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EDUCATION AND DANCE MUSIC

Children Like It—Let's Make Use of It!

(Written for "The Listener" by RAY CARR)

A RECENT reference to "cheap music" in the *Listener* has annoyed us with its futility. Beyond giving satisfaction to those in agreement such terminology is without beneficial effect — and we're not concerned with those in agreement. If we're going to interest our young people in (for want of a better word) classical music, we'll never do it by belittling the sort of music that appeals to them so much. It is only natural that dance music should appeal to the young; it's rhythmical, and youngsters especially react enthusiastically to rhythm; it's melodious — deny it who may — and surely there would be something wrong with a child who did not listen with pleasure to an appealing melody? Dance music is here to stay, it's universally popular, so what are we going to do about it? Disparagement is otiose; as well to attempt the conversion of a cannibal to vegetarianism by telling him the meat he adores tastes nasty. Can we not find some way in which we can utilise this popular music to lay a foundation for the appreciation of the music of the Three B's and Co.? Yes, we can—we'll make a friend of dance music!

Our pedagogues, our professors, seem to look upon dance music as the enemy of Good Music, so let us with true Christian cunning make a friend of our enemy; we'll use him to further our own ends in the best tactical tradition by broadcasting regular educational sessions telling the kids all about dance music. NOT patronisingly, NOT didactically will we broadcast these sessions, but with interest and enthusiasm — more so because the popularity of them would be assured.

Listening Intelligently

We'll start off with such instrumentally simple orchestras as those of Victor Silvester and Josephine Bradley and point out which is the trumpet, saxophone, violin, etc., how the trumpet is sometimes muted and sometimes open, the pleasant effect of violin and saxophone playing in harmony; we'll go on to explain all about the different sorts of dance music—"sweet" as compared with "sweet swing" and the like; we'll show them how dance arranging has evolved in beauty and complexity by playing old and new versions of the same tune; we'll

have them noticing more about dance music than they ever knew existed; they'll learn to listen intelligently—we'll enhance their appreciation by making it intellectual as well as purely emotional.

It should be obvious that if we want the young to appreciate classical music we must get them interested, for without interesting them we'll be wasting our time and perhaps sickening them of such music for the rest of their lives.



"... They'll learn to listen intelligently"

So throughout these sessions we will frequently and with studied casualness bring in cross references to classical music. It often happens that youngsters are repelled from classical music by the people who "like" it; so many of these people are poseurs as must be fearfully obvious to those who have surveyed an orchestral concert audience with discernment; and we've all known those gushing females—of either sex—who "just simply adore" this or that composer who happens to be the current rage. So we must talk about classical music with easy familiarity, as if it's a real friend to us—and isn't it? We must dispel the idea that classical music lovers are a pack of stuffshirts, and we'll show them that the composers were pretty good fellows too: Beethoven and his hotted up minuet that became the scherzo should help to endear him to them for instance.

Must Play Fair

Concerning the composers, we must find a medium between idolatry and iconoclasm; we'll tell them about Beethoven's fondness for jokes, bad puns; Wagner's fad for silk underwear; Chopin's keen sense of humour; Schubert