

Lecture at the Interprofessional Institute, St. Paul, April 29, 1943

My topic for today may have aroused the uninspiring ~~conjecture~~ conjecture that I might deliver myself of one of those speeches that are frequently given on the so-called vocational days in schools and colleges. On such occasions the students who begin to worry about what they are going to do after graduation gather in order to listen to ~~some speakers~~ experts as to how they can ~~capri-~~ the advice of ~~_____~~ salize quickly and efficiently on the results of their education. Now I ~~do~~ do not propose entertaining you with surefire methods how to get, and what is more, how to hold piano students, or how to behave at a radio audition, or how to secure a kindergarten job. What I will try to do is to ~~discuss~~ discuss a few more philosophical aspects of the position which music holds in society; ~~that~~ that position is reflected in the relationships of the musician as a professional man, ^{and} I have chosen those relationships as my point of departure, since it is the interdependence of various professional activities that is ~~the~~ ~~underlying factor~~ ^{instrumental} in bringing the present group together. On second thought, I discover that when I am called upon to speak at a vocational day I am actually talking about that same subject, leaving the ^{so-called} practical advice to other speakers who seem to ~~find~~ ^{find} ~~more inter-~~ ~~esting~~ these things ^{more important} than I ~~do~~. To my own surprise and satisfaction I noticed that the students who ~~were~~ ^{were} supposed to be eager only to learn how to get ~~quickly~~ ^{quickly} rich on music were much more interested in the ^{more} general aspect of the matter. Thus this will get to be a sort of vocational day address.

Let us consider first music as an avocation as this mode of existence seems to offer very few

2/ problems, ~~states is~~ and because the average layman thinks of music usually in such terms. Music as an avocation, or a hobby - well, this sounds very simple. A person whose livelihood is secured in some way has spare time and likes to spend this time ⁱⁿ making some sort of music - perhaps he has a piano and improvises on those instruments, or a violin or a saxophone, or he just sings in his bathtub. No other problem will arise than that caused by the noise thus produced, but ~~that~~ in serious cases it will ~~not~~ be a problem rather than a musical one. Police fortunate the man who chooses as his musical hobby composing, for that is a silent activity. ~~It is~~ So far we have considered only persons who would furnish their own material for their avocational endeavors. The ~~the~~ situation will change as soon as they are not willing or unable to do so, that is to improvise, and are in need of musical material produced by others. I am going into that later.

Most people are inclined to think that the original and natural social quality of music is that of a hobby, because they are thinking of music chiefly as a means of entertainment. However, this is not so. Originally music had various well defined functions in the life of man, all of which can be summed up in the statement that music was one of the most powerful magic equipment of elements in the ~~primitive~~ primeval man. Music to him was a mighty ally in his dealings with the supernatural agencies by which he felt himself surrounded. Of course, music owed this status to the power which it obviously exerted

3// over the emotions of those who produced or heard it. It was hoped that if music acted upon the emotional, that is ~~superstitious~~ irrational character of men, it would also influence the frame of mind of the various deities, demons, spirits and ghosts on whose whims primitive man seemed to depend. Music should scare the evil ones away, appease the irascible and remunerate the benevolent. Music at that point is hardly more than vocal utterance different from that of speech - shouting, yelling, chanting, singing, improvised under the spell of ~~emotional~~ ^{emotionally tense} situations. However, it probably was discovered at an early date that some people were better equipped by nature for the performance of such utterances than other people, and soon ~~the~~ the community entrusted such distinguished individuals with making the music necessary for the welfare of all. Thus music becomes part of the ritual, that is a set of ceremonies taken care of by experts, and the musician becomes a professional man. He is rendering services deemed necessary by the community, as a specialist, like a priest, or a medicine man, or a well-digger, or a carpenter, and he is remunerated for those services. Music has a ~~clearly~~ clearly outlined function in the life of these early communities.

Conditions of such nature have existed at all times in regard to music, although the functions fulfilled by music have greatly and curiously varied from time to time. The further we advance in historical time, however, we encounter increasingly frequently the phenomenon of music having no obvious social functions. Interesting in itself, it invites investigation as to how such a strange thing could happen.

