

The Creative Mind and the Interpretative Mind

IN THE ART OF MUSIC, creation and interpretation are indissolubly linked, more so than in any of the other arts, with the possible exception of dancing. Both these activities — creation and interpretation — demand an imaginative mind — that is self-evident. Both bring into play creative energies that are sometimes alike, sometimes dissimilar. By coupling them together it may be possible to illuminate their relationship and their interaction, one upon the other.

Like most creative artists, I have from time to time cogitated on the mysterious nature of creativity. Is there anything new to be said about the creative act — anything really new, I mean? I rather doubt it. The idea of creative man goes back so far in time, so many cogent things have been written and said — acute observations, poetic reflections, and philosophic ponderings, that one despairs of bringing to the subject anything more than a private view of an immense terrain.

Still, the serious composer who thinks about his art will sooner or later have occasion to ask himself: why is it so important to my own psyche that I compose music? What makes it seem so absolutely necessary, so that every other daily activity, by comparison, is of lesser significance? And why is the creative impulse never satisfied;

why must one always begin anew? To the first question — the need to create — the answer is always the same — self-expression; the basic need to make evident one's deepest feelings about life. But why is the job never done? Why must one always begin again? The reason for the compulsion to renewed creativity, it seems to me, is that each added work brings with it an element of self-discovery. I must create in order to know myself, and since self-knowledge is a never-ending search, each new work is only a part-answer to the question "Who am I?" and brings with it the need to go on to other and different part-answers. Because of this, each artist's work is supremely important — at least to himself. But why does the artist presume to think, and why do other men encourage him to think, that the creation of one more work of art is of more than merely private import? That is because each new and significant work of art is a unique formulation of experience; an experience that would be utterly lost if it were not captured and set down by the artist. No other artist will ever make that particular formulation in exactly that way. And just as the individual creator discovers himself through his creation, so the world at large knows itself through its artists, discovers the very nature of its Being through the creations of its artists.

Jacques Maritain has summarized this idea of the necessity and uniqueness of the work of art in these terms: it is the artist's condition, he says, "to seize obscurely his own being with a knowledge that will not come to anything, save in being creative, and which will not be conceptualized save in a work made by his own hands." Thus the creator finds himself in a precarious position because, first, the involuntary nature of creation makes the moment of engendering an art work uncertain, and then, once conceived, there comes the fear that the conception may not be brought to fruition. This gives a dramatic aspect to the composer's situation. On the one hand the need for self-expression is ever-present, but on the other hand, he cannot, by an act of will, produce the work of art. It must either be

entirely spontaneous, or if not spontaneous, then cajoled, induced, gradually perceived — so that each day's work may spell failure or triumph. No wonder many creative artists have been reputed to have had unstable characters.

Up to this point, the situation of the musical interpreter is not so very different from that of the creator. He is simply the intermediary that brings the composer's work to life — a kind of midwife to the composition. He partakes of the same dedication of purpose, the same sense of self-discovery through each performance, the same conviction that something unique is lost, possibly, when his own understanding of a work of art is lost. He even partakes of the involuntary nature of creation, for we know that he cannot at will turn on the wellsprings of his creativity so that each performance may be of equal value. Quite the contrary, each time he steps out upon the concert platform we wish him luck, for he shares something of the creator's uncertain powers of projection. Thus we see that interpretation, even though it may rightfully be thought of as an auxiliary art, does share elements of creativity with the mind that forms the work of art.

But now let us consider the essential way in which creation and interpretation are radically different. The interpretative mind can exercise itself on a given object; it cannot itself supply that object. The making of something out of nothing is the special province of the creative mind. The composer is a kind of magician; out of the recesses of his thought he produces, or finds himself in possession of, the generative idea. Although I say "the recesses of his thought," in actuality the source of the germinal idea is the one phase in creation that resists rational explanation. All we know is that the moment of possession is the moment of inspiration; or to use Coleridge's phrase, the moment when the creator is in "a more than usual state of emotion." Whence it comes, or in what manner it comes, or how long its duration one can never foretell. Inspiration may be a form of superconsciousness, or perhaps of subconsciousness — I wouldn't

know; but I am sure that it is the antithesis of self-consciousness. The inspired moment may sometimes be described as a kind of hallucinatory state of mind: one half of the personality emotes and dictates while the other half listens and notates. The half that listens had better look the other way, had better simulate a half attention only, for the half that dictates is easily disgruntled and avenges itself for too close inspection by fading entirely away.

