

Program Notes Continued

tory of Music in Leipsic and at the University, studying composition and musicology under Grabner and Kroger. Even before his graduation, Breitkopf & Haertel, the historic publishing house, offered him a contract and brought out several chamber music scores which were widely performed. International success began for the young composer with the "Theme, Variations and Finale", Op. 13, programmed by the foremost orchestras in Europe. It was first heard in the U. S. in 1937 by the Chicago Symphony under Stock, while the N. Y. premiere occurred last year with Bruno Walter directing the N. Y. Philharmonic.

In 1938 Rozsa was honored by his native country with the "Franz Josef Prize", the highest musical token of esteem at the command of the Hungarian Ministry of Education. A year later the "Capriccio, Pastorale and Dance", Op. 14, proved the outstanding novelty at the International Music Festival in Baden-Baden. Then came a call from Alexander Korda, the famous film producer who, in 1940, brought his principal collaborators, including Rozsa, to Hollywood. Rozsa has been guest conductor in various music centers of the world. In 1943 the National Association of American Composers and Conductors conferred on him a "Citation of Merit in Appreciation of his Services to Music in America". As indicated, Rozsa's concert music is largely for orchestra, chamber music and songs, but mention also must be made of choral works and piano solos.

Rozsa's "Concerto for String Orchestra", Op. 17, heard here today for the first time anywhere, and under his own leadership, came into being last year and has been issued by the Delkas Music Publishing Company. It is scheduled for performance next Spring by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy.

In a letter received from Rozsa, the composer confirms this annotator's description of his style as neo-classical "as the most appropriate definition."

"I believe in the formal and architectural values of the classic", he continues. "But on the other hand I am speaking my own musical language. I do not avoid dissonances if I can use them as intensification of my artistic expression and I am not afraid of consonant writing either when it suits my purpose. I never have any programmatic, literary or ideological associations in my

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music, as I believe music is a strong enough art to create its own abstract forms, expressing nothing else but the feelings of the creator. The years of my youth spent in the Hungarian country, made a lasting influence on my musical style, and I endeavor to create a Hungarian symphonic music which tries to go deeper than just adapting the superficial characteristics of Hungarian folk-music."

This "Concerto for String Orchestra", Op. 17, indeed exemplifies Miklos Rozsa as a neo-classic who fuses classic forms and requirements of their brilliant and emotional application with the technical advances of contemporary craftsmanship. He has tried to revive the 18th-century 'concerto grosso' or grand concerto for orchestra, but fills it with new content. It is intricate and rich in thematic and rhythmic juxtapositions, some in exact imitations, others free. Rozsa never strains to sound archaic.

1st Movement. Moderato ma risoluto e energico. The first theme is energetic and introduced by cellos and basses, violas and second violins, later by first violins. Following a climax and a canonic imitation of the theme, the violas announce the more lyric and melodic second theme. The classic principle of counter-point is applied, but with freedom when different solo instruments display the two main themes or when entire sections of the orchestra, single or in union with others, again antiphonally develop either theme. The end is strong and energetic.

2nd Movement. Lento con gran espressione. This starts with a nostalgic, folk-song like melody from the solo viola. Violins take over and, after a strong development, the second theme, more lively and more expressive than the first, is presented at once in characteristic Rozsa style and skill. It is first heard in canon or imitation style from the solo-violin and solo-cello. The music reaches passionate breadth. Solo-instruments provide fascinatingly subtle detail to the very end when, after a muted viola solo, the movement dies away.

3rd Movement. Allegro giusto. Following a syncopated figure in octaves and some repetitions, plucked string effects, the first theme, light and dance-like, is played softly by the violins. The second theme, more "grazioso" occurs in the 1st and 2nd violins. Its merry and rhythmic development is interrupted by a fugato episode. The new theme is more serious, played by basses

and divided cellos. It is later joined by the first theme of the opening movement. All of the material goes through a wide diversity of treatment. Tempo and dynamics grow into a fast and virile finale.

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