

New Composers Hailed in Severance Concert

By Frank Hruby
Music Critic

It was written, "The last shall be first"—and so it was in the contemporary music concert by the Cleveland Orchestra in Severance Hall last night.

LOTHAR KLEIN'S "Musique a Go-Go" was last on the program and first in the hearts of the audience. Because it went to the vernacular for its medium of expression, because it then used it in a sophisticated manner, because he asked the orchestra to function as orchestras always have, his piece was the most successful of the evening.



Klein could be (or perhaps is) the present day Gershwin or Grofe by thus keeping in contact with the times. The least effective part of the work was its title. It wasn't Go-Go music, but it went-went well-well.

DAVID LEWIN'S Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra was next in line in the something-to-say department.

Ostensibly of the Schoenbergian school, it was so by virtue of the fact that it avoided most of the thorny problems that school represents.

As played by David Majeske, it was impressive for its sustained, long lines which were strung on poles of honesty of expression.

It was the one piece on the program that needed

The Cleveland Orchestra, under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, presented its "New Music Program" last night in Severance Hall, with George Szell, Louis Lane, Michael Charry and James Levine conducting. Composers represented were: Walter Aschaffenburg of the Oberlin Conservatory faculty; Russell Smith, the orchestra's composer-in-residence; David Lewin of the University of California (Berkeley) faculty; and Edward Miller of the Hartt College of Music faculty, and Lothar Klein of the University of Texas faculty.

no explanatory notes; the piece would have had an even better effect had he not supplied them.

WALTER ASCHAFFENBURG'S Three Dances did as he bid them do — be enjoyable, not solve the world's problems.

They showed an imaginative orchestral sense, a logical rhythmic background, an airy outlook—if not downright optimistic.

I would have asked only for more drive or punch or some sort of exclamation point.

RUSSELL SMITH'S Second Piano Concerto was the work which showed its formal structure most clearly. It is a long work in the course of which it explored nearly every device the concerto is heir to, even to the ending of the first movement cadenza with a multiple trill.

Thematically it explored its material and even exhausted it. The craftsmanship and fondness for the

traditional concerto style were everywhere in evidence.

But the principal weakness was that the material did not live up to the facility. Joela Jones gave it the very best possible performance.

EDWARD MILLER'S "Orchestral Changes" was more in the nature of an experimentation, it seemed to me, than a finished work of art.

It showed a certain flair for instrumentation, and made almost a fetish of awkward lines for the various instruments.

To which the players responded with a brilliance they are seldom called upon to exhibit.

It was a good show all the way. We can do with a lot more of this sort of thing.