

ITEM NO. 8991/55

EH
Oct 21
X/7153

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

WESTERN GERMANY

CULTURE (0800)
Music (0806)

CZECH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA ON TOUR IN WESTERN
GERMANY.

SOURCE HAMBURG: Concert agency.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Tour to take place between October 23
and November 6.

EVALUATION COMMENT: Attention "Cultural Program" Editors.
The Philharmonic Orchestra from PRAGUE will perform in
MUNICH on October 28 1955. (Sueddeutsche Zeitung" of October
15 1955.)

+ . +

As probably already known the famous Czech Philharmonic Orchestra from PRAGUE is to make a tour of Western Germany starting on October 23 in STUTTGART and thereafter in FRANKFURT/Main, MUNICH, NURNBERG, KOLN, DUSSELDORF, ESSEN, BIELEFELD, HAMBURG, LUBECK and West-BERLIN. The orchestra will be conducted by Karel ANCERL and Karel SEJNA. This first visit since the war is undoubtedly intended as a great cultural propaganda move and the full program of eleven concerts, all in a total of 14 days, makes it clear that the orchestra's norms have been set very high. In fact, on the last day of their tour they will give two concerts on the same day, one in HAMBURG at 1100 hours and another concert in LUBECK, 45 miles distant, in the evening.

The programs which the orchestra is offering are anything but enterprising. They comprise standard classical works and there seems to be no intention of producing any new Czech music. The program for HAMBURG will consist of:

(over)

Carl Maria von Weber
Franz Schubert

Bedrich Smetana

Peter Tchaikovsky

- 'Oberon' Overture
- Symphony No.8 in B Minor (The Unfinished)
- Symphonic Poems -- Vltava (Moldau)
- Symphony No.4 in F Minor

The alternative program which will be played in LUBECK consists of -

Johannes Brahms
Anton Dvorak

Modeste Mussorgsky

- Haydn Variations
- Symphony No.5 in E Minor (The New World)
- Pictures from an Exhibition.
(Ravel orchestration)

It is clear that the programs have been designed to have a popular appeal and to ensure that the auditorium is full, rather than to act as the harbingers of modern Czech music. It is to be expected that the German musical critics will not overlook this fact, as it will be remembered how Raphael KUBELIK, on his recent tour with the VIENNA Philharmonic, while receiving ample praise from the critics and enormous ovations from the public, was severely taken to task for the choice of a standard popular program. Two of the works which the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra is bringing in its repertoire, the Smetana "Vltava" and the Dvorak "New World Symphony," were also KUBELIK's repertoire in the spring of 1955. In several German papers, this elicited comments such as "these two works belong to the standard repertoire of every musical nation and it is a pity that the Czech conductor feels obliged to repeat them for us when we would much rather have heard something newer or less hackneyed."

The novelty of the first visit (as far as the writer knows) to the West of a famous orchestra from behind the Iron Curtain will undoubtedly be great enough to ensure an enthusiastic reception. On the other hand, Germany has, during the last two years been spoiled by visits from most of the great orchestras of the West, including the NEW YORK Symphony and VIENNA Philharmonic Orchestras, the Philharmonia and BBC from LONDON, the La Scala from MILAN, to mention only a few. The task before the Czech orchestra is, therefore, not an easy one, especially as it is playing under conductors who are not known to the German public.

It is interesting to read from the programs of the Czech Musical Festival in PRAGUE in May of 1955 that several works of Bohuslav MARTINU, the Czech composer living in exile

(over)

in US, had been put back on the repertoire in CSR. Among the works were his Fourth Symphony (composed in 1945,) the Cello Concerto and one piano concerto. It would have been a subtle move on the part of the organizers of the impending tour of the Czech Philharmonic to put a MARTINU work on the program but, as far as is known at present, this will not be the case.

The present tour was arranged through the CSR Embassy in East BERLIN, whose Cultural Attaché approached various concert agencies in the cities where the performances are to take place. Most of the concert agencies seem to have accepted the concerts 'For Arrangements Only,' i.e., for an agreed fee and with no participation in any eventual deficit. This is, however, usual for such large scale ventures.

(NOTE: Since beginning this report, information has come in that the programs in FRANKFURT, KOLN and DUSSELDORF will be the same as in LUBECK given above.)

CORRESPONDENT'S COMMENT: Further information should be available directly in MUNICH from either Concert Agency WINTERSTEIN, Sendlinger Strasse 55, Tel: 49 04 83 or from Konzert Direktion VEDDER, Mauerkircherstr.8, Tel: 48 31 31.

End