

## Spiritual Contact: An Artist's Mission

By Marina López

The distinguished American composer, Lothar Klein is presently in Mexico City for the Contemporary Music Festival.

"You know, this festival should really be called the International Festival of Contemporary music," said Mr. Klein. "all the major countries of Europe are representing their current musical tendencies here."

He pointed out that a festival of this sort is only possible in a subsidized institution such as Bellas Artes.

"In the United States, this sort of thing can only be done at state universities such as the University of Texas where we can play without worrying about box office returns."

"Other countries, for example Germany, have festivals of this type but feature nearly exclusively their own composers."

This is not Mr. Klein's first to Mexico. He was sent here last year by the Latin American Institute of the University of Texas to find out the work being done by the young Mexican composers.

"It seems that here too, the trend is away from nationalism — the use of folk melodies in compositions — this is also the case in the States, in Germany

where I spent a number of years, and throughout Europe."

"This may be more 'advanced' but there is a danger of music becoming monotonous".

"After the Second World War, musicians all over began to take a more universal approach to their compositions: a more humanistic attitude became prevalent."

Mr. Lothar Klein, though in his thirties, has already had many works published. One of them, Cantata No. 2 was performed at the Berlin Music Festival in 1962.

"An actress reads Sappho's epigrams, chosen at random, while the orchestra softly plays my background music."

"I had read these epigrams in an excellent modern translation and was so impressed that I searched for a musical form to adequately express them." Having them sung would detract from their subtle irony. This seemed the only way to put my idea across."

Though Mr. Klein considers himself to be a modern composer, influenced by Stravinsky and Webern, he sees much avant-garde work being done.

"Stockhausen for example has worked with compositions were the orchestra improvises, much like a jam session."

"This is the way it is done. The composer gives a few al-

ternatives to each instrumental of the orchestra and then leaves it up to them to play what they wish while he sits back and washes his hands off the whole affair."

"There is the problem then," said Mr. Klein with a grin, "of to whom we should really give the credit — the composer or the orchestra".

Mr. Klein believes that an artist who creates under an artificial stimulus only believes that he is creating a work of art.

"An artist's mission is to establish spiritual contact with his audience, and not to gratify his own senses."

Mr. Lothar Klein has definite opinions of classic and modern composers. About Vivaldi he says — "Here is a man about whom you can safely

say that he wrote the same piece 1,000 times.

Wagner he dislikes intensely for his ideology.

His favorites among the classics are Mozart and Debussy.

Of the Mexican composer Carlos Chávez, Mr. Klein says, "He is a phenomenal talent, not concerned with the dictates of his time. He follows his inner urge or inspiration, whatever form it may take."

Mr. Klein, who teaches at the University of Texas quoted the famous phrase of Bernard Shaw's... "Those who can —do— those who can't —teach".

Then, wryly, "I hope to prove him wrong."