4/ We would assume that music without social function must be of the hobby-type, something privately indulged in by individuals without public consequences - although of course even hobbies have social significance. We will be considerably surprised in finding that this music without obvious social function is not only considered ^{field of} a professional activity, but ~~has~~ even has been ascribed during the last two hundred years a value far higher than that attached to functional music of the same period. How did this anomaly come to pass?

There are two trends responsible for that evolution, one very old, the other more recent, both conditioning each other. The first is the trend toward specialization observable in any field that requires ~~great~~ talent and skill of a peculiar kind. It is well known that people engaged in such activities are wont to evolve special standards of their own for their performance. Certain details of their work become ingrained habits thought of as indispensable; they grow into rules and regulations to be handed down from generation to generation, constantly enlarged and elaborated on. In the beginning all that is done with the avowed intention of ~~improving~~ ^{heightening} the efficiency of the work with respect to its functional purpose. But sooner or later the professional standards become autonomous and an end in itself. ~~rather than~~ In the Middle Ages, when music was as strongly associated with the religious service as ever before or after, it had become an object of highly specialized scientific speculation, the ostensible purpose of which was of course to make music ~~the better~~ ^{even more} suited for its exalted task. Since the experts who devoted all their efforts to investigation and experiment



The change of conditions thus accomplished involves that music is now listened to for its own sake, while previously it had been part of a complex activity, the religious service, in which music was not exhibiting itself. ~~The~~ One of the conspicuous results of the process is that now one has to go to ~~some~~ special places designed to offer the best acoustical conditions for the perception of music as such, while previously music went to the places where it was needed, whether or not they were favorable for the display. It is one of the characteristic dialectic paradoxes of history that ever since music attracted the attention of the public in its own right, that is without being connected with ~~any~~ extramusical functions, it developed in such a way that fewer and fewer people want to listen to it.

5/ were able to discover so many amazing possibilities in the field of music, they wanted to ~~consume~~^{consummate} them and to make them serviceable to the progress and improvement of the art. The inevitable result was that the rift between them and the community within which and for which the art should fulfill a clearly outlined function grew wider and wider. In order to understand fully what the experts were after, one had to be an expert oneself. However, music still performed its function within the Church, which, as seen from a purely rationalistic vantage point, is also a body of experts mediating between the divine power and the uninitiated layman. ~~It is~~ ^{Actually} ~~speaking from a rationalistic viewpoint,~~ there is no reason for ~~postulating~~^{postulating} that the spokesman must be understood by those for whom he speaks, as long as they are confident that he is understood by whom he speaks to.

The situation underwent considerable changes when a different social function of music became preponderant, that is the secular function of entertainment and enjoyment. Of course, this function had existed at all times. At the end of classical antiquity music had become at least as secular as in recent centuries, but we have ~~only~~^{few} accounts of the social implications of that process, so that ^{if} we ~~want~~^{want} to study it we have to turn to the modern period. ⊕

Secular music during the middle ages was less subject to the trend of specialization than ecclesiastical music. It became so when the center of gravity shifted from religious music to worldly. But there was more to it than the mere transfer of professional standards to a new field. It did not mean only that the composer who wrote operas, symphonies, sonatas and such-like secular

6// works, would strive at the same amount of complexity, ^{and} perfection ~~and~~ that had been attained in ecclesiastical music. As time went on, the composer became increasingly ~~more~~ ~~of his conviction~~ convinced that he had a mission to fulfill, over and above the task of providing material for enjoyment and entertainment. The nature of that mission is not easily circumscribed in words and opinions on it have ~~been~~ varied from time to time and from individual to individual. In a general way it may be defined as allegiance to the standards of perfection ^{embodied} ~~embodied~~ in the masterworks of the past and as belief in the fact that the art has a message to transmit, ~~message~~ independent from the demands emanating from the public. It is this attitude that has caused much trouble for the artist and has made his position in the social body problematical.

