

FOOTBALLER- CONDUCTOR

ANYONE who thinks that orchestra conductors are elegant aesthetes who know nothing of the rough-and-tumble of life and that the only virility in music is to be found in Tin Pan Alley, should remember Rafael Kubelik, who has agreed to become musical director of Covent Garden Opera Company next year. The 40-year-old Czech-born conductor is the tallest in the world, though his 6ft 4in. is less of an advantage on the podium than it has been on the football field. It might have been there that he learnt how to score by neat side-stepping rather than by a frontal attack. When he was musical director of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra



RAFAEL KUBELIK

during the war, he cancelled every concert the Germans ordered by pleading ill-health. Since the war he has conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for three years.

Son of the violinist Jan Kubelik, he is an eloquent advocate of Czech music, so it would not be surprising if the Covent Garden repertoire includes operas which are little known in Britain but well-tried favourites in Prague.

The Covent Garden directorship, which has been vacant since 1951 when Karl Rankl's contract was not renewed, was offered last year to Sir John Barbirolli. However, he has decided to remain conductor of the Hallé Orchestra for at least four years—"providing that the orchestra is maintained at international status," according to a clause in the contract. Barbirolli will thus be with the Hallé for its centenary in 1958 which is already being planned.

—J. W. GOODWIN (London)

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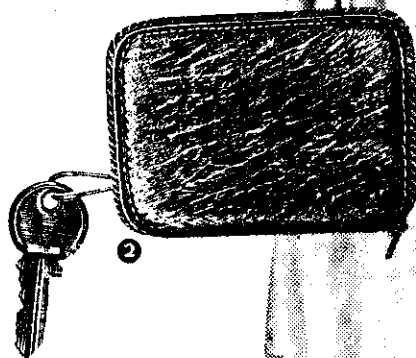
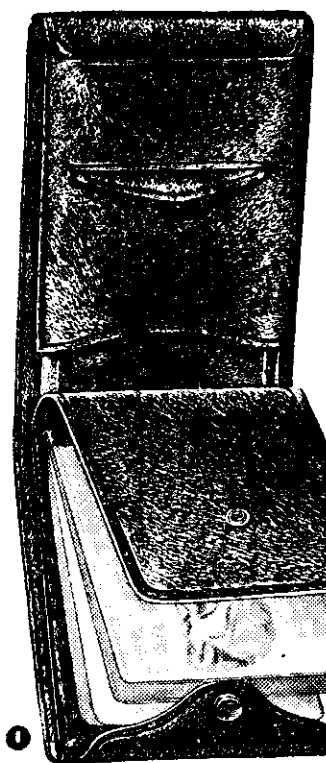
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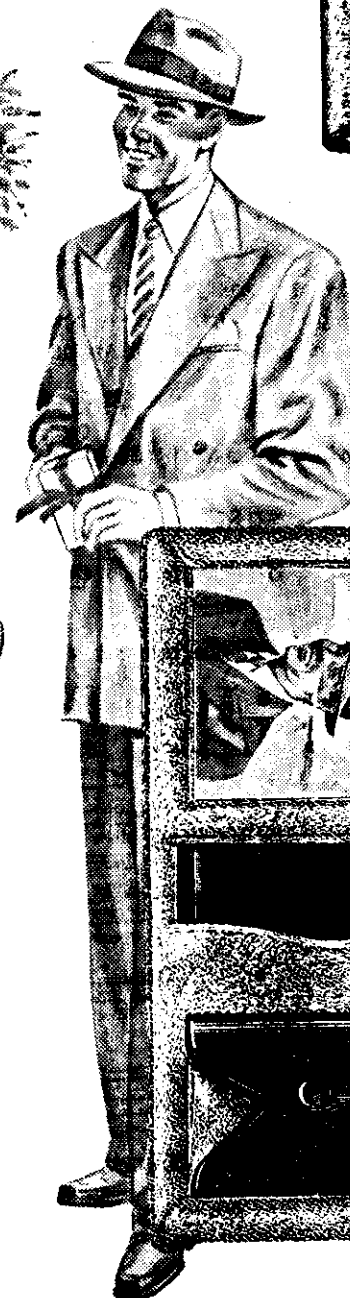


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