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THE WORKS PROGRAM

-- Works Progress Administration --

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Federal WPA Summer Music Program Provides Opportunity for Developing
American Talent.

Under the impetus of the work of 15,600 formerly unemployed musicians, the Federal Music Project of the Works Progress Administration moves into the summer season with regularly scheduled concerts in more than 25 cities, affording opportunities for American composers, artists, and conductors never before realized, according to an announcement today by Nikolai Sokoloff, national director.

Federal Music Project officials have designed the concerts to bring before an ever-increasing public outstanding American talent, Dr. Sokoloff said.

In the East concerts have been scheduled or are under way in New York, Brooklyn, Syracuse, Buffalo, and other New York state cities; Philadelphia, Boston, Hartford, and Bridgeport, Connecticut. In the mid-west concerts will be heard in Chicago and many Illinois cities, Detroit, Minneapolis, and St. Paul, as well as in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In the west symphonies will play in Denver, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, San Bernardino, San Diego, Portland and Seattle.

Among sponsors for the summer concerts are some of the country's leading universities. Included are the University of Illinois, Syracuse University, University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, University of Minnesota, Harvard University, and

many others.

New York and Philadelphia orchestras have already begun the summer program emphasizing music and performers definitely American.

Dr. Sokoloff, speaking in Los Angeles the other day, declared "the only trouble with American music is that the American public has not awakened to the fact that it must be classed with the finest being written today".

"The hour for the development of American music has struck", he said.

"There never was a time when America, either by birth or adoption, had such a wealth of musical artists. The various musical schools, the newer symphony orchestras in Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles and San Francisco, have contributed scores of highly talented musicians in the last few years. The majority of them are equivalent in talent to European musicians.

"I do not mean that we should turn our backs on a Toscanini or a Flagstad because they come from another land and speak an alien tongue. They are great geniuses who should be welcomed everywhere. The time has come, however, to forego the fallacy that music, to be good, must be of the European brand."

The New York Festival Orchestra, an eighty-five instrument symphonic unit, will appear in fifteen "New Talent" concerts in the Sculpture Court of the Brooklyn Museum of Art on Sunday afternoons at three-thirty o'clock. They will be broadcast over WNYC, the New York City municipal radio station. The first program of the series was heard on May 31. Federal Music Project officials have designed these concerts to bring before the public outstanding native talent. The series will provide for appearances of thirty vocal and instrumental guest artists in addition to scheduled conducting engagements for qualified young musicians who will alternate with staff conductors of the Federal Music Project. The "New Talent" series will feature the performance of new and previously unheard American compositions.

Four musicians of established reputation, not employed by the Federal

Music Project, have been certified by the government to examine applicants and scores. Up to the present more than 100 musicians have applied for engagements as guest soloists, thirty for guest conducting assignments, while more than fifty scores, including symphonies, choral works, symphonic poems and concerti have been received by the audition board. Two guest artists will appear at each concert. Records of the majority of the applicants for engagements show them to have been winners of state or nation-wide music competitions.

These Brooklyn concerts will not interfere in any way with the other park programs planned for Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx by the Federal Music Project organizations. These will include the presentation of grand opera in concert form.

Plans for the Syracuse symphony orchestra's summer post-season are not yet completed, but they contemplate a series of concerts in the orchestra shell at Syracuse University with programs of American compositions and with American conductors at the desk. The Syracuse orchestra also will be heard in three other New York cities.

The summer series of the Philadelphia Civic Orchestra, that city's 100 piece WPA unit, will follow in four lines. Two of these series will be sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University; there will be weekly Thursday night programs in famous old Mercantile Hall in which the promenade features of Sir Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra in London will be introduced, and two concerts a week at Willow Grove. Concerts by the combined Penn and Sylvania bands, Philadelphia WPA units, with Giuseppe Creatore as the conductor, have already been started.

The concerts at Willow Grove effect a restoration of a tradition which during many years was associated with that park in the northern suburbs of Philadelphia. Willow Grove for decades was the center for summer concerts by bands and orchestras lead by men whose names have become famous in the history of American music. They include Walter Damrosch, Frederick Stock, Victor Herbert and John Philip Sousa.