It would not be so, if the secrets held by the artist would still allow his art to exercise a clearly defined function in the community. What is the community which is ~~supposed~~ the recipient of the artist's work? In the first two centuries ~~of~~ following the pronounced secularization of music the countless sovereign rulers, particularly in Central Europe and in Italy, were the patrons of ~~the~~ music. We don't need to assume that all of them were ^{accomplished} ~~proficient~~ connoisseurs of the art, ~~and~~ able to appreciate the profound meaning and the sophisticated ^{technicalities} ~~fineness~~ of the music with which they were served, although some of them might have been rather well prepared for the treat, as for instance Frederick II of Prussia who, though a pernicious ^{individual} ~~being~~ politician and statesman, seemed to understand very well with whom he was dealing when he invited Johann Sebastian

77 Back to play for him and to write a composition on a theme furnished by the royal host and entirely worthy of his distinguished guest. Others were less ready and able to recognize genius when they saw one. The story goes that the Emperor Joseph II commented on an opera by Mozart which he had commissioned saying "Very nice, my dear Mozart, very nice, but entirely too many notes." Whereupon Mozart is said to have retorted: "Just as many ^{notes} as necessary, your majesty". That is the typical rebuke administered by a professional man who knows his trade to an ignoramus who does not know the first thing and is entranced in conventional prejudices. However, here is the whole problem: was the ignoramus not perfectly right with his criticism, since he had ordered the job and payed for it, so that he could expect to get for his money just what he wanted? He was in the habit to be entertained by fewer notes than Mr. Mozart was in the habit to produce. A customer who wants to buy a necktie with few dots would probably call for the manager, if the sales clerk would insinuate that the ^{customer} was an idiot because he did not like neckties with many dots. Emperor Joseph did not call the manager, but he stopped patronizing Mozart, thus contributing to the ~~poor~~ result that the latter after his untimely death was shipped away to a pauper's grave, the exact location of which has remained unknown to this day. A certain count belonging to the retinue of the emperor expressed his indignation by kicking Mozart down the stairs. As this cavalierly behavior can be explained only as the desperate attempt of a non-entity to be remembered by posterity, his name shall not be mentioned.

According to ~~his~~ business viewpoints, the attitude of the composer was obviously crazed. But

8/ it is just as obvious that he did not mean it so. When he received a commission from the emperor, or anybody else, for that matter, he made himself responsible for ~~the~~ delivering the very best, according to the highest standards of his art, as he knew them. Would it have been possible for him to furnish what his patrons wanted, that is to write as few notes as the emperor was wont to listen to, he would have felt that he had cheated his patron, because he ~~could~~ ^{would} not have ~~given~~ (given) his best. However, his motive was not vanity and understandable pride, but the desire to show off his fine workmanship, but the conviction that ~~the~~ perfection ^{of} his technical ^{enabled him to attain} prowess was the embodiment of the message which he felt he had to transmit. He felt that he had important things to say, and important things could be expressed only by using the full array of technical means available.

The conflict thus outlined has ~~become~~ become the predicament of all serious musicians up to the present day, and in some respect it has worsened as the type of the disciple of the musician has changed. Mozart's great contemporary, Joseph Haydn, was still lucky. ~~He~~ ~~was~~ He spent most of his life in the service of the prince Esterházy, a family of the high Hungarian aristocracy. The little court resided in the seclusion of a castle in western Hungary, and Haydn was in full charge of the amazingly extensive ^{and variegated} musical activities of the small community. They, too, wanted entertainment, but they did not reject intellectual stimulation, and they ~~was~~ were confident that they had secured the best man for the job. Haydn, who is usually thought of as a happy-go-lucky pedestrian, ~~was~~ was actually a very intelligent man with a

9/ deep insight in the problems discussed here. In his diaries which are ~~beautiful documents~~ ^{fine tokens of his} ~~written~~ by a keen, observant ~~person~~ ^{mind}, he says: "My Prince was always satisfied with my works. I not only had the ~~same~~ encouragement of court and approval, but as conductor of an orchestra I could make experiments.... and be as bold as I pleased; I was cut off from the world, there was no one to confuse or torment me, and I was forced to become original". Few artists ~~there~~ were in a position to confess that they had worked under so admirable circumstances.