That describes, of course, only one kind of inspiration. Another kind involves the personality as a whole, or rather, loses sight of it completely, in a spontaneous expression of emotional release. By that I mean the creative impulse takes possession in a way that blots out in greater or lesser degree consciousness of the familiar sort. Both these types of inspiration — if one can call them types — are generally of brief duration and of exhausting effect. They are the rarer kind, the kind we wait for every day. The less divine afflatus that makes it possible for us to compose each day — to induce inspiration, as it were — is a species of creative intuition in which the critical faculty is much more involved. But I shall come to that in a moment. Long works need intuitiveness of that sort, for it is generally the shorter ones that are entirely the result of spontaneous creativity.

Mere length in music is central to the composer's problem. To write a three-minute piece is not difficult; a main section, a contrasting section, and a return to the first part is the usual solution. But anything that lasts beyond three minutes may cause trouble. In treating so amorphous a material as music the composer is confronted with this principal problem: how to extend successfully the seminal ideas and how to shape the whole so that it adds up to a rounded experience. Here, too, inspiration of a kind is needed. No textbook rules can be applied, for the simple reason that these generative ideas are themselves live things and demand their individual treatment. I have sometimes wondered whether this problem of the successful shaping of musical form was not connected in some way with the strange fact that musical history names no women in its

roster of great composers. There have been great women musical interpreters, but thus far — I emphasize, *thus far* — no examples of women composers of the first rank. This is a touchy subject, no doubt, but leaving aside the obscure and various reasons for the historical fact, it appears to indicate that the conception and shaping of abstract ideas in extended forms marks a clear boundary between the creative mind and the interpretative mind.

In all that I have been saying about creative thinking there is implied the strongly imaginative quality of the artist's mentality. I stress this now because there has been a tendency in recent times to put the emphasis rather on the artist as craftsman, with much talk of the composer's technique. The artist-craftsman of the past is held up to us as the model to be emulated. There is a possible source of confusion here: amidst all the talk of the craftsmanlike approach we must always remember that a work of art is not a pair of shoes. It may very well be useful like a pair of shoes, but it takes its source from a quite different sphere of mental activity. Roger Sessions understood this when he wrote recently: "The composer's technique is, on the lowest level, his mastery of the musical language . . . On a somewhat higher level . . . it becomes identical with his musical thought, and it is problematical in terms of substance rather than merely of execution. On this level it is no longer accurate to speak of craftsmanship. The composer is no longer simply a craftsman; he has become a musical thinker, a creator of values — values which are primarily aesthetic, hence psychological, but hence, as an inevitable consequence, ultimately of the deepest human importance."

It is curious that this concern with craftsmanship should have affected an art that has developed no successful large-scale primitive practitioners, in the sense that there are accepted primitive painters. Music boasts no Henri Rousseau, no Grandma Moses. Naiveté doesn't work in music. To write any sort of a usable piece presumes a minimum kind of professionalism. Mussorgsky and Satie are the

closest we have come in recent times to a primitive composer, and the mere mention of their names makes the idea rather absurd.

No, I suspect that the stress placed upon the composer as craftsman, especially in teacher-pupil relationships, comes from a basic mistrust of making private aesthetic judgments. There is the fear of being wrong, plus the insecurity of not being able to *prove* that one is right, even to oneself. As a result an attitude is encouraged of avoiding the whole messy business of aesthetic evaluation, putting one's attention on workmanship and craft instead, for there we deal in solid values. But that attitude, to my mind, side-steps the whole question of the composer's own need for critical awareness and for making aesthetic judgments at the moment of creation. As I see it, this ability is part of his craft, and the lack of it has weakened, when it hasn't entirely eliminated, many potentially fine works.

The creative mind, in its day-to-day functioning, must be a critical mind. The ideal would be not merely to be aware, but to be "aware of our awareness," as Professor I. A. Richards has put it. In music this self-critical appraisal of the composer's own mind guiding the composition to its inevitable termination is particularly difficult of application, for music is an emotional and comparatively intangible substance. Composers, especially young composers, are not always clear as to the role criticism plays at the instant of creation. They don't seem to be fully aware that each time one note is followed by another note, or one chord by another chord, a decision has been made. They seem even less aware of the psychological and emotional connotations of their music. Instead they appear to be mainly concerned with the purely formal rightness of a general scheme, with a particular care for the note-for-note logic of thematic relationships. In other words, they are partially aware, but not fully aware, and not sufficiently cognizant of those factors which have a controlling influence on the success or failure of the composition as a whole. A full and equal appraisal of every smallest contributing

factor, with an understanding of the controlling and most essential elements in the piece, without allowing this to cramp one's freedom of creative inventiveness — being, as it were, inside and outside the work at the same time; that is how I envisage the "awareness of one's awareness." Beethoven's genius was once attributed by Schubert to what he termed his "superb coolness under the fire of creative fantasy." What a wonderful way to describe the creative mind functioning at its highest potential!

