

# "LONDON SYMPHONY"

ON Tuesday evening April 21, the NBS Orchestra under Andersen Tyrer will play, from 2YA, *London Symphony* by Vaughan Williams. The composer himself is quoted as saying of this work: "The title might run *A Symphony by a Londoner*. That is to say, various sights and sounds of London have influenced the composer, but . . . the music must succeed as music and in no other way."

Here are some notes by Mr. Tyrer on the various movements:

**First Movement:** Daybreak by the Thames. London sleeps, and in the stillness of early morning Big Ben solemnly strikes the half hour. Suddenly the scene changes; one is in the Strand amid the bustle of morning traffic. This is London street life of the early hours—steady stream of foot passengers hurrying, newspaper boys shouting, messengers whistling, and that most typical sight of London streets, the costermonger. We next turn from the Strand into one of the quiet streets, and the noise suddenly ceases. We return to the Strand and are once again caught up by the bustle and life of London, gay, careless, noisy, with every now and again a touch of something fiercer.

**Second Movement:** This paints a picture of Bloomsbury. Dusk is falling. Those who know their London know this region of melancholy streets over which seems to brood an air of shabby gentility. In front of a "pub" stands an old musician playing his fiddle. His tune is played in the orchestra by a viola. In the distance the "lavender cry" is heard.

**Third Movement:** One must imagine oneself sitting on a Saturday night on one of the benches of the Temple Embankment; that part lying between the Houses of Parliament and Waterloo Bridge. On our side of the river all is quiet, and in the silence one hears from a distance on the other side of the river all the noises of Saturday night in the slums. Again the music changes suddenly, and one feels the Thames flowing silent and mysterious, with a touch of tragedy. One of London's fogs comes down, making slumland and its noises seem remote.

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holder." I am clever. I am filled to overflowing with awareness. Or am I tawdry—my words breaking like cheap brittle knicknacks on the silence? My conversation is very hot-house—much admired, but rather forced.

\* \* \*

MISS QUINT'S voice becomes a shade purposeful. "Do you play?" she asks him. "Play?" "Yes, an instrument. Do you perform?"

He gives her a pitying look. She has fallen, fallen.

"No. We none of us play," he says gently, "we listen."

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**Fourth Movement:** The last movement deals almost entirely with the crueller aspects of London, the London of the unemployed and unfortunate. After the opening bars we hear the "Hunger March"; then again the bustle and noise of the streets (reminiscences

of the first movement), but these now take on a crueller aspect. There are sharp discords in the music. This is London as seen by the man who is "down and out".

**Epilogue:** Here we feel the great soul of London—London as a whole, vast, and unfathomable—and the symphony ends as it began, with the river, old Father Thames, flowing calm and silent, shrouded in mystery.

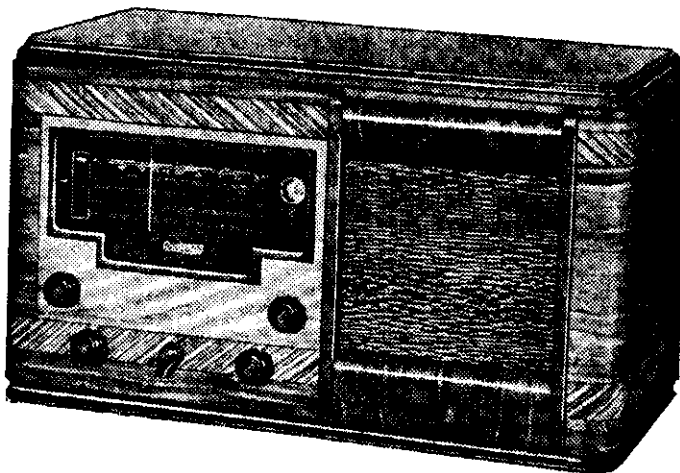
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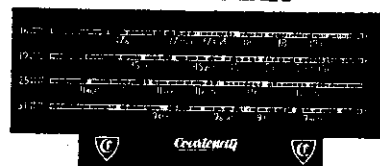
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