

INVITED AUDIENCE

BBC's Free Concerts in London's East End

(By PATRICIA H. YOUNG)

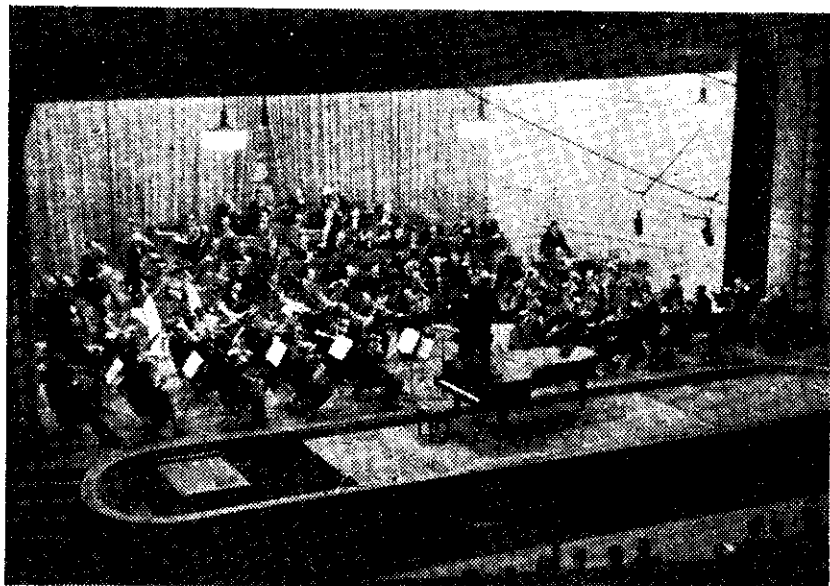
THE People's Palace in the East End of London is becoming one of the city's principal music centres. Built originally as a theatre for the entertainment of the inhabitants of the East End, who could seldom afford an excursion into the glamour of the West End, it is now being used as a studio by the BBC, principally to house its Symphony Orchestra of 100 players.

During the winter season the BBC has given a series of fortnightly Sunday afternoon concerts at the People's Palace at which the citizens of each part of

of Our Time programme, which comprises works by contemporary composers of all nations; the other is a weekly Thursday afternoon concert of *Music of the Masters*, popular music by the great classical composers. The audiences for these two types of programmes are identical: young boys still in school, medical students taking an hour off from their studies, boys and girls from youth clubs eager to learn something new, and not afraid of expressing their own opinions.

Taste—and Taste

I went to a *Music of the Masters* broadcast the other day to see the audience and watch for myself the enthusiasm I had heard so much about. I was



THE BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA on the stage at the People's Palace for the first of the fortnightly Sunday afternoon concerts described on this page.

London gather—West End and East End. During the week routine retainers are fed and housed during their working hours, which may last from ten in the morning until ten at night. It is not possible to have an audience for all these concerts, but some of them, mainly popular concerts or important programmes of contemporary music, are attended by an "invited audience."

All Sorts and Conditions

The phrase "invited audience" may suggest to you the friends and relations of the orchestra, favoured people who by the golden key of acquaintanceship can open the door to the studio. In the case of the People's Palace this is not so. A few months ago a scheme was born, and is now growing fast, for allowing the East End access to their own People's Palace while broadcasting is going on, so that they can share in the music as often as possible. Hospitals, schools, youth clubs and music clubs in the vicinity are sent lists of the broadcasts which may be attended, passes are sent to those who wish to come, and these young people have a chance to hear fine music free.

The two regular broadcast concerts for which passes are issued are vastly different. One is the six-weekly *Music*

not disappointed. I saw little schoolboys of ten and twelve years old scrambling to get the best seats and then settling with their ice-creams till the music began—when the ice-cream was soon forgotten. I saw older schoolboys, fifteens and sixteens, and listened to their talk of the previous night's Honegger and Walton and Bartok; they didn't think much of them, but suggested they were an acquired taste. I saw young romance bathing itself in the warm pools of Wagner, and I saw young nurses and medical students relaxing under the soothing touch of a Brahms song.

What most impressed me was the eagerness, the rapt attention, and above all the knowledge, technical and historical, which these young people displayed and were feeding with their new-found opportunity. I felt I was watching and listening to the growth of a new musical nation.

The People's Palace had an inspiring origin. Stirred by a novel written in 1882 by Sir Walter Besant, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, which was concerned with the life of the East End poor, people were moved to contribute to a fund on their behalf. In all, £60,000 was raised "to improve the moral and intellectual tone of the working classes," and part of it was used to build this "palace" for the people.

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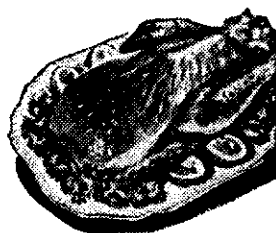
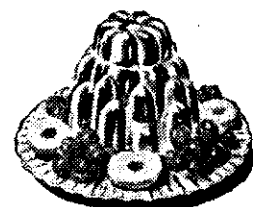
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