It is one of the curiosities of the critical creative mind that although it is very much alive to the component parts of the finished work, it cannot know everything that the work may mean to others. There is an unconscious part in each work — an element that André Gide called *la part de Dieu*. I have often felt familiar, and yet again unfamiliar, with a new work of mine as it was being rehearsed for the first time — as if both the players and I myself had to accustom ourselves to its strangeness. The late Paul Rosenfeld once wrote that he saw the steel frames of skyscrapers in my Piano Variations. I like to think that the characterization was apt, but I must confess that the notion of skyscrapers was not at all in my mind when I was composing the Variations. In similar fashion an English critic, Wilfrid Mellers, has found in the final movement of my Piano Sonata "a quintessential musical expression of the idea of immobility." "The music runs down like a clock," Mellers writes, "and dissolves away into eternity." That is probably a very apt description also, although I would hardly have thought of it myself. Composers often tell you that they don't read criticisms of their works. As you see, I am an exception. I admit to a curiosity about the slightest cue as to the meaning of a piece of mine — a meaning, that is, other than the one I know I have put there.

Quite apart from my own curiosity, there is always the question of how successfully one is communicating with an audience. A composer who cannot in advance calculate to some extent the effect of his piece on the listening public is in for some rude awakenings.

Whether or not he ought to take this effect upon an audience into account at the time of composing is another matter. Here again composers vary widely in their attitude. But whatever they tell you, I think it is safe to assume that although a conscious desire for communication may not be in the forefront of their minds, every move toward logic and coherence in composing is in fact a move toward communication. It is only a slight step when a composer tries for coherence in terms of a particular audience. This idea of music directed to a particular public is usually a bit shocking to the music-lover. It doesn't matter how many times we tell the familiar story of Bach writing each week for the honest burghers of Leipzig, or Mozart's relations with the courtly musical patrons of his day; audiences still prefer to think of the musical creator as a man closeted with his idea, unsullied by the rough and tumble of the world around him. Whether or not contemporary composers think about this matter of communication with their audience, they haven't been signally successful at it. The reasons for this are explored in greater detail in a later chapter.

The subject of communication with an audience brings us quite naturally to a consideration of the performer's role, and the interaction of the creative and the interpretative mind which is crucial to the whole musical experience. These two functions — creation and interpretation — were usually performed, in pre-Beethoven days, by a single individual. The composer was his own interpreter; or, as frequently happened, interpreters wrote music for their own instrument. But nowadays, as we all know, these functions are more usually separated, and the composer is in the position of a man who has lost his power of speech and consigns his thoughts by letter to an audience that cannot read words. Consequently they both have need of a middleman, a talented reader who can arouse response in an audience by the public reading of the composer's message.

A prime question immediately presents itself: what does the composer expect of his reader, or interpreter? I think I know what one

of the main preoccupations of the interpreter is: elocutionary eloquence, or, to put it in musical terms, the making of beautiful sounds. All his life long he has trained himself to overcome all technical hurdles and to produce the most admirable tone obtainable on his instrument. But there's the rub; the composer is thinking about something quite different. He is concerned not so much with technical adequacy or quality of tonal perfection as with the character and specific expressive nature of the interpretation. Whatever else happens he doesn't want his basic conception to be falsified. At any moment he is ready to sacrifice beauty of tone for the sake of a more meaningful reading. Every performing artist has something of the elocutionist in him; he wants the words to shine, and the sound of them to be full and right. Every composer, on the other hand, has something of a playwright in him; he wants above all to have his "actors" intent upon the significance of a scene, on its import within a particular context, for if that is lost, all elocutionary eloquence becomes meaningless — irritating even, since it hinders the creative mind from getting across to the auditor the whole point and purpose of the work of art.

