

A LITTLE CHILD LED THEM : 11-Year-Old Conductor For Great Symphony Orchestra

WHEN the members of the NBC Summer Symphony Orchestra of America — the orchestra which Toscanini had whipped into one of the world's finest—first saw their conductor for the new season, they laughed. Not unnaturally, perhaps, for who could imagine an 11 year-old boy conducting a full symphony orchestra? Certainly not the public; least of all the men whom he must lead and direct. After one rehearsal under the baton of Lorin Maazel, however, the orchestra was prepared to admit that they had been wrong. Plump, mop-haired, and hardly bigger than a 'cello, Lorin is not the conventional idea of a child prodigy. With precocious composure and in a



LORIN MAAZEL

They laughed when he stood up to play

variable treble voice, he politely prefaced his requests with "Could I ask?" or "Might I have?" pronounced the string section first "messy" then "much better"; and gently chided a clarinetist who altered the beat. He rarely consulted the score, and then only to refer to numbered sections, for he knows 22 symphonic works by heart. Critical listeners to his two Saturday night broadcasts were amazed at his interpretation of such music as Wagner's "Rienzi" Overture, Mendelssohn's "Italian Symphony" and Dika Newlin's "Cradle Song."

Lorin was born of American parents in the Parisian suburb of Neuilly. His father, a singing teacher, later took his wonder child to Los Angeles in order to develop his musical talents. There, Lorin studied the piano and violin, and was "discovered" to the orchestral world through a Haydn score which his father gave him four years ago. This also introduced him to Vladimir Bakaleinikoff, assistant conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, who is still his teacher.

In the past three years, Lorin has conducted seven orchestras, of which the best before the NBC Symphony was the Los Angeles Philharmonic. His beat is precise, his gestures are graceful, and he has one gift from the gods; absolute pitch, i.e., ability to place a note without help from any instrument.

Lorin Maazel is very much older than his years. After the first rehearsal, he said, "I hope I got the men with me. I tried to." And later: "I still have a lot of hard work ahead of me. I am constantly studying. I have yet to prove my mettle."

SHORT STORY

(Continued from previous page)

happily the experiments didn't go at all well, and at odd intervals the residents in our street would be alarmed by dull, heavy explosions which, most of them decided, came from somewhere deep beneath our section.

We ourselves professed equal alarm and bewilderment as to the source of the explosions, and eventually the street agreed that they were evidence of sudden and unsuspected volcanic activity, and gloomily prophesied that our street would go sky-high some day. Letters have even appeared in the papers about it, and many property owners have shown such eagerness to dispose of their homes and move to other suburbs that, but for the special circumstances, I wish I had sufficient ready money to do a little speculating in house property.

LATELY the explosions have been heavier and more frequent, and I can only marvel at the heroism of Arbuthnot's persistence. He has hardly any hair or eyebrows left, and I fear that he will suffer permanent deafness. Fortunately I have managed to persuade my mother to take a long holiday in the country.

This morning Arbuthnot told me that he intends to risk everything in a supreme test. He will carry the experiment a stage further, with quantities of material considerably greater than he has been using hitherto. He will also introduce a modification which he hopes will curb this compound's sorry habit of shedding odd molecules at inconvenient times, and if all goes well one of the greatest and most daring experiments in the history of science will be brought to a successful conclusion at approximately four-thirty this afternoon.

If all does not go well, I hate to think what will happen. The quantities Arbuthnot is using are so large that one's brain reels at the thought. But Arbuthnot and I are agreed that whatever the sacrifice involved, the experiment must be completed.

HALF an hour ago I shook hands with him and assisted him through the trapdoor at the head of the shaft in the back garden. He has given me a draft of notes dealing with the experiment, and if the worst happens, I am to hand them over to the Government.

It is now exactly two o'clock, and I must catch a tram to the city. Between now and four-thirty I must put as many miles as possible between myself and Arbuthnot's experiment.

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