

Advice from Colin Horsley

"MUSIC students go to London because it has more to offer, but they should realise that if they want to develop musically they should go mainly to listen. After all, if they practise all day shut up in a room they might as well be at home." This was advice from one who knows—the New Zealand pianist Colin Horsley.

"I found when I went Home," he told *The Listener*, "that one of the biggest difficulties for piano students is to find somewhere where they can make a noise—as the average landlady who lets out rooms won't stand for it. The ideal solution to the problem seems to be to board with a deaf family in the suburbs. However, I was fortunate. When I first went to London in 1938 Douglas Lilburn got hold of an upright Bluthner for me, which cost £55. Getting a piano, as you can understand, is another difficult problem. That Bluthner today would cost about £130, but fortunately there is a firm in Oxford which does hire out pianos."

When he was asked about first steps towards

a professional career, Mr. Horsley replied that students must be prepared to find things hard, to work themselves up by small engagements with correspondingly small fees. "It's my firm belief," he said, "that opportunities come for everybody when they are ready for them, but you must be prepared to consolidate. As for concerts, the Arts Council is a great help. Even then your first recital is bound to put you in debt. The Festival Hall Recital Room costs about £40, for which they do all publicity, but it seats only about 300. The Wigmore Hall seats 500, costs about £60, and even if it were packed you would still lose about £100. Of course, newspaper advertising rates are very high and you must advertise."

However, once you had served your apprenticeship and gradually become known things were easier, Mr. Horsley said. The British public was very faithful to you so long as you kept faithful to them. Artists who had once been great and were now past their prime were still assured of their public because people remembered their past glory



COLIN HORSLEY

even when it was revealed now only in glimpses. In the United States, on the other hand, young people gave first recitals and stood or fell by them. "Either you're greater than Rachmaninoff or less than the dust," he commented with a grin.

"The music profession in England is very overcrowded. Far too many want to be pianists to the exclusion of everything else. Actually, they'd be far better off learning, say, a woodwind, with which you can get good results in a far shorter time. Piano training is never a disadvantage, though, whatever line you take up, and many people, men particularly, find this out when they suddenly discover at 26 or 27 that they have a good voice."

Colin Horsley is in the fortunate position at the moment of having two concertos being written for him—by Lennox Berkeley and Eugene Goossens. The Goossens work will not be ready for a while, but the Berkeley will have its premiere with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham next April at the Royal Festival Hall. Colin Horsley will also play in Australia a new Sonatina written for him by Philip Cannon, a 24-year-old British composer. Cannon has also composed and published recently a Concertino for Piano and Strings which Colin Horsley strongly recommends our string orchestras to try.

The Orchestra

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What's remarkable about that, you may say. We can do this almost any night any week; and after all, this time it's only Haydn and Mozart. And why Haydn, anyhow? If that's the way you feel, you but confirm what is, without exaggeration, one of the tragedies of our radio-gramophone era. The well of genius has become a gusher, tapped and tanked on records. We pull up at the radio bowser, fill up and settle



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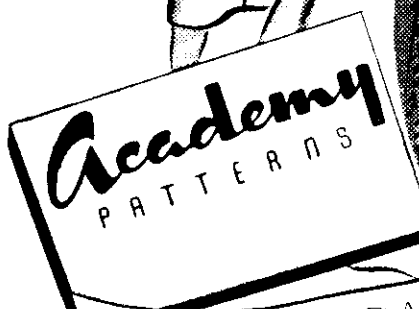
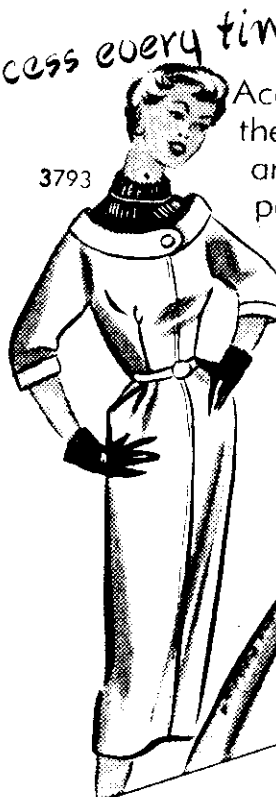
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