

Radio, Recordings Held Aid In Study of New Music

Composer Explains Problems Facing Audiences In Understanding Contemporary Pieces

By HENRY BUTLER

It takes a modern composer to discuss modern music. Roy Harris, eminent American composer now in town for the Indianapolis Symphony's Pension Fund concert tomorrow night, convincingly explains the difficulty audiences have in understanding contemporary compositions.

"Concert audiences are conditioned to 19th-Century romantic music with all its repetition of themes and its easily understood harmonic structure. It's just as if the reading public were conditioned only to mid-Victorian novels and had trouble understanding anything written more recently," Mr. Harris observed.

Conducts Rehearsal

He talked to me yesterday at the Murat after conducting a strenuous rehearsal of his new work, "The Quest," especially commissioned by Fabien Sevitzky last year and composed last September, which will have a world premier under Mr. Harris' direction at tomorrow's concert.

"Music lags behind the other arts in popular appreciation because it is instantaneous. You hear it, and it's gone. You can't contemplate it," Mr. Harris said. Radio and, still better, recordings help people to study new music until they like it. Unfortunately, both radio and recordings have tended to repeat endlessly the familiar concert-hall repertoire. "Mechanical devices of musical distribution have gone far ahead of our understanding of music," Mr. Harris observed.

Cites Radio Listeners
The American symphony audience is still only about 10 per cent of the population. Mr. Harris believes, citing the estimated 13 million listeners to New York Philharmonic broadcasts.

What about the great majority whose only music comes from radio, juke-box, movies and dance bands? Mr. Harris thinks they could and should be reached by serious music. "After all, our national experience is not just 57 varieties of 'I Love You'—sometimes hot, sometimes blue," he says. "Like other nations, we too have destiny, sorrow and suffering."

Mr. Harris' "The Quest" will be one of the more serious items on tomorrow's program, which also will feature the Dorsey Brothers as soloists and guest conductors and the Tommy Dorsey band.

A Restless Quest
What I heard of it in rehearsal yesterday confirmed Mr. Harris' own description of it. He calls it a musical expression of the endless seeking and never finding, the restless quest most human beings now experience, which he terms "one of the great characteristics of modern life."

It's not dissonant in the wild and wilful manner of early modern music. It illustrates some new theories of harmony Mr. Harris is incorporating into a book on harmony which will be published late next fall or winter.

Among other things, Mr. Harris now is working on a violin concerto, commissioned by the Cleveland Orchestra, and a Seventh Symphony, commissioned by the Boston Symphony.



QUESTER—Roy Harris, eminent American composer, whose new work, "The Quest," will be given a world premier by the Indianapolis Symphony in its Pension Fund concert at 8:30 p. m. Thursday in the Murat. Mr. Harris, sharing guest-conductor honors with Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, will direct his own work, which was especially commissioned last year by Fabien Sevitzky.

London Thieves Loot U. S. Naval Depot

LONDON, Jan. 28 (UP)—Thieves broke into U. S. Naval Headquarters in Grosvenor Square last night and escaped with cameras and equipment valued between \$16,000 and \$32,000, it was announced today. The thieves eluded armed Marine guards.

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Arrested by FBI In 'Hot Car' Ring

Kentuckian Caught In Six-State Roundup

A Kentucky man arrested by FBI agents at Noblesville yesterday as part of a six-state stolen car ring was to be returned to Louisville today.

The prisoner, Edward Thompson, 25, of Golden Pond, Ky., was charged with violation of the National Motor Vehicle Act, which makes it unlawful to transport stolen cars across a state line.

The ring, which operated in southern Indiana and five other states, is said to have sold more than 40 cars with illegal Tennessee license plates.

Twelve other members of the gang have been picked up in Kentucky and other states. The ring is said to have netted \$70,000 from car sales in eight months. A warrant for Thompson's arrest was sent here by the FBI office in Louisville.

