor, bass, female chorus and small orchestra and the *Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine* by Messiaen, mentioned in our Paris report in this issue.

Membership of the Centre (one guinea per annum) entitles subscribers to admission to the Wigmore Hall concerts, and to monthly studio meetings which are not open to the public. They also have access to libraries of modern music. Programmes and other information may be obtained from the Secretary of the L.C.M.C., c/o Novello & Co. Ltd., 160, Wardour Street, W.1. (Telephone Gerrard 1222).

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To carry on the work of the concerts given by the Morley College Choir and Orchestra during the war, the Morley College Concerts Society has been founded with the object of presenting "works not usually performed which are of cultural, educational or historical interest." The Society is a non-profit making organization, and since its sources of income are limited, it appeals for donations from music-lovers who wish to further its efforts. Professor Edward J. Dent is President, and Mr. Michael Tippett the musical director.

At concerts to be given at Central Hall next year, Stravinsky's ballet suite *Les Noces* and Tippett's Symphony (1945) will be given, in addition to some extremely interesting old works such as *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and the 1610 Vespers of Monteverdi, and the forty-part motet by Tallis, *Spem in alium nunquam habui*. The conducting will be shared by Walter Goehr and Michael Tippett. Programmes are obtainable from the Morley College Concerts Society, Morley College, 61, Westminster Bridge Road, London, S.E.1, to which address donations may also be sent.

## U.S.A.

Aaron Copland's third Symphony was given its first performance by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra on October 18th. Commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation, it has occupied the composer for two years, and has been described as "a full-size work, written in the broad, folksy style of Copland's latest works, brilliant, earthy and bold." It is in four movements, of which the last is based on an earlier fanfare by Copland entitled *Fanfare for the Common Man*. George Szell plans to give the symphony in England next year.

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Richard Strauss's *Ariadne in Naxos* was recently given for the first time in New York, at the City Centre of Drama and Music. Originally scheduled for two performances, its success was such that nine were eventually given. The conductor was Laszlo Halasz, musical director of the City Opera, and the part of Zerbinetta was played by Virginia MacWaters, who will be heard in England soon. At the Metropolitan Opera House, the only new productions this year were Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* and a one-act opera, *The Warriors*, by the American Bernard Rogers.

The New York City Symphony, orchestra of the City Centre, has also offered interesting programmes under the young American conductor Leonard Bernstein, Copland's first piano Concerto, Blitzstein's *Airborne*, Britten's violin Concerto and Ravel's piano Concerto for the left hand figuring in the programmes.

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The Ballet Theatre company, on their return to New York from Covent Garden, broke with their American manager, Mr. S. Hurok, and a "battle of the ballets" ensued. The Ballet Theatre usually appears at the Metropolitan in New York, but after the break it was announced that a new Hurok company, consisting of some members of the old Russian Ballet of Col. de Basil, and three dancers from Ballet Theatre—André Eglevsky, Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin—would appear there. Ballet Theatre replied by taking a theatre on Broadway, and the rival companies opened their respective seasons within a few days of each other. Competition was intense, and some New York papers reported the struggle in sporting jargon, with daily scores. It appears that Ballet Theatre were the victors. Two new ballets were given: *Facsimile*, with choreography by Jerome Robbins and music by Leonard Bernstein (Ballet Theatre), and *Camille*, based on *La Dame aux Camélias*, with a Schubert score arranged by Rieti (the Hurok company).

## U.S.S.R.

*Soviet News* reports that David Oistrakh, the outstanding Russian violinist known here through gramophone recordings, is to give the Elgar and Walton concertos with the U.S.S.R. State Symphony Orchestra in Moscow.

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Moscow musicians and composers are preparing to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the birth of Scriabin (born 1872). All his major orchestral works are to be performed at a special series of concerts.

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A *Times* report from Moscow (October 2nd) says that Shostakovich has again incurred official displeasure, this time because of "ideological impurities and deviations" in his most recent symphony, the ninth.

He has been rebuked by the music critic of *Culture and Life*, the official propagandist organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in these terms: "When the war ended, the people expected from Shostakovich a truthful embodiment of the ideals and emotions which had destroyed the worst enemy of mankind. But instead Shostakovich gave them what one critic called a symphonic joke . . . The unwholesome influence of Igor Stravinsky—an artist without a fatherland and without confidence in advanced ideas—dominates Shostakovich's ninth Symphony. It has forced into the background the influence of Bach, Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky, which inspired him in his earlier works."

## With the Composers

Arthur Benjamin is back in England after nine years abroad (mostly in Vancouver), during which time he has worked as conductor, composer, pianist and lecturer. In Vancouver he was conductor of the CBR (Vancouver) Symphony Orchestra—the local broadcasting orchestra—and with them introduced some fifty works, mostly British, that had not been heard there before.

Benjamin's viola Sonata was given recently at Wigmore Hall by Frederick Riddle and the composer, and his new Symphony is scheduled for a first performance next spring. Other new works Benjamin has brought back with him are a Suite for flute and string orchestra, after D. Scarlatti, and two short pieces, *Red River Jig* and *Caribbean Dance* (subtitled *A New Jamaican Rumba*) which he has scored for orchestra, two pianos and other instrumental arrangements. 100,000 records of the *Jamaican Rumba* have been sold in the United States between January and September this year.

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Ernest Bloch's new string Quartet No. 2 is being given by the Griller Quartet at many of their current concerts, and they are shortly going to record it for Decca. They will introduce the work to America during their tour there in the new year. Ernest Ansermet has broadcast Bloch's recent *Suite Symphonique* from Geneva, and will give public performances in Geneva and Lausanne early next year.

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Benjamin Britten is working on his third opera, which, in contrast to *Peter Grimes* and *The Rape of Lucretia*, will be of a humorous nature. Eric Crozier is writing the libretto, derived from a story by Guy de Maupassant. The setting will again be in Suffolk. Another major work planned by Britten is a choral symphony, which Koussevitzky asked him to write when he visited Tanglewood this summer.

Several further foreign productions of *Peter Grimes* are being prepared. Two complete radio performances were given in Rome on December 1st and 7th, under Fernando Previtali, and it is to be staged at the Scala, Milan, in February, Tullio Serafin conducting. The orchestral interludes from *Peter Grimes* are being given by leading orchestras everywhere—twenty-two American performances have been noted to date, the conductors including Stokowski, Koussevitzky, Szell, Reiner, and Leinsdorf. *The Rape of Lucretia* was given by the Glyndebourne company to enthusiastic audiences in Amsterdam and The Hague in October, and the first production by a foreign opera house will be at the Municipal Theatre in Basle, in February, under Alexander Krannhals. *Peter Grimes* has already been given at this theatre.

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Zoltán Kodály has gone on to America, after his stay in England, and will conduct several of the leading orchestras there in performances of his recent Variations for orchestra and other works.

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Richard Strauss's new *Metamorphosen* (study for 23 solo strings) is now published, and performances are announced in Vienna (Paul Sacher), Boston (Koussevitzky), and Rome (Previtali). Several English performances have been given by Boyd Neel, who introduced the work here.

Strauss's operas are still being widely performed, recent productions including *Der Rosenkavalier* in Basle, Vienna and New York, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Berne, and *Salomé* in Geneva and Vienna.

## Miscellaneous

Paul Sacher and the Basle Kammerorchester will give on January 21st the first performance of three new scores: Stravinsky's Concerto for strings, Martinů's Toccata and Canzoni, and Honegger's fourth Symphony.