~~At~~ Early in the 19th century the patronage of the aristocrats gave way to that of the big audiences recruited from the middle class. Beethoven was the last musician who ~~was~~ derived most of his income from the stipends granted to him by members of the aristocracy, but he left ^{them in} a little doubt about his being not in their service, that what he was writing was mostly above their heads, that he did not care about its being so, and that they did not pay him for the pleasure to be ~~derived~~ ^{expected} from his compositions, but for the prestige that they might derive from ~~supporting~~ ^{supporting} a great artist, his greatness not being measured by his entertainment value, but by ^(standards) ~~inherent~~ ~~standards~~ to his artistry. Such has become the attitude of more or less all outstanding musicians ever since, regardless of the fact that their patrons were large anonymous masses of listeners instead of a few benevolent or ambitious individuals. The conflict resulting from that situation ~~was~~ ^{was} not ~~always~~ of the same intensity ~~was~~ in all cases, and ~~was~~ varying in intensity ~~was~~ within the life of a single musician, as even composers adhering strictly to the standards of the art occasionally produced works that were absorbed by the recipients without ^{marked} resistance, sometimes even with acclamation.

10// The large masses of middle class people to whom music was made accessible early in the 19th century are naturally inarticulate as to their demands in regard to the character of the artistic material which they are to receive. An individual sponsor may express very explicit wishes to an individual artist whom ^{he holds} in his exclusive service, and that may work out both ways, to the good of the art as well as to its detriment. The public at large, the thousands of ~~the~~ people attending concerts, let alone the millions of owners of radio receiving sets, have no single mind in regard to the matter, and no machinery of expressing it, if they had such a mind. ^{It would seem desirable that they had} From the artist's point of view of view of persons endowed at least with the taste and good will of many of the former sponsors, if not ^{with} a real insight in the artistic standards. As things stand now, however, the self-appointed spokesmen of the public are almost exclusively animated by the desire to make as many people as possible pay for the musical offerings which these middlemen may be able to provide. Thus music has become a commodity to be sold for profit. The commercial agents may be right ~~in~~ in their assumption that ^{the} majority of their customers will ~~rather~~ agree with Emperor Joseph, that music of high standards has too many notes; ~~that~~ be that as it may, such ^{is} is, above all, their own conviction, according to their personal tastes and background.

There ^{were} ~~are~~ still isolated cases of private patronage, the most spectacular and best known of them the relationship between Richard Wagner and King Ludwig II of Bavaria. It is quite ^{characteristic} ~~typical~~ that in this case the sponsor was unmistakably suspected of being, ~~insane~~, and ^{mentally disturbed} his fanatical belief in Wagner has certainly been an important factor in the proceedings leading to the King's being declared insane in later years, although by that time Wagner's ideas

11) had become widely accepted. More and more the artist ~~was~~ was filled with the conviction that his ~~work~~ (was based on a vocation, in the sense of being activity) called upon by a mystical power to perform his artistic task. This conviction made it for him increasingly difficult to exercise his activity ~~in~~ as a profession, in the sense of ~~the~~ work duly rewarded according to the law of supply and demand.

The various laws passed ^{during the 19th century} in all civilized countries with ~~the~~ respect to a view to protection of the artist's rights are only of limited value since they are based on the assumption that his work ~~is~~ is in demand and affords him a livelihood only ~~to that extent. The only~~ ~~subject as his work is~~ composers profiting substantially from that protection are naturally the providers of entertainment music, for their product is the only one which is seriously sought after and used by a great number of customers. Those artists are the only ones who ^{still} perform a tangible function in our society, since they are supplying that continuous background noise which millions of people are led to deem pleasant and necessary for satisfactorily carrying on ~~with~~ ^{with} the chores of their everyday's life. Powerful interests vested in gigantic industries inhibit any consequential investigation as to whether those noises are really pleasant and necessary, although it does not require much intelligence to realize that mankind has reached a ~~new~~ respectable age and achieved various creditable accomplishments without ~~being~~ having been stimulated by those noises. But so it has without knowing about vitamins, in spite of the fact that few people seem to be able to enjoy their breakfast unless they check unintentionally on whether they have swallowed their prescribed quota of vitamins.