Further analogies with playacting exist. The notion of the actress who has been hopelessly miscast in a play is familiar to all of us. But musical actors, so to speak, often miscast themselves, and with less justification. The woman violinist who has the robust, healthy tone of a washerwoman will never successfully invoke from her instrument the sweet innocence of a *jeune fille*. The singer who is a nice person, and who possesses an excellent voice, may have no inner comprehension for the tragic sense of life, and hence will never successfully communicate that sentiment. One might almost maintain that musical interpretation demands of the performer an even wider range than that of the actor, because the musician must play every role in the piece.

At this point I can hear the querulous performer asking: But is there only *one* way of reading a piece of music? Aren't divergent

readings of the same music possible? Most certainly they are. As a composer I should like to think that any one of my works is capable of being read in several ways. Otherwise a work might be said to lack richness of meaning. But each different reading must in itself be convincing, musically and psychologically — it must be within the limits of one of the possible ways of interpreting the work. It must have stylistic truth, which is to say it must be read within the frame of reference that is true for the composer's period and individual personality.

This question of the proper style in playing or singing is one of the thornier problems of music. There have been instances when I have listened to performances of my work and thought: this is all very fine, but I don't think I recognize myself. It may be that the performer misses the folklike simplicity I had intended, or that he underplays the monumental tone at the conclusion of a piece, or that he overemphasizes the grotesque element in a scherzo section. Personally I have always found the finest interpreters most ready to accept a composer's suggestions. And similarly, it is from the finest interpreters that the composer can learn most about the character of his work; aspects of it that he did not realize were there, tempi that are slower or faster than he had himself imagined were the correct ones, phrasings that better express the natural curve of a melody. Here is where the interaction of composer and interpreter can be most fruitful.

All questions of interpretation sooner or later resolve themselves into a discussion of how faithful the performer ought to be to the notes themselves. No sooner do we ask this than a counterquestion suggests itself: how faithful are composers to the notes they themselves put down? Some performers take an almost religious attitude to the printed page: every comma, every slurred staccato, every metronomic marking is taken as sacrosanct. I always hesitate, at least inwardly, before breaking down that fond illusion. I wish our notation and our indications of tempi and dynamics were that exact,

but honesty compels me to admit that the written page is only an approximation; it's only an indication of how close the composer was able to come in transcribing his exact thoughts on paper. Beyond that point the interpreter is on his own. I know that there are some contemporary composers who have been exasperated by the extreme liberties taken with the notes by romantic artists. As a result they have gone to the other extreme and said: "Stop concerning yourselves with interpretation, just play the notes." That attitude blithely ignores the insufficiencies of musical notation, and thus refuses to take into account the realities of the situation. The only sensible advice one can give a performing artist is to ask that a happy balance be found between slavish adherence to inadequate signs and a too liberal straying from the clear intentions of the composer.

In order to get insight into the interpreter's mentality it is necessary to be able to bring judgment to bear on the performance. The interpretation itself must be interpreted if we are to evaluate what the executant is contributing to a performance. This is not easy for the layman. Observation has convinced me that even the truly musical layman often has difficulty in making subtle distinctions in the judging of musical performance. He seems to lack the criteria necessary for such critical judgment. The difficulty arises from the fact that the listener, in order to exercise such criteria, is expected to know in advance what the performance *ought* to sound like before he hears what it *does* sound like. In other words, he must have an ideal performance in his mind's ear alongside which he can place the actual performance heard for purposes of comparison. To do this he must understand, first, the style appropriate to the historical period of the composition and to the composer's development up to that time; and secondly, he must be able to describe precisely the nature of the given execution so that he can particularize the qualities special to that performer and none other. To do this well presupposes wide historical knowledge, a great deal

of experience in listening, with the admixture of an instinctive musicality of one's own.

In interpreting the interpretation, as I put it, we must never lose sight of the preponderant role of the individual personality of the performer. I like to think that if I were to hear successively three unidentified pianists behind a screen I could give you a brief personality sketch of each one of them, and come somewhere near the truth. This may of course be merely an illusion of mine, but no matter; it indicates what I mean by the thought that a performance is both an exposition of the piece and an exposition of the personality traits of the performer. This is particularly true for singers. Like actors on the stage, they must be impressive in themselves, even before they utter a sound. Singers are really "on the spot"; unlike the conductor they cannot turn their backs to us; they face us, and the song and the personality are inextricably mixed. You can't get at the one except through the other. The same is true of instrumentalists, except that in their case our sight of the instrument and their busy fingers makes less obvious the role played by personality. But it is there nonetheless. When a performer lacks personality we call the performance dull; when he has too much personality we complain that he obscures the piece from view. A just appreciation of the exact part played by the performer's personality in any given execution is therefore essential for precise judgment.

