

FROM THE MAIL POUCH; SCHOENBERG

To the Music Editor:

I WAS profoundly shocked to read of the death of Arnold Schoenberg. He was one of the greatest geniuses of our time. He did for music in the twentieth century what Einstein did for science. He created a new musical system and method of expression which influenced half of the younger generation of composers. He was the tree from which stemmed the Central European romanticism of the Twenties and early Thirties. Without him there would have been no Alban Berg.

Arnold Schoenberg believed in his own destiny. With his death that belief will be fulfilled.

DIMITRI MITROPOULOS.

New York.

Recognition in His Time

To the Music Editor:

The news of Schoenberg's death came to us in the Cumberland

Forest Festival late on a "Pierrot Lunaire" night. We were saddened by the inevitable dominance of mortal gravity over the courageous spirit of a lone prophet of the unproven.

We remembered the opening sentence of Schoenberg's letter which he sent to friends in response to greetings on his seventy-fifth birthday: "To be recognized after one's death . . ."—and we reasoned:

Roy Harris: The significance of Schoenberg was the integrity and courage with which he attacked tradition by inventing something personal—something which did not exist before—naïve as it seems to us in perspective.

Nicolas Slonimsky: All great ideas are simple, or naïve, if you prefer. Yet Schoenberg's simple idea of composing with twelve-tone rows has influenced, directly or indirectly, many composers, even those who were firmly opposed to it. Schoenberg created a new climate in music.

R. H.: You may be right—but actually no major composer of any country in the last thirty years has been, strictly speaking, a systematized twelve-tone composer.

N. S.: What about Alban Berg? He brought Schoenberg's theories to the point of almost popular success. And what about Bartók who made use of twelve-tone motifs? And, for that matter, what about yourself?

R. H.: Alban Berg and Bartók used twelve tones when they pleased and set aside the Schoenberg formula whenever they wished. As for myself, I, too, used all the twelve tones—but always to confirm tonality, not to negate it.

N. S.: No doubt Schoenberg negated many things that were basic to the musical mind before 1900. His power was a power of rebellion. And great moments of art history come out of such absolute rebellions.

R. H.: That seems indisputable to me. A firmness of moral fiber is at least half of all strong rebels. It is almost as important in a culture to know what is not tenable as it is to recognize a new segment of truth. Only the strong can face a lifetime of discouragement from those who fear any change. For this we must honor Schoenberg. He would not give up. The attacks of his critics only confirmed him in his convictions.

N. S.: Yes, Schoenberg was an embittered prophet, but he be-

lieved—and said so many times—that the future would be with him. Ironically, Schoenberg's importance is unexpectedly indicated by the fact that his manuscripts have now acquired considerable market value. So he was becoming recognized even before his death—and he must have been both pleased and amazed at this recognition.

ROY HARRIS.

NICOLAS SLONIMSKY.

Sewanee, Tenn.

The Indispensable Amateur

To the Music Editor:

Mr. Downes' reply to Mr. Petrillo, who recommends the exclusion of the amateur from taking music lessons, is excellent. I am sure that such a measure would in the first place hurt thousands of Mr. Petrillo's own musicians, who earn money on the side by giving music lessons outside their regular jobs.

The music lover, however, is not just the consumer of music, of which the professional musician is the producer. The former is or ought to be also an active factor in our musical life beyond his passive role in an audience. In this connection I am not referring to school glee clubs or bands, which serve the needs of their respective institutions. I am thinking of organizations, particularly various kinds of vocal and instrumental ensembles, whose numbers should be increased rather than diminished and integrated into our public music life. To this end the music lover must do away with concert music that he cannot master. He should primarily take to such music as was written for and cultivated by the amateur.

Radio, gramophone and television are making the music lover more and more passive. What we need is his activation. For such a task the professional musician is indispensable as leaders, adviser, aide and instructor.

We musicians and music educators are keen on easing the plight of our colleagues, but in doing so we must not disregard cultural requirements, either. The music lover and the professional musician are by no means competitors either artistically or commercially. Olin Downes convincingly labels the amateur as the backbone of the nation's musical life. Well, the professional musician is its flesh and blood. Neither can exist without the other.

KARL ADLER.

New York.