In some countries like Austria for instance the manufacturers of entertainment music - and there were more than a few highly successful ones in Vienna - had decided to spend a percent-
(voluntarily)

12// Page of their earnings under the Copyright laws for the benefit of their unpopular colleagues, the writers of so-called serious music. Their motives were not entirely unselfish, since in countries with a powerful tradition of great music the plight of the serious composer was occasionally felt as a disgrace, and the entertainers ~~were~~ anxious to prove that the protecting laws did not work automatically in their exclusive favor. In this country it was necessary for the ASCAP to come under the fire of an anti-trust ~~the~~ investigation, before this organization made a sketchy move in the same direction. ~~the~~ ~~the~~ Again the move was not due to genuine respect for serious music, nor did the government take action for that reason, but only because the broadcasting industry complained about being ~~exploited by a monopoly of~~ blackmailed by the organized gang of the makers of entertainment music.

Of course, as legislation stands now, the government had no possibility of taking action on behalf of the serious composers, if it had wanted to do so. Artists sympathizing ^(even) with the New Deal are advocating government subsidies for art, ^{or government administration of art,} on the assumption that the government as a non-profit enterprise would ~~not~~ do away with the ~~humiliation~~ humiliation to which art is exposed by being treated as a commodity. Serious doubts may be expressed as to the consummation of such hopes. It may be true that the removal of the profit motive from the management of artistic affairs would alleviate some of the present antinomies. But as soon as the government would loose money on its artistic enterprises, the legislative bodies in control of ^{(tax monies} ~~tax monies~~ ^{the expenditure of)} would begin at once criticizing activities which are costly for the day reason of ~~their~~ being unpopular. No opponent of the administration would fail to capitalize politically on such an excellent ~~issue~~ campaign issue and soon the government would be com-

13/ pulled to follow in its artistic policy a line not much different from that of the present private managers. And that presupposes still an administration which would resist the temptation of using art more directly for political purposes. The advocates of government control over art are frequently pointing to Russia as the brilliant example of a country in which ^{the} artist has found a dignified and ^{has been} properly remunerated. I understand that in Russia ~~no~~ ^{no} artist ~~is~~ has trouble in securing his ~~own~~ livelihood, and considerably more than that, and I am ready to believe that this is true. However, many people are so fascinated by these ~~glorious~~ ^{splendid} conditions that they fail to see that the Russian artist has to pay for them with his freedom of imagination, or else the admirers of that system don't seem to attach much value to that freedom. The totalitarian governments have re-assigned to art a function, there is no doubt about that, and it is only fair that they pay the artist for performing it; actually it is even less than that, for he could not serve them properly if they would not support him. However, it will in many cases be a crucial problem of conscience for the artist whether he wants to do that kind of work. In the final analysis there is not much of a difference ^{between} being told by a propaganda clerk to write an appropriate ~~message~~ piece for the inauguration of a new party center, and grinding out ditties for a private manager who suggests what he hopes ^{will} prove successful subject matters, according to the conventions of the day.

according to the specifications resulting from the aesthetic tenets just ^{being} held by the administration

The former case may offer ~~more~~ more material security, unless the aesthetic tenets happen to change overnight, a rather narrowing experience to which all totalitarian composers are con-

(as ~~is~~ any bureaucratically organized business.)

44// starkly exposed. The now famous Dimstri Gorka-
Kovitch could tell a story on that score, if he
would care to do so. In the latter case there
may be ~~some~~ ^(more) possibility ~~of~~ of making a few
mendous hit, but also the chance of countless
misses, as in any private enterprise on the basis
of free competition. In both cases art has a
function again. In the case familiar to us in
democratic and capitalistic countries it has the
function of entertainment, in the totalitarian
set-ups the function of propaganda. Neither one
will satisfy the artist who is convinced of his special
mission and wants to express it by abiding by the
highest professional standards.

