

# MUSIC

By LAWRENCE GILMAN

## New Music by Schoenberg Given Last Night at the Philharmonic Concert

3,123th concert of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, Otto Klemperer conductor, at Carnegie Hall.

### PROGRAM

1. Wagner.....Prelude to "Lohengrin"
2. Schoenberg...Suite for String Orchestra
  - I. Largo—Allegro.
  - II. Adagio.
  - III. Minuet.
  - IV. Gavotte.
  - V. Gigue.

(First time in New York)

### INTERMISSION

3. Tchaikovsky.....Symphony No. 5, in E minor, Op. 64

THE hero of last night's Philharmonic-Symphony concert was no less a personage than the eminent Arnold Schönberg, once of Vienna and Berlin, now of Hollywood, U. S. A. Herr Schönberg has for years, as we all know, held an undisputed pre-eminence as the most menacing of the ultra-modernist composers. God-fearing conservative musicians have pictured him shudderingly to themselves as a maniacal wrecker of the tonal hearth and home, dragging the lyric Muse by her sacred braids to some destination of unimaginable horror.

But that was in the old, old far-off days, before Herr Schönberg left the Fatherland and came to Boston, New York, Hollywood, and other debilitating centers. Something has happened to Herr Schönberg. What it was remains a mystery, at least to this deponent. But the results are plain, and the inference is unescapable. Some Hollywood Dillah must have shorn his locks; for this Samson of the twelve-tone scale, this once horrific atonalist who had made even the mighty Richard Strauss sound like Ethelbert Nevin—this insuperable champion of the New Era has become a harmless composer of salon music, the Nevin of today, apt at pretty tunes and harmless harmonies, edged nostalgically with a little red pepper and a dash of dissonant Tabasco.

The facts appear to be that Herr Schönberg, for some reason that is not quite clear, composed last winter at Hollywood what he referred to as "a school suite," a suite for strings in five movements, using certain of the old dance forms dear to the classic masters—a Minuet, Gavotte, Gigue, etc. Mr. Klemperer played the Suite last May at a concert of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in the composer's presence, and last night he disclosed it to New York.

## Arnold Schoenberg



Whose new suite was played by the Philharmonic

We had been told that Schönberg had reformed, had taken the diatonic pledge, sworn off Atonalism and the Twelve-Note Scale, and had determined to compose in the manner sanctified by those ancients who had struggled along for centuries without benefit of Atonality. It was said that Schönberg had decided to go straight, to write discernible, coherent tunes, even to palter with ideas.

But perhaps it wasn't so simple as Herr Schönberg thought it was going to be. He has doffed the elaborate costume of atonality, has removed the makeup of the professional modernist; but there seems to be hardly anything underneath—no profile, scarcely a countenance, obviously not a brain. If there could be anything drearier than Schönberg in his elaborate makeup as a prophet of the tonal future, uttering solemnly vacuous nonsense, it is Schönberg stripped of his pretensions, trying to generate and organize a pattern of musical ideas.

For there is nothing there—nothing but emptiness and sterility, savored by an occasional reminiscence of "Oh, Promise Me," and some rather pretty tunes that Mr. Gershwin would have chucked impatiently into Porgy's ashcan.

Mr. Klemperer played the Suite last night as if he believed in it. All things are possible.