

CAN MUSIC KEEP THE PEACE?

A PERMANENT international music organisation to bring about better understanding and amity among nations is being urged by Ernest Hutcheson, Australian-born pianist, composer, and president of the Juilliard School of Music, New York, says *Talk*, the monthly review of the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

An effective organisation of that type, by helping to promote better understanding among the peoples, could play an important part in preventing future wars, Mr. Hutcheson believes. He suggests that the world-wide music body could either be an enlargement of the cultural committee of the old League of Nations set-up, or an entirely new organisation. Each participating nation should be represented by its ablest musicians, preferably the composers, who interpret musically the spirit of their people.

International music matters before the second World War were handled by the League of Nations, through its international committee on Folk Arts, which was a branch of the international committee on intellectual co-operation. Hutcheson's plan provides for greater

emphasis on music than the League committee provided. He strongly recommends that an "international musical festival"—which would bring together the world's ablest musicians for an exchange of cultural ideas—should form a part of the international organisation. The festival would feature music of all participating nations, preferably modern music, with the finest world conductors directing the festival orchestra in the music of their native lands.

Since Europe will be occupied with rehabilitation problems now the war is over, it is suggested that some city in the New World, which could provide musical facilities for such an undertaking, would be best suited for the immediate future. Both New York and Mexico City are suggested as possible locations for the seat of the international music organisation and festival.

Exchange of Ideas

Such an international festival not only would encourage exchange of cultural ideas, but would actually produce culture. This interchange of ideas among the people who influence world musical trends would, he thinks, help the peoples to reach a better understanding.

"The second world war caused despair of bringing about world-wide amity

through the common channels tried in the past," he said recently. "Diplomacy and pacts failed to avert the holocaust which enveloped the world. It is more likely that this understanding can be achieved through the arts and sciences. There is a universal language."

Radio Would Help

He pointed out that cultural ties were not infallible in bringing about better relations among the different peoples. "There have been breakdowns at times under stress, but we have made progress. For instance during the first world war there were serious movements instituted in America to ban the playing of music which had been created in the countries of our enemies. There has been no such trend in this war. That demonstrates progress towards a cultural understanding."

Hutcheson believes the groundwork for the international organisation should be laid now. He thinks the world music group should from the outset plan for a publication which would allow continuous interchange of ideas and keep the world informed of musical activities in the various lands.

Music circles in New York point out that the activities of an international organisation could be manifold, but that

one of its chief values could be in bringing about a wider distribution of the world's music. To do that, the organisation could act as a clearing house in getting the best music created in one country into the concert halls and homes of another. Technical music problems could be handled through the international body. With the increased transmission of good music throughout the world by radio, work of an international group would become increasingly important.

They Were Not Amused

THE French National Radio had just completed a news broadcast. Without explanation, the announcer said: "Monsieur Helium, delegate to the World Institute of Atomic Research, will make an important announcement." Then, to the accompaniment of eerie music and the sound of loud explosions, a succession of breathless announcers pleaded with Parisians not to panic. "Bulletins" described cities disintegrating, ships disappearing at sea and the world splitting wide open. There was complete panic. Few people stayed near their radios long enough to hear the announcer say: "Wake up. It's a joke." Next day the French Government, not at all amused, dismissed Claude Bourdet, new director-general of French broadcasting.

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