~~The totalitarian solution~~
At this point I expect hearing the objection
that it is obviously the fault of the artist that
he cannot conform ~~himself~~ to the new ^{types} of
functions offered to him in modern society. Since
I had gone so far as even to praise the Dark Ages
because their music still had had a clearly de-
fined function, I should not be so particular
about the functions assigned to art in our days,
as long as there are such functions available.
As to the so-called Dark Ages, I propose that
this derogatory metaphor be entirely dropped
at a time when modern man ~~has~~ in the greater
part of the world has found it necessary to live
in a permanent black-out and has reverted
to the considerably pre-medieval mores of
the cave-dwellers in order to stand the blessings
of his self-administered enlightenment, ap-
propriately known as blighting out each other's lives.
Well, I hear my opponent say at this point, the
medieval artist did not know better than to
devote his efforts to the cause of religion, and
thus he may well have been satisfied with his
limited function. Yes, indeed, that is true - he
did not know better, but, I answer, he did not
know worse either.

15// It certainly is a fact that art has long out-
grown the close association with the sphere of re-
ligion; in the course of a much more inclusive
process affecting the Western mind during the last
centuries. What I called the mission by which
the artist feels himself animated and which I
tried to indicate inadequately, is undoubtedly
his feeling that he is able ^{to} and responsible for,
expressing subject matters of much higher dignity
and significance than the various forms of
modern society expect of him, as a rule. Thus
the most consequential artistic accomplish-
ments in our time, take on the character of ~~an~~
avocational activities, that is of gratuitous
efforts without expectation of immediate or
adequate reward. The profession of the artist
~~is~~ is usually only indirectly connected with
his ~~av~~ vocation; ~~he~~ he earns his livelihood as
a teacher, performer, or in some other way,
perhaps even with some work ~~entirely~~ ^{entirely}
divorced from his real interest.

I ~~wanted to speak~~ ^{wanted to speak} of the musical art in gene-
ral, however, I put special emphasis on the
relationships of the creative artist, not partic-
ularly because that is my special field, but
~~also~~ because I think that the various antinomies
which I pointed out are most clearly manifest
in that field. The same conditions apply in
a less pointed manner to the field of ~~artistic~~
musical performance. It has become quite
commonplace to refer to a pianist or con-
ductor as one "who does not make any con-
cessions to the public". Such artists exist, and
it impairs their success considerably if they
actually have such an attitude. However, in the
 parlance of current criticism the phrase has
generally laudatory connotations, since the
~~most~~ appreciation courses and books have
^{popular} ~~wanted~~ gone at great lengths in de-

16) picking the venerable figures of the past as love-
some heroes who had to fight all ~~the~~ the time
for recognition and against ignorance and pre-
judice. The public naturally is ~~very~~ much pleased
to meet such heroes in our own time and
to ~~thus~~ flatter itself for being so much more
intelligent than its ancestors in that it is ready
to bestow upon such artists any desirable
success. The only detail which of course is never
to be mentioned is that those artists actually
make all and any concession to the public taste
or whatever is pointed out to them by the managers
as the public taste. It is sufficient that they are
described as making no concessions, and every-
thing is fine as long as they make them. Recently
I read ^{that} even ~~when~~ a popular band leader was
praised for not having made any concessions
to his public. I don't quite see what he did be-
cause the very essence of ~~the music which he trans-~~
~~acted~~ his transactions is a
concession to the public. In the ~~preview~~ preview
of a movie dealing with the life and deeds of
one of the most popular baseball stars his
sweetheart was shown and described as "the
only one who could understand him". Not having
seen the movie ^{and not knowing the rules,} I am not in a position to judge
what kind of esoteric baseball game he must
have played. The great American novelist Robert
Merrill ~~was~~ commenting on the situation has
summed it up handsomely: "The public
~~was~~ was constantly waiting for a composer
who would be as lovable as Beethoven and
at the same time as self-evident as a nightingale".
I think that is true, ~~and~~ no wonder that
the public is constantly disappointed.