

MUSIC AND COLLABORATION

WHAT is the difference, morally, between a pianist who gives mental comfort to an enemy and a physician who ministers to an enemy's body? The answer, if one can be found, may decide the future of half-a-dozen of the world's greatest singers and instrumentalists. Here is the situation as set out by Winthrop Sargeant in an article in New York "Life."

NOTHING is generating so much dissonance in the world of United States music to-day as the problem of what to do with the prominent European musicians who are accused, rightly or wrongly, of collaboration. Unlike the large number of artists who left Germany and Italy after the rise of totalitarianism, these musicians elected to stay behind or to work under the Nazis in Axis occupied countries. The trouble is that by purely artistic standards many of them are embarrassingly great. They include Wilhelm Furtwangler, a German conductor whose standing is close to Toscanini's; Richard Strauss, probably the world's greatest living composer; Walter Gieseeking, who is very close to being the world's greatest pianist; Kirsten Flagstad, the world's most cele-

brated Wagnerian soprano; Alfred Cortot, greatest of French pianists; Beniamino Gigli, most famous of Italian tenors; William Mengelberg, Dutch conductor of international standing; Serge Lifar, Europe's most noted male ballet dancer. Many Americans are in favour of banning them forever from our concert halls and opera houses. Many others feel that to do so would result in a substantial and unnecessary loss to culture.

The problem is particularly vexing because there is no accepted legal machinery to decide it. The artists in question are not war criminals. The issue is basically one of morals. Philosophers and poets have, of course, pointed out that music and morals do not necessarily coincide. In his novel *The Magic Mountain*, Thomas Mann remarked sagaciously that the art of music is "politically suspect." The disconcerting fact is that in Germany and Italy the Allied



WILLEM MENGELBERG
Toured Germany in triumph

powers have just defeated what are unquestionably the two most musical nations in the world.

The degree of political guilt differs greatly in individual cases. Kirsten

Flagstad, for example, refused to sing either in Germany or under the Quisling regime in her native Norway. Her crime consists merely in being the faithful wife of Henry Johansen, a celebrated Quislingite war profiteer who sold lumber to the Nazis and is now in a Norwegian jail awaiting trial. She is at present living in retirement in Norway, forbidden to sing and unable to get passport visas to leave the country. Richard Strauss, now living in Switzerland, has enjoyed undiminished popularity in American opera houses and concert halls, where his operas *Rosenkavalier* and *Salome* and a sheaf of brilliant symphonic poems have been performed throughout the war. He is 81 years old. He had several run-ins with the Nazis and once publicly denounced their war, which incidentally interfered with the collection of his enormous foreign royalties. He has, however, enthusiastically accepted several Nazi honours and even went so far, in 1940, as to write a festival piece for Emperor Hirohito. Walter Gieseeking has stubbornly maintained (and still believes) that art has nothing whatever to do with politics. When the war broke out he deliberately chose to stay in Germany, where he played the piano

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