

### TO CLEAR UP THE SALZBURG PROBLEM

THE dissatisfaction following last summer's Salzburg performance of the International Society for Contemporary Music has been as general as it has been bitter. In the confusion and heat of controversy, the essential fact has been obscured, that what the society needs most is a clear and resolute interpretation of purpose.

As all the world now knows, this new organization exists to promote the new music. One of the chief methods is the yearly festival at Salzburg, the programs thereof to be chosen by a jury selected annually by delegates from each country.

Superficially it is the question of arbitrary power, which the jury of 1923 freely exercised, that so disturbed the society—indeed not one of the local groups appeared satisfied. Acting on the general sense of the London conference which took place early last year, the jury had arranged programs that did not attempt to give equal representation to all countries, and disregarded the suggestions of the national juries. More than ten works were performed which had not even been proposed by these bodies. The conflict is between what one might call federal and state jurisdictions.

The situation underlying it, was best summed up by Ernest Ansermet, the Swiss delegate, whose clearly stated opinion I repeat here, trusting that I do not overstep the bounds of discretion tacitly assumed by the delegates.

"Our name," said Mr. Ansermet, "is the International Society for Contemporary Music. But which word is determinant? If it is the first, we can choose for our programs a fixed number of works from every section's proposal. But the society is founded to cultivate and present contemporary music, and that, it seems to me, is the major consideration, and the direction our effort should take."

This, I believe, is the best and broadest interpretation. Salzburg should be first of all a center for the new music of our time. Programs should reflect the evolution that is taking place in music today which the international composition of our society should help to bring to light.

But what is finest in contemporary music should be beyond local judgment, and left to the final choice of the central jury. The jury, it should be remembered, is elected after all by the delegates, and the delegates in turn elected by the sections.

There is one important problem which a free jury is best qualified to meet, and which, for an instructed jury, is trebly difficult—the works of composers of doubtful nationality. Such names as Ernest Bloch, Van Dieren, Busoni, Delius and Stravinsky are often omitted, because they belong to two countries and neither country recommends them.

While this society is still in the stage of promising infancy, we should come to an agreement about the lines of its development. Let us first of all clear up the pre-suppositions with which we come to the yearly festival. It is my conviction that we should go to Salzburg not to hear our own music, but to listen to the best music of our time, music selected by a jury in whom, by our election, we have placed unlimited confidence for this purpose of choice.

*Svend B. Felumb*