



LEFT: A study of this funny drawing by Hoffnung, from "The Hoffnung Symphony Orchestra" (Denis Dobson Ltd.), should help one get into the right mood for the Hoffnung Festival broadcast



started on the tuba in 1951 and now possesses four of them, one of which was specially built for him by a famous firm of English instrument makers. It is a rarity being pitched in F.

The tuba quartet play, with as much delicacy as they can summon, a Chopin Mazurka. This is followed by a setting of Walter Scott's poem "Lochinvar"—the speakers are backed up by percussion effects which includes an alphon so long it needed two operators—one to hold, the other to blow. The last item in the broadcast programme features the massive sub-contra-bass-tuba played by Hoffnung and so big it has to be moved on wheels. Originally made for Sousa it has been stored for many years in a London warehouse. This instrument appears in a set of variations on the theme of "Annie Laurie" and among the cast are two more rarities. One, in fact, is the only specimen of its kind in captivity—the contra-bass serpent, brought from a North Country memorial museum. Besides an ordinary serpent, the Variations are scored for piccolos, a rare form of oboe; the hecklephone, itself very nearly extinct; and two contra-bass clarinets, two contra-bass bassoons, a harmonium, and a hurdy-gurdy. The composer, Gordon Jacob, who is a Professor at a London College of Music, conducts.

THE audience in the Royal Festival Hall, London, on the night of November 13 last were not sure what to expect. The evening had been announced as a Hoffnung Music Festival Concert and the celebrated cartoonist Gerald Hoffnung whose books of orchestral caricatures had made him famous all over the world was to appear himself and play what must be one of the most fabulous instruments in existence—the sub-contra-bass-tuba. Several eminent composers had been commissioned to write works specially for the concert—Malcolm Arnold, Gordon Jacob, Humphrey Searle—and the evening was to start with a special fanfare composed by Francis Baines and played by trumpeters of the Royal Military School of Music. Older masters who were to help in the evening were Mozart's father, Leopold; Haydn and Chopin.

The concert, entitled "an extravagant evening of symphonic caricature," was a tremendous success. An enterprising gramophone company recorded it all and their LP disc, air mailed from London, will be played over all YC stations on Sunday, April 7, at 8.0 p.m.

The Hoffnung Music Festival Concert opens with an absurdly pompous fanfare by Francis Baines. Then comes "A Grand Overture" by Malcolm Arnold, conducted by the composer and played by a 150-piece orchestra. Electric floor

polishers and vacuum-cleaners—probably used many times before in the Festival Hall—appear in a new role as instruments in the orchestra where they are played by the wives of some of the musicians. Rifle shots also intrude and near the end of the work a gigantic bass drum enters—played with great strength by Mrs Hoffnung.

The famous horn player Dennis Brain, using several lengths of hosepipe with a mouthpiece attached, plays the third movement of a concerto originally written for an alphon by Leopold Mozart. The first part of the concert ends with a piano concerto to end all piano concertos (by Reizenstein), played by Yvonne Arnaud, who used to be a pianist before she became a comedy actress.

In this work all the well-known war-horses come under fire. The Tchaikovsky, Grieg and Rachmaninoff concertos—and snatches of the Beethoven 4th—are followed hard by "Rhapsody in Blue," "Roll Out the Barrel" and "Pop Goes the Weasel."

Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony, supposed to alarm the old ladies, has additional surprises in its andante. Members of the BBC Music Division ("to prove

## THE Hoffnung FESTIVAL

they can read music," said a London paper) play on stone hotwater bottles and in other respects Haydn's music is brought up to date. At its very first performance in London in 1791 this work produced the following incredible notice from a London critic: "The *Surprise* might not be inaptly likened to the situation of a beautiful shepherdess who, lulled to slumber by the murmur of a distant waterfall, starts alarmed at the unexpected firing of a fowling piece."

Hoffnung himself then appears to introduce his quartet of tubas. Hoffnung

The instigator of all this was born in 1925. His own style of caricature he regards as a serious art form and his concert is also serious—up to a point—but at that point wit takes over and musical invention soars upwards to the delight of his audience and, we hope, to the delight of our own listeners.

"I have been described as an unconventional person," Hoffnung says, and his voice (which listeners will hear) is certainly remarkable. When he was 19 he became a schoolteacher specialising in German and Art, but it was Art that became his real love.

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