

commercial programs, who naturally want to attract as many listeners as possible, aren't eager to experiment. And they're still afraid to let an artist play a 'big' work over the air. They'll pay you a large fee, and then insist that you play only short numbers. Even to persuade them to let you perform a single movement from a concerto, which might take nine or ten minutes, is difficult. You understand, of course, that I'm talking only of commercial programs, which are, I have discovered, ruled by the gentlemen who spend their time studying charts and statistics which supposedly tell them exactly what the public wants. I'm convinced that these gentlemen are wrong. The people who listen to the radio for good music want more than the bits and pieces they usually get on the big commercial broadcasts."

In Buenos Aires this summer Heifetz was engaged to play on a radio program sponsored by a business firm for advertising purposes. He was permitted to treat his listeners to an entire concerto and a number of shorter works.

"I felt that I was really giving those people what they wanted to hear from me," he said. "I wish that sort of program could be presented here—if only as an experiment. I think it might change the sponsors' ideas of what the radio public prefers to hear from a musical artist."

Although Mr. Heifetz probably never saw a "listener-response" chart in his life, he nevertheless, on his record, is entitled to rank as an authority on what interests and attracts music patrons. He's been going around the world for a good many years now, playing before crowds who pay cash to hear him. They wouldn't continue to do so if he didn't know what they want and give it to them.

start here

OCTOBER 31, 1940
CARNEGIE HALL

JASCHA HEIFETZ HEARD IN RECITAL

Mozart's Sonata Achieves the High Point of Program at Carnegie Hall

EMANUEL BAY IS AT PIANO

Richard Strauss's Violin and Piano Sonata is Presented

With Splendor of Tone

By Olin Downes

One could not with impunity state that Jascha Heifetz had never made a greater display of his sovereign qualities as virtuoso and interpreter than he made at his recital last night in Carnegie Hall. The statement would have to be proved by a record of attendance at all his concerts of recent seasons, including those of the good-will tour of South America which he recently made. But the present reviewer looks back over many a season and does not find in his own experience such a fascinating demonstration of a great art as Mr. Heifetz gave on this occasion.

As usual, he arranged his program, comported himself, interpreted the music without the slightest concession to the conventions of the concert platform. He has no stock pose or gesture, nor are there any such meretricious elements in his playing. A disdain of appeal to gallery, an almost disdainful mastery, are suggested, perhaps, by his reserve on the platform, but his playing is the antithesis of that. It pulses with feeling and sensibility, last night fully communicated to an immense audience which listened absorbed to every tone that came from the strings. This tone, of exquisite texture, and full of subtle gradations of color, was employed with consummate perception and the most aristocratic taste.

Extremely difficult passages, thrown off, on occasion, with exhilarating virtuosity, were never exhibitions of skill, but always pertained to the interpretive end. There were also certain legitimate places where this bravura became in itself intoxication.

With all this, the Mozart sonata, which came second on the program, was one of the most beautiful moments of the evening. It seemed for the moment that such music should never be played save by an artist of Mr. Heifetz's consummate mastery, which involved subtlest proportion, and a releasing of instrumental song that seemed to free the art from all earthly bondage. Yet here, too, was the utmost precision, the most carefully conceived nuance. The simplicity was not artificial; neither was it unconscious, or less than supreme art. And it must be admitted, with due acknowledgment of the musicianly and responsive piano playing of Emanuel Bay, that by the side of the violin, or that violin, the piano appeared somewhat pedestrian.

Strauss Work Follows

The contrast between this music and that of Richard Strauss's violin and piano sonata which followed was very striking, and a good stroke of program making. The Strauss sonata is certainly music of coarser fiber than that of Mozart. It is music, nevertheless, of a noble line, and a symphonic manner. It could well be called "sonata eroica," and it is elaborate and dramatic in development. Of this sonata Mr. Heifetz has long been a champion, and here he played less with delicacy than splendor of tone and a grand stride, with an opulent style and a dramatic accent.

His program was very substantial, but sustained its fascination to the very end. After Strauss came a welcome revival in the form of the Spohr "Gesangscen." and this was interpretation of another sort; the classic periods sustained with such dignity and manner, the intrepid playing of the bravura passages of double stops, octaves, and other devices, delivered with an aplomb which brought down the house, was perfectly in accordance with the nature of the music.

