



"... Throws tomatoes at the stage"

(continued from previous page)

Yes, but it's got to be done without letting the recipient know he's being given a dose of Culture. You can't drag people to Musical Appreciation Classes by the scruff of the neck. If you did, they'd probably hate all music for the rest of their lives.

Also you can't ram a love of good music down the throats of the very young without disastrous results. I know, having taught music. Children have naturally bad taste. They like the worst variety of popular jazz, because it's rhythmic and easy to remember. This doesn't matter in the least. Left alone, they outgrow it. When they develop a technical ability to perform Beethoven, they don't want to go back to playing "The Robin's Return." Appreciation and technical mastery go side by side. Personally, I should be most suspicious of the young pupil who told me he liked Bach. I should wonder, first, what grown-up had been feeding him rich indigestible musical fare unsuited to his tender years; second, whether I as teacher might not be directly responsible for grafting an artificial good taste on to a naturally ordinary mind. It usually happens that a child who has been carefully schooled in "what to appreciate and why" will later return with unabated vigour to the cheap and nasty music which appeals to children and to those adults whose musical intelligences have not developed at the same pace as their bodies. This aptitude for bad taste should not be checked at all. Neither should it be encouraged. Ignored, it will be outgrown.

### Giving a Lead

The adult who plays no instrument, and makes no effort to understand what he hears, is a more difficult proposition. He is a stubborn creature and must be approached warily.

If, for instance, you know that your audience is unmusical, and you play them a Beethoven sonata without any preliminary warning other than a twiddling of the piano-stool, you are courting disaster. Play them a short piece (the non-musical listener finds it difficult to concentrate on listening for more than seven minutes at a stretch) with a fanciful title, say Ibert's "Little White Donkey" or Debussy's "Submerged Cathedral," and preface it by an explanation of what it's all about, and the same audience will listen intently and enjoy every note. All they want is an explanation, some sort of lead, an inkling of what the composer is trying to tell them. (Singers have a happier time than instrumentalists in this respect, for they have words to carry their message.) The

field of abstract music is not for such audiences, and it is best introduced by means of the radio, where themes can be illustrated and formal plans unfolded in an atmosphere more intimate than that of the concert-hall.

There are many small ways in which the lover of good music can further his cause. He can insist on switching his radio off when nothing of worth is to be heard from it. He can insist that the radio is not to be used in his home as a background for reading, children's homework, or a game of cards. He can, if he is addicted to letter-writing, write to his radio station, congratulating it on a good programme rather than reviling it because of a bad one. He can attend local concerts and urge others to do so. He can have his children taught some instrument and encourage music-making in the home. He can support choirs and orchestras in his own city. He can, if he performs himself, perform in public only the best music, and try to "put it across" by explaining to his audience what it's all about. This is all so obvious that it seems scarcely worth mentioning, but remember that unless the best is continually placed before the public, the public will continue to demand, and get, the worst.

\* \* \*

BUT, says the average person, I've listened with patience to what you have to say, and it's very interesting — for musicians. But I'm just an average listener and how do I know what's in good taste and what isn't? Haven't you a sort of guide, a signpost for the middle-brow?

Well, in this connection I've thought out a few questions on the subject of taste, whereby you can test your own judgment. See how many you can answer.

### "GOOD TASTE IN MUSIC" QUIZ

#### Section 1 (For Beginners):

1. Is it considered good taste to use three minutes of Grieg or Tchaikovsky to fade in and out of a radio serial?
2. Is it considered good taste to allow a bat of nine to occupy part of the Children's Hour with a rendition of "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree"?
3. Is it considered good taste to present Schubert's "Serenade" in common time, largo, scored for a band consisting mainly of drums and muted saxophones?
4. Is it considered good taste to applaud between movements of a Symphony at a concert?

#### Section 2 (For Those of Medium Intelligence):

1. Which is in better taste, Fats Waller at the piano or "Remembrance" as an organ solo?
2. Ditto, an Irish tenor singing "Danny Boy" or a German tenor singing "The Last Rose of Summer"?
3. Ditto, the Sentry's Song from *Iolanthe*, or the Policeman's Song from *The Pirates of Penzance*?
4. Ditto, Beethoven's Minuet in G, or Paderewski's Minuet in G?

#### Section 3 (For Musicians, excluding Highbrows):

1. Why is Schubert's "Ave Maria" preferable to Gounod's?
2. Which is the better Mass, Palestrina or Mercadante, and why?
3. Regarding *Faust*, do you prefer Berlioz or Gounod, and why?
4. Place these Symphonies in order of merit, with reasons: Beethoven's 5th, Shostakovich's 5th, Tchaikovsky's 5th.
5. Is the "Warsaw Concerto" to be ranked with any other concertos, and if so, which?



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