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PREVIEWS.

25TH MARCH: Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham.

There will be a concert containing much 20th century music (including two first performances) in the B.M.I. on Thursday 25th March at 1.10.p.m. Given by the Lusingando Brass Consort, a string quartet and Andrew Giles (countertenor) it will contain works by Laurence Williamson, Peter Bullock, Poulenc and Horowitz.

Laurence Williamson writes of his Brass Sextet as follows:-

The work was conceived over a period of five years. I originally thought of writing for a Brass Band, but soon decided that the usual Brass Band compliment would be far too heavy for what I wanted. Nevertheless, the original idea does survive and is now the beginning of the second movement. I first thought of this in the summer of 1966 whilst walking over the moors above Rautenstall and Bacup at 4.0'clock one Sunday morning, recovering from the previous night's drunkenness. I found the grey, wet dawn over the Rossendale Valley stimulating, but it is important to remember that, although, perhaps, this was responsible for the stimulus, in no way was it responsible for the content of the music itself. It is not my intention to convey anything, neither the Rautenstall dawn, nor any emotional response to it. I do not consider the music to be a means of expression; it is simply organised sound. Logic and comprehensibility are my sole aims.

To achieve this, I make rigorous use of serial technique: the row provides all the melodic and harmonic material of the work and is common to all movements. The work is almost in "arch" form; the two outer movements use common material, but a coda drafted onto the final movement disturbs the equilibrium of the cycle.

Peter Bullock, who has composed a setting of "The Journey of the Magi", writes:-

In this setting no attempt is made at word painting; the piece is a purely musical unit. The words are treated as a musical element, and they have an inextricable part to play in the music. The voice and flute are equally important in a dialogue, to which the stringed instruments add a relief, in both a universal and individual sense.

Of the rest of the programme, Peter Fairhurst, who devised and arranged the concert writes:-

Of Poulenc's Sonata for trumpet, horn and trombone, only the first and last movements will be played. The sonata shows well the composer's light, humorous style and contains some good and clever writing for brass instruments. The concert will close with a performance of the Music Hall Suite for brass quintet by Horowitz, an amusing, if slightly banal, set of five pieces in a light, easy-to-listen-to style.

7TH and 14TH MAY: Elgar Concert Room, Faculty of Arts, University of Birmingham.

The lunchtime concerts on these dates (each at 1.10.p.m.) are in the regular weekly series organised by the University Musical Society. They will be given, not in the Barber Institute as is usual, but in the Elgar Concert Room, and will be presented entirely by students.

The concert on Friday 7th May will be given by the University Improvisation Group, an ensemble formed to play partially indeterminate works and improvisations. (See Peter Dickinson's article, entitled "Manifesto" in this issue) The group will perform pieces by Stockhausen and works composed by members

The concert on Friday 14th May will consist entirely of student compositions performed by students. The programme will include songs by Libby Macnamara, Alison Rushby's setting of "The Owl and the Pussycat" for speaker and ensemble and a work for flute and piano by Keith Potter.

28TH MAY: Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham.

It may not seem worth recording that a new ensemble has been formed (September 1970) composed of young musicians, but the Osiris Music Group (who are giving the Musical Society's lunchtime concert on Friday 28th May) may qualify for particular mention on several counts. All the members are still music students, yet have given public concerts in the Midlands and in the London area. They are booked for two festivals in the West Country, as well as their quarterly series of concerts in Cheltenham.

Their aims are truly laudable; they include- to quote from their constitution - "to promote contemporary music (in particular that of composers living in and around Cheltenham) together with works of neglected composers and unfamiliar works of major composers. The group was formed to give young musicians the opportunity to perform in public that music for which they have particular sympathy, and not the limited standard repertoire which, in all honesty, should be the last music young performers play, given the overcrowded record catalogues and Radio Three."

Their programme runs as follows: Berners: Valses Bourgeoises; Debussy: Syrinx for solo flute; Peter Lawson: Four Songs from "Sitting in Farmyard Mud"; Philip Lane: Colloquy 1 for flute and piano (1st performance); Faure: Clair de Lune; Duparc: Songs; Stravinsky: Three Easy Pieces for piano duet.

PHILIP LANE.