

"SHEET MUSIC" BY MOLOTOFF

When Henri Penn Made A Noise Like An Armaments Factory

BY musical tradition and upbringing, Henri Penn, the English pianist now touring New Zealand for the National Broadcasting Service has every reason to be a dyed-in-the-wool classicist. He is thoroughly modern, however, and even enjoys playing good swing.

In the classics he has undoubtedly been influenced by Sir Thomas Beecham and Serge Diaghilef, the great ballet impresario, with whom he played for three years. His sympathy with the moderns is evident from the frequency with which he features such composers as Bartok and Prokofieff in his recitals. He also has the distinction of having played the sheet metal in the first performance in Australia of the Soviet composer Molotoff's remarkable composition *The Machine*.

A Musical Warning

This performance took place in Melbourne five years ago, under the direction of Professor Bernard Heinze. *The Machine* is a musical representation of a scene in an armaments factory, with a giant machine starting, gradually getting under way, driving at full speed, and then slowing down. The sounds are represented by the usual instruments of the orchestra, with the addition of the sheet of metal, which is five or six yards in length by one and a-half yards wide and is suspended above the musicians. A handle is attached, by means of which the metal is shaken suddenly, or, for longer notes, rattled violently. The sheet metal part is written in orthodox crochets, quavers and trills.

The whole effect of the composition is startling and eerie, and Mr. Penn considers that Molotoff intended it as a musical warning to a world threatened by an overburden of armaments.

When it comes to swing, Mr. Penn is an object lesson in tolerance. He believes that, along with the work of certain ultra-modern composers in what may be called the cacophonous style, it is only a side channel in the great stream of musical development; but he does not deny it a place altogether as so many single-minded classicists do.

"Le Jazz Hot"

When he was in London a few years ago, Mr. Penn watched several performances by the Quintet of the "Hot Club of France," which was making vaudeville appearances. It comprised two guitars, one violin (who was also the leader), a bass and a light vocalist. The quintet captured the true spirit of what the

French call "le jazz hot," says Mr. Penn, and as for the violinist, in technique, phrasing and tone, he could only be compared to masters like Menuhin, Kreisler, and Heifetz. In his sense of rhythm he surpassed them all.

Like all balletomanes who were privileged to be present at Diaghilef's miraculous revival of the Russian Ballet in the years immediately prior to the Great War, Mr. Penn is a little critical of present day ballet. "A lot of it is a hybrid art, and no more Russian ballet

than I am," he says. "Much that I have seen of recent years has been just a display of mechanics."

Mr. Penn joined up with Diaghilef's company in London about 1910 as pianist in Beecham's orchestra—he was plain "Tommy" Beecham then. The company, says Mr. Penn, was one which has probably never been excelled before or since. At the head, controlling and guiding, was Serge Diaghilef, artist himself and authority on every art form compassed by the ballet. The two principal dancers were Karsavina and

Nijinsky, who have both become legends; Fokine and Nijinsky were creating brilliant ballets, and Beecham's orchestra was precisely the musical instrument needed to bring out the dancers' best.

The Art of Nijinsky

Similarly, Mr. Penn does not attempt to compare Nijinsky with male dancers of a later generation. Having seen Nijinsky create some of his greatest roles—in *Sacre du Printemps* and *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*—he can only say that no dancer he has ever seen since has had the same inspired grace and concealed art.

Two Sides to Beecham

A staunch champion of Sir Thomas Beecham, Mr. Penn points out that there were two sides to the great conductor's display of feeling in Australia last year. He also points out that had Australians been a little more tolerant of the temperament of a sensitive musician, it is possible that Sir Thomas would have come to Australia for a season instead of accepting a post with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. Australian, and to a lesser extent New Zealand, orchestral work would thereby have benefited immeasurably.

Nevertheless, Mr. Penn points out that Australian orchestras have made considerable progress, and need only the impetus which a long stay in the Commonwealth by a first class conductor would give them.

Mr. Penn has visited New Zealand five times during the past 20 years, and

says that corresponding progress has been made here. What would help New Zealand orchestras, he says, is a number of really good players in the woodwind, brass and percussion departments.



RELIEVE BUNIONS
Dr. Scholl's Zino-pads relieve painful shoe pressure, blisters, corns or bunions. Only 1/6 per packet, with free medicated disks, from all chemists and Dr. Scholl dealers.

DR. SCHOLL'S ZINO-PADS



Alan Blakey photograph
HENRI PENN
"The effect is startling"

Absolutely Unique in its Quality



State Express Cigarette Tobacco is manufactured with the most exacting care, for the man whom nothing but the best will satisfy.



TWO OUNCE TINS
2' 3 1/2

STATE EXPRESS
CIGARETTE TOBACCO

44



FREE ELECTRICITY FOR RADIO OR LIGHTS!

A WINCHARGER turns every breeze into a free electricity supply for radio, lights, etc. Charge your batteries for a few pence a year. The WINCHARGER has the scientifically designed "Airfoil" propeller—charges in a breeze but safe in a 70-mile gale. Quiet, dependable, economical—and amazingly troublefree. Write for particulars.

JOHNS LIMITED. P.O. Box 471-O AUCKLAND