The final groups comprised two Heifetz transcriptions of Piano Preludes of George Gershwin, the last of these a most felicitous and original treatment, and five short violin and piano pieces by Robert Russell Bennett called "Hexapoda," or "Studies in Jitteroptera." The composer ex-

plains: " 'Hexapoda' is merely one of the accepted names of insects or bugs. The subtitle narrows it down to that comparatively recent hybrid, 'Jitterbug.' " The pieces, highly modern in texture and resourceful in device, are very amusing and make an uncommonly piquant effect. Two of these and the second of the Gershwin transcriptions had to be repeated. But not all violinists should attempt all of them!

OCTOBER 31, 1940

SILK-UNDERWEAR MUSIC

By Virgil Thomson

JASCHA HEIFETZ, violinist; recital last night at Carnegie Hall, with Emmanuel Bay as accompanist.

Sonatasatz	Brahms
Sonata No. 10 (K. 378)	Mozart
Sonata	Strauss
Concerto No. 8 (Gesangscene)	Spohr
Two Preludes	Gershwin
Hexapoda (<i>Five Studies in Jitteroptera</i>)	Bennett
1. "Gut-Bucket Gus"	
2. "Jane Shakes Her Hair"	
3. "Betty and Harold Close Their Eyes"	
4. "Jim Jives"	
5. ". . . Till Dawn Sunday"	

ROBERT RUSSELL BENNETT'S musical sketches of the jitterbug world are pretty music. Also they are evocative of swing music without being themselves swing music or any imitation of swing music. They manage with skill and integrity to use swing formulas as a decor for the musical depiction of those nerve reflexes and soul states that swing-lovers commonly manifest when exposed to swing music. They are, in addition, expertly written for the violin. They come off, as the phrase has it, like a million dollars.

Mr. Heifetz's whole concert rather reminded one of large sums of money like that. If ever I heard luxury expressed in music it was there. His famous silken tone, his equally famous double-stops, his well-known way of hitting the true pitch squarely in the middle, his justly remunerated mastery of the musical marshmallow, were like so many cushions of damask and down to the musical ear.

He is like Sarah Bernhardt, with her famous "small voice of purest gold" and her mastery of the wow-technique. First-class plays got in her way; she seldom appeared in one after thirty. Heifetz is at his best in short encore pieces (the Bennetts are beautifully that) and in lengthy chestnuts like Spohr's *Gesangscene* (an old-time war-horse for violinists), where every device of recitative style, of melodic phrase turning, and of brilliant

passage work is laid out, like the best evening clothes and the best jewelry, for Monsieur to put his elegant person into. No destination, no musical or emotional significance, is implied.

The Strauss Sonata, a work of the author's early manhood, lacks none of that composer's characteristic style. The themes could only be his (albeit one was practically straight out of *Carmen*), bombastic, second-rate (I except the one that starts the last movement, which is bombastic and first-rate), inflated, expressing nothing but the composer's fantastic facility, his jubilant gusto at writing music. Mr. Heifetz's execution of this was almost embarrassingly refined.

Of his Mozart, the less said the better. It is of the school that makes a diminuendo on every feminine phrase-ending, that never plays any phrase through with the same weight, that thinks Mozart's whole aim was to charm, that tries so hard to make out of the greatest musician the world has ever known (those are Joseph Haydn's words) something between a sentimental Pierrot and a Dresden china clock that his music ends by sounding affected, frivolous, and picayune. If that is Mozart, I'll buy a hat and eat it.

I realize that my liking or not liking what Mr. Heifetz plays and how he plays it is a matter of no import to the stellar spaces in which he moves. But it happens that I did go to the concert last night and that I did observe pretty carefully his virtuosity. It was admirable and occasionally very, very beautiful. The fellow can fiddle. But he sacrifices everything to polish. He does it knowingly. He is justly admired and handsomely paid for it. To ask anything else of him is like asking tenderness of the ocelot.

Four-starred super-luxury hotels are a legitimate commerce. The fact remains, however, that there is about their machine-tooled finish and empty elegance something more than just a trifle vulgar.

FEBRUARY 6, 1941
CARNEGIE HALL

RODZINSKI DIRECTS CLEVELAND GROUP
Symphony Orchestra Opens Concert in Carnegie Hall With Piston Work
HEIFETZ IS THE SOLOIST
Violinist Presents Concerto by William Walton
Before Enthusiastic Audience

By Olin Downes

The Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, Artur Rodzinski, conductor, was the second symphonic visitor in the space of two consecutive days to this city, performing last night in Carnegie Hall. The program for the major part offered material of fresh interest; the familiar item was the Strauss "Heldenleben."