Now let us get down to cases. Let us observe the interpreter in action, for the purpose of describing certain basic psychological types that are met with most frequently.

Great interpretation, as the "big" public understands it, is generally of the fiery and romantic type. Since so much of the music we hear publicly performed comes from the romantic period, many performers are forced to adopt the manner, even though they may not be born to it. But the true romantic — the interpreter who creates an impression of giving himself in an uninhibited way — has great

power over audiences everywhere. I am now thinking in terms of the real thing, not merely of the unfortunate individual making a public spectacle of himself. By only a slim margin a tasteless exhibitionism is separated from an experience that can be deeply moving. When this kind of performance doesn't come off, we want to laugh — if we are charitably inclined; in less charitable moments it can be infuriating, for the simulation of strong feelings on the part of an interpreter who is really feeling nothing at all strikes us as a public lie; we want to rise up and denounce it. On the other hand, the performer who is deeply moved, and who without a shadow of embarrassment can openly appeal to what is warmest and most human in man's psyche, and who in a sense exhibits himself in this state of vibrant sympathy before the glazed stare of a large and heterogeneous crowd — that is the performer who really communicates with an audience and who usually wins the loudest plaudits.

Another of the truly potent ways of engendering legitimate excitement in an audience is for the player or singer to give the impression that chances are being taken. To create this kind of excitement there must really be a precarious element present. There must be danger: danger that the performance will get out of hand; that the performer, no matter how phenomenal his natural gift may be, has set himself a task that is possibly beyond even his capability of realizing it.

Nothing is so boring as a merely well-rehearsed performance, well-rehearsed in the sense that nothing can be expected to happen except what was studiously prepared in advance. This has vitiated more than one tasteful and careful performance. It is as if the musician, during the execution, had stopped listening to himself, and was simply performing a duty rather than a piece. It is axiomatic that unless the hearing of the music first stirs the executant it is unlikely to move an audience. A live performance should be just that — live to all the incidents that happen along the way, colored

by the subtle nuances of momentary emotion, inspired by the sudden insights of public communication. Wonderful performances can be of many different kinds, but the virtuoso performance that is breathlessly exciting, to my mind, always implies this almost-but-not-quite out-of-control quality, the antithesis of the well-rehearsed execution.

Still another type of performer, whose sphere of action is somewhere in the neighborhood of the romantic, is the musician who gives a personalized reading of a work. Every performance that has been logically conceived represents a reading in some sense, but in this case the reading is more particularized and personalized, so that the composition is not just the composition, but the composition as our performer on that one occasion understands its meaning and tries to communicate it. In the case of a conductor of this type, thoughts of elegance of style, perfection of ensemble, delicacy of instrumental balance are all secondary; instead he is "singing" his way through the composition with a kind of concentration that does not allow for distractions of mere technical details. Such a reading, to be successful, must impose itself — must break down the resistance that may come from the thought that you or I might read the work differently. There can be no question of "aesthetic contemplation" here, either for the conductor or his listener. What he strives for is our involvement in a wholeness of experience — the sense that he and his listeners have lived through something important. This is the kind of performer who sometimes takes a meretricious piece and makes it sound better than it really is. The power of conviction behind such a performance tends to blot out critical reservations. We lend ourselves, and smile about it later. It was a good show, we got our money's worth, and no one was really fooled. But when the work merits it, and the reading is truly convincing, we are left with the impression that whether or not what we have heard is the only possible interpretation, we have at least heard *one* of the essential ways in which that music is to be understood.

I should like to invoke now another category of performer whose mind seems concentrated on a quite different artistic end; the performer whose approach to interpretation is more impersonal, more classic perhaps. Here the objective is an absolute clarity of texture, a euphonious ensemble, an infallible sense of timing, and above all, prime concern with continuity and flow — the sense of directional movement forward which is intrinsic to the nature and character of all music. Here it is not the musical measure being heard that is important but the musical measure to come. It is this concern with forward motion that carries a piece in one long trajectory from its beginning to its end and gives an interpretation inevitability.

The interpreter whose attention is focused on the road ahead is better able than others to give us the long line and sculptural shape of a composition. It is useless to explain this need for directional movement forward to performers who have no instinct for it. They may, and often do have clarity, but clarity taken by itself can easily decline in interest to that of a schoolroom demonstration — a laboratory taking-apart of the mechanics of a piece of music. We see how it ticks in its minutest part. For some reason, however, unless an inner fervor is generated, the performer becomes a schoolmaster who makes the composition clear for us but neglects somehow to turn it into music.