Snoring Betrays YWCA Prowler

TERRE HAUTE, Jan. 28 (UP)—Police today hunted a young prowler whose loud snores gave him away last night when he fell asleep under a girl's bed at the YWCA.

The prowler's intended victim, Mary Snodgrass, 23, heard the snoring as she was climbing into bed in her second-story room.

The girl's screams for help woke up the sleepy prowler and he fled down the fire escape.

Authorities found seven pieces of rope which police said the man probably had planned to use to tie up the girl. The snoozer also left behind a pair of heavy black overshoes.

Shutoff Shuts Up

OLEAN, N. Y., Jan. 28 (UP)—K. C. Wilson said today he thought he was the only person in town who did not complain to the gas company about a two-hour gas shutoff in near zero weather. Mr. Wilson is the company's district manager.



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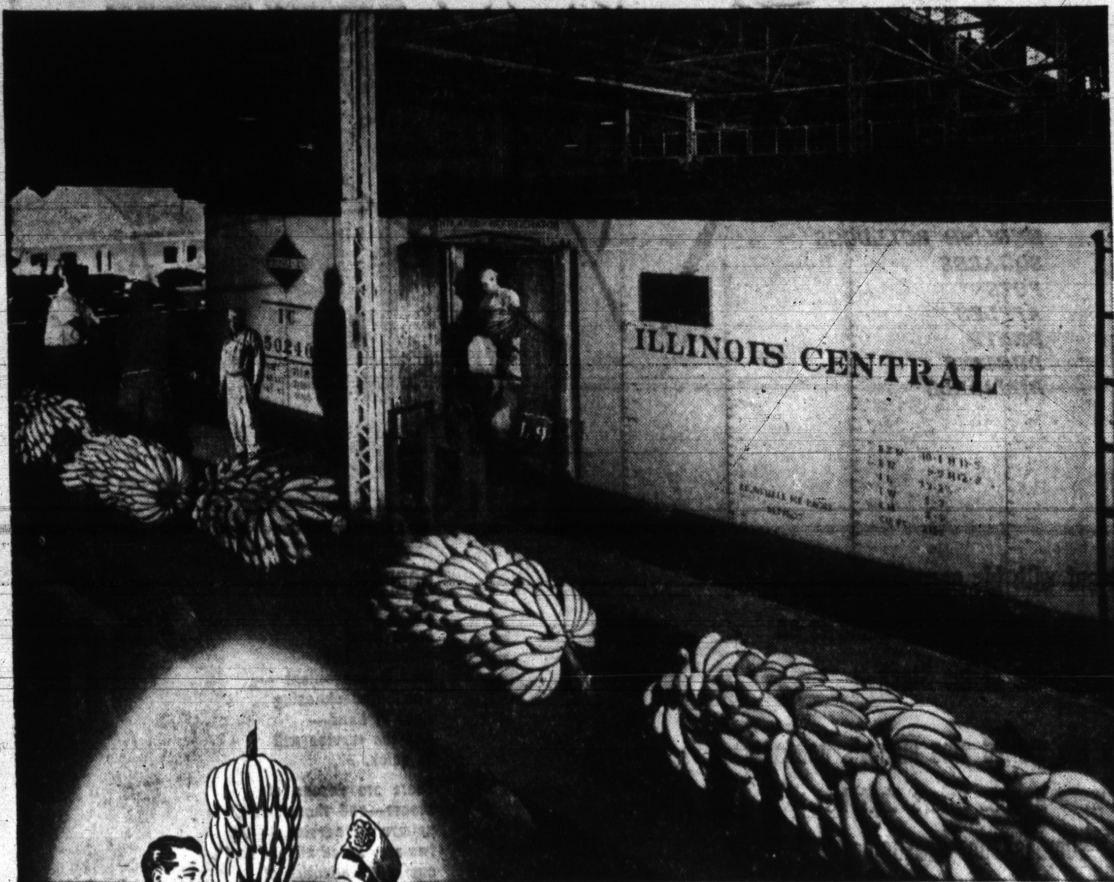
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