

'I Can Wait'

Schoenberg Talks Back To Violinist

By John H. Harvey

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG'S violin concerto which is to be heard Friday night at the Minneapolis Symphony orchestra's concert in Northrop Memorial auditorium has, believe it or not, something in common with Tchaikowsky's concerto for the same instrument.

Both have been pronounced "unplayable" by leading virtuosi, then proved playable by lesser violinists.

Schoenberg wrote his in 1935 for one of the great violinists of our day. The artist recommended some changes to make it "playable," but Schoenberg refused. The two never reached an agreement.

Later, the virtuoso remarked that Schoenberg's concerto would be played when violinists grew an extra finger. Schoenberg, informed of the remark, smiled and said: "I can wait."

The SHOW

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In 1938, Schoenberg, living in Hollywood, sent the work to Louis Krasner, now concertmaster of the Minneapolis orchestra, who had premiered the great violin concerto by Schoenberg's gifted pupil, Alban Berg.

Krasner, then in Vienna, studied the concerto carefully, gave up and put it away. But the more he thought about it, the more the work challenged him. He got it out again, studied it anew and worked over it for two years.

"I found it had to develop new techniques to meet the demands of this music," he says. "And as I worked on it, I was forced to the conclusion that it was even greater than the Berg concerto."

In 1940, Krasner, now back in the United States, played the concerto for Schoenberg and obtained his consent to give the work its first performance.

The premiere took place that year with the Philadelphia orchestra under Stokowski. Its reception by the audience was not enthusiastic and the event made the front page in many newspapers throughout the country.

At that time, illness in the family prevented the composer from hearing the performance. And now again, he is to be disappointed.

Schoenberg had plane reservations and was to arrive here from Los Angeles today. He was to deliver two lectures on his work, Tuesday night in Macalester Presbyterian church and Thursday at the University of Minnesota music auditorium. But new ODT orders banning civilian eastbound air traffic canceled his reservation and he has been unable to get train space.

The University radio station, KUOM, is to give a "preview" program on the concerto at 2:30 p. m. Friday, during which portions of the work are to be played. On the program will be Dimitri Mitropoulos, conductor of the Minneapolis orchestra; Krasner, Ernst Krenek, noted composer and dean of the Hamline university fine arts department, and Paul Brissey, KUOM's musical director.

Friday night's concert will include the concerto, Berlioz' "King Lear" overture and Brahms' Symphony No. 2 in D major.