There is another attribute of the classic approach to the re-creation of music that should be mentioned: the species of deep satisfaction to be derived from a performance that has ease and relaxation. Effortless singing or playing is one of the major joys of music listening: it indicates a measure of mental confidence and a degree of physical assurance in the handling of the instrument, whatever it may be, that is not often found in combination in one human being. There are few qualities more grateful in execution than this sense of ease, the sense of powers completely adequate to the expressive purpose, but few things are more difficult to achieve for the per-

former. This is not at all a matter of the intellect, for certain performers in the field of popular music also have this kind of ease — in fact, they are more likely to possess it than are concert artists. I doubt whether it can be tricked. It must reflect a true inner relaxation, difficult to come by in view of the condition of public performance, which in itself makes for tension. But the master interpreters have it.

I have left until last the question of national characteristics in musical interpretation. Is there such a thing? Is there an American way of performing Schubert as distinguished from an Austrian way? It seems to me that there most definitely is. The quickest way of gauging this is to compare present-day American and European orchestral performance. Our orchestras, by comparison with those abroad, are energized and glamorized: they play with a golden sheen that reflects their material well-being. The European organization approaches orchestral performance in a more straightforward and natural way. There is less sense of strain, less need to make each execution the "world's greatest." In Europe it gives one a feeling of refreshment to come upon the frankly unglamorous playing of a solidly trained orchestra. I once heard such an orchestra in America, about fifteen years ago. It came out of the Middle West and played under a conductor of European origin in such a way that one felt the whole organization had just stepped out of the nineteenth century. Nowadays, when that approach is attempted, it generally results in a businesslike, shipshape rendition, without much artistic conviction behind it. More typical is the glorified tonal approach, although our orchestras still have not reached the steely brass perfection of a jazz combination's attack. But something of the same compulsion to "wow" an audience through the sheer power of tonal magnificence is present. Our symphonic organizations, as they become known in Europe, are admired for their live sound and their vitality in performance. It is only right that they should be. My

object is not to belittle the outstanding qualities of our orchestras but merely to stress one factor in their playing which seems to me indicative of national flavor.

National characteristics are most clearly present in interpretation, I suppose, when it can be said that the execution is "in the true tradition." This comes about when the performer is either a contemporary of the composer and has received the correct style of rendition through association with the composer himself, or when, by birth and background, the performer is identified in our minds with the country and culture — sometimes even the city — of the composer in question. I realize that the phrase "in the true tradition" is at best a shaky one. For there is no positive proof that my conception of the "true tradition" is the really true one. Still, we are all mostly ready to concede that the conductor from Vienna has a special insight into the way in which Schubert should be played. Serge Koussevitzky once made an observation to me that I shall always remember. He said that our audiences would never entirely understand American orchestral compositions until they heard them conducted by American-born conductors. It seems clear, then, that if we can speak of national traits of character, inevitably those traits will form the interpreter's character as a human being and shine through the interpretation.

In sketching thus briefly various basic types of interpreter I have naturally been forced to oversimplification. The finest artists cannot be so neatly pigeonholed, as I am afraid I may have suggested. The reason we remain so alive to their qualities is just because in each case we are forced to balance and adjust subtle gradations of interpretative power. Every new artist, and for that matter every new composer, is a problem child — a composite of virtues and defects that challenges the keenness of mind of the listener.

I have mentioned what the composer expects from his interpreter. I should now logically state what the interpreter expects from the composer. Too often, however, the truth is that interpreters are not

thinking about the composer at all — I mean the live composer. In the past it was different. There are numerous instances of a work being written simply because some outstanding instrumentalist inspired it. Paganini commissioning Berlioz, Joachim helping Brahms — instances such as these become more legendary as the years pass. Of course isolated examples still occur, but for the most part a regrettable gulf separates the interpreter and composer in present-day musical life. They are not interacting enough! A healthy musical state of affairs would include increased opportunities for interpreters and composers to meet and exchange ideas. This should begin at the school level, as often happened abroad. If I were an interpreter I think I should like to have the sense that I had been a part of the full musical experience of my time, which inevitably means an active part in the development of the composers of my time. Is this too utopian? I hope not, because the indissoluble link between interpreter and composer makes their interaction one of the conditions of a healthily functioning musical community.