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WATCH FISTOULARI *Russian Successor to Beecham*

(Written for "The Listener" by COLIN G. ROUSE)

The writer of this article is a Wellington pianist, who joined the Air Force, and is now a Flying-Officer in the R.N.Z.A.F. Some readers will remember his broadcasts from 2YA studio.

DURING December last I was on leave in London from my R.A.F. unit, and was fortunate enough to attend an all-Russian concert at the Royal Albert Hall, presented by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. It was sponsored by the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. (a live musical body in London) and under the patronage of M. Gusev, the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain.

A comparative newcomer to English musical circles was the conductor on this occasion. The L.P.O., after being without a chief regular conductor since Sir Thomas Beecham left them four years ago and went to the U.S.A., has appointed Anatole Fistoulari to this post. Fistoulari was born in Kiev, the son of a former director of the Philharmonic College in Leningrad, and has conducted the leading orchestras on the Continent and America. He came first to England before the war to conduct the Russian Ballet (Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo). He escaped from France to England in 1940, and has since married the daughter of Gustav Mahler.

Compared with the BBC Symphony and London Symphony Orchestras, the Philharmonic rather lacks the perfect combination and character which Sir Adrian Boult and Basil Cameron have respectively built up. However, under a vigorous and youthful conductor like Fistoulari great things can be expected of it, and that it will be moulded into as powerful a combination as either of the other two orchestras.

It was fitting, I thought, that an all-Russian programme should be conducted by a Russian. He impressed me greatly from the outset with a masterly yet natural style. His readings gave evidence of great attention to detail, and the whole result was a sensitive and impressive programme.

The programme presented was:—

- (1) Capriccio Espagnole (Rimsky-Korsakov).
- (2) Letter Scene from "Eugen Onegin" (Tchaikovsky).
- (3) Introduction to Act IV. "Khovantchina" (Moussorgsky).
- (4) Paganini Rhapsody (Rachmaninoff) (Solo pianist: Eric Harrison).
- (5) Symphony No. 6 (Shostakovich).

Interest centred on the symphony, and I found it a most fascinating work. If I remember rightly, this was its second public performance in England, although Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra had recorded it

(continued on next page)


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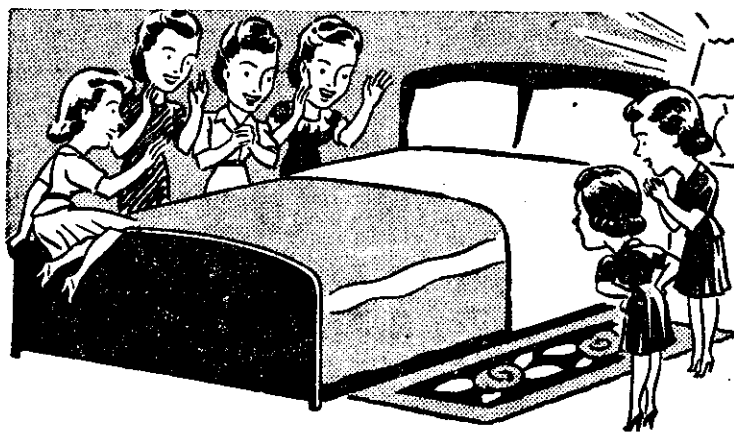
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