

UNESCO'S HOMAGE TO CHOPIN



IT is a good thing to be reminded of the enduring importance of the great musicians, and an anniversary is always a satisfactory reason for singling out one composer for preferential treatment. When broadcasting services and musical societies were busy a few months ago arranging programmes to commemorate the centenary of Chopin's death, eleven eminent contemporary composers were engaged, at the invitation of Unesco, in writing chamber music in his honour. These works were performed for the first time with the co-operation of the French Broadcasting Company, at the Salle Gaveau in Paris on October 3 last, and recordings of the programme have been lent to the NZBS by the Radio Division of Unesco in Paris for a limited number of broadcasts. These will be given from the four YA stations in March on dates yet to be announced.

The contributing composers represent nine countries—England, Mexico, Spain, America, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Brazil—and their collaboration has, as listeners will recognise when they hear the programme, made it possible for the tribute to be a worthy one.

Here are the items in the anniversary programme: *Tombeau de Chopin* (Alexandre Tansman) by the Calvet String Quartet with Gaston Logerot (contrabass); *Hommage à Chopin* (Heitor Villa-Lobos) and *Sonate espagnole* (Oscar Espla) by Arnaldo Estrella (pianist); *Etude-Caprice* (Jaques Ibert) by Maurice Marechal ('cellist); *Suite polonaise* (Andrzej Panufnik) by Irene Joachim (soprano) and Andre Collard (piano); *Pastorale* for oboe and piano (Howard Hanson) by Jules Goetgheluck and the composer; *Three Mazurkas* (Lennox Berkeley); *Hommage à Chopin* (G. F. Malipiero) and *Etude* (Carlos Chavez) by Hélène Pignari (pianist); *Mazurka-Nocturne* for oboe, two violins and 'cello (Bohuslav Martinu), by Jules Goetgheluck, Georges Tessier, Georges Hugon and Roger Albin; *Ode à Frédéric Chopin* for four mixed voices and piano, on a poem by Nietzsche (Florent Schmitt), by the Marcel Couraud Vocal Ensemble and André Collard.

Of the composers, Tansman won in 1919 the first and second prizes in composition for Poland. Later he became a French citizen. He has composed symphonic and chamber music, music for the theatre, and also a lyric drama, *The Kurdish Night*. Founder and Director of the National Conservatory which prepares teachers of choral singing for schools, Villa-Lobos is a member of the Brazilian National Commission for Unesco, and the most famous of Brazilian musicians. His work is essentially inspired by folk music.

Describing his *Sonate espagnole*, Espla, a Spanish composer, wrote: "I have sought for a new formula to achieve balance and the development of the allegro, which I have placed at the end, corresponds particularly to the old Spanish sonatas. . . The work is tonal from beginning to end, even though my harmonies occasionally baffle the listeners." Ibert, since 1937, has been Director of the French Academy in the Villa

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LEFT: Frédéric Chopin, from a photograph