Summer plans for the WPA symphony orchestras in Boston will call frequently for elaborate programs, particularly those that are to be given in the Harvard Stadium. In Boston where many writings by American composers have had first performances during the life of the Federal Music Project, emphasis again will be placed on the music of native writers.

Other scheduled concerts in the Boston area will be given in the courtyard of the Boston Museum of Art, these being devoted principally to the more intimate chamber music of the smaller instrumental ensembles, with symphony and choral programs in the Brookline Shell, on the Esplanade and Boston Common, in Sanders Theater at Harvard and the Boston Opera House, and at the Roxbury Memorial and other school centers.

In Hartford and Bridgeport, Conn., and Buffalo, N. Y., the symphonic orchestras of the Federal Music Project, began open air concerts during the first week in June and the authorities intend to continue them at intervals throughout the summer.

Sponsors for these WPA summer concerts include the University of Chicago, Loyola University, the Park Board of Chicago and the City of Wilmette.

As in the Eastern cities guest conductors and guest soloists will be heard in Illinois in the performances of many American compositions.

Open air performances of the sixty-five instrument Illinois Symphony Orchestra will average three a week in Chicago or on tour. The Chicago concerts will include series at the University of Chicago and on the campus of Loyola University. The American Concert Orchestra, another WPA unit with thirty-five musicians, will give a large number of outdoor

concerts in parks and community centers.

Negotiations are being completed for a tour by the larger orchestra to include, besides concerts at the University of Illinois at Urbana, appearances at Carbondale, East St. Louis, Springfield, Bloomington, Peoria, Galesburg, Rockford, Elgin, Waukegan and Western Springs.

In Detroit the WPA Symphony Orchestra will conclude its formal season with a final program in the Institute of Art on June 14. Thereafter concerts will be given in many sections of the city under the cooperation of the Department of Recreation, and in conjunction with important Federal Theater Projects. The City Park Commissioners have tendered the great Belle Isle shell to the WPA orchestra for August.

A series of summer concerts will be given at the University of Minnesota, sponsored by the Federal Music Project, with the recently merged St. Paul and Minneapolis WPA symphony orchestras. The new organization will be known as the Twin Cities' Civic Orchestra and the first concert at the University will be held June 18.

With the cooperation of the University School of Music a Composers' Forum Laboratory will be organized, and there will be open rehearsals for certain of the submitted manuscripts to permit the writer to correct and amend his score before it is performed publicly. The formal Composers' Forum is scheduled to follow through in the Fall in both Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The WPA Symphony Orchestra in Tulsa, Okla., will give a season of starlit concerts in the Skelly Stadium. An invitation to play at the Texas Centennial was declined. W. Dexter Moss, chairman of the Tulsa Fine Arts Committee, held that the people of Tulsa "needed the orchestra at home."

"Moreover," he said, "Tulsa is not in a financial position musically now to accept this honor. If we can raise the \$5,000 required for the trip I feel we should use it to lay a foundation for our permanent orchestra here."

In the West, comprehensive plans have been made for summer concerts, beginning with those in Los Angeles on July 12. There are two Works Progress Administration symphony orchestras in Los Angeles County, each comprising 100 musicians who will appear at the Griffith Park outdoor theatre on alternate Sunday evenings. In all Federal Works Progress Administration music concert projects in the West, the works of American composers will predominate.

The San Francisco symphony orchestra has organized weekly concerts for the summer to be given in the War Memorial Building in the civic center. The Federal orchestras in San Bernardino and San Diego will continue with regular symphony performances.

In Portland, Oregon, the Works Progress Administration orchestra will give performances in the outdoor amphitheatre at Mt. Hood, cooperating with the Oregon Society of Composers. Symphonic bands in Seattle, Washington and Denver, Colorado, will play from two to three concerts in public parks each week.

In Phoenix, Arizona and Salt Lake City, Utah, the symphonic concerts will be given throughout the summer season.

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