

PREVIEW AND REVIEW

Helmer Plans Busy Week

The next few weeks will be fully occupied for UNB's Resident Artist Paul Helmer who has engaged to give two public concerts and two talks, between 26 January and 18 March, in addition to his normal work of practising and composing. Commenting on these talks, Mr. Helmer said:

"I hope the talks will be of interest to the general public, and may give some insight into how composers work. The talks are based mostly on my own experience as a composer and on things I have learned from exchanging experiences with other composers. While there is no formal theme common to all four of these events, the two concerts complement each other, and the talks bear a general relationship to both."

Asked how he prepared for the concerts, Mr. Helmer said that he had started to plan them as long ago as last September, when he returned here from Germany. "Some of the pieces," he said "are pieces I very much want to play, and they have been part of my repertoire for some years. Other pieces I have chosen to complement these, in form or in style or in content or in composer. These I have been developing while at UNB. I have tried to make up two programs which will form a unified and coherent musical experience."

Asked about the two talks he plans to give, Mr. Helmer said "These will be relatively technical. It was last October when the Creative Arts Committee asked me to give them, and I have been working on them since then, assembling material, selecting, arranging — and sometimes rejecting — ideas and illustrations. I like to talk without a script, indeed without even notes, and I shall be illustrating on the piano what I have to say. Most of the ideas and theories in the talks are my own, although I suppose inevitably contact with other disciplines — especially here at UNB — will have influenced me one way or another."

When they asked me to give two talks, the Creative Arts



Committee did not suggest any topics, so I chose two that interested me. The first is Music and Mathematics, and this talk will be given in Memorial Hall at 8:15 p.m. on Wednesday, 12 February. I chose this subject because I think there is quite a close relationship between music and mathematics. Personally, I studied and enjoyed mathematics, and I see distinct internal relationships between the two. Music can be approached scientifically: indeed today mathematics has a great bearing upon music, especially electronic music, for to write such music, a composer must have some concept of mathematics. Of course, the relationship between music and mathematics is not really new: from the work of Pythagoras in the days of Ancient Greece onwards, mathematics and music have been closely related; mathematics is the purest of the sciences, and music it, in some ways, the purest of the arts. Consider also how many great mathematicians have also been deeply interested in music. Einstein is only one example.

My second talk will be on Form in Music. This talk will

be more concerned with music and less with theory. There is much more musical illustration in it, and I think it will probably be easier to give and possibly more popular and easier to listen to than the first talk. In both talks, I'm aiming mainly at telling people things I think they will be interested to know. I hope also that they will find some of my ideas interesting and stimulating in other ways too. This talk will be given on Wednesday, 11 March at 8:15 p.m. in Memorial Hall. The talks will probably last from sixty to ninety minutes, though it is difficult to be absolutely exact about this."

Asked what else he had been doing while preparing this season of concerts and talks, Mr. Helmer said that he had spent much time working on a composition of his own. "I have spent a good deal of my time here in Fredericton both this year and last year working on this composition. It is atonal, and you might describe it as neo-classical in structure, and you could say that it has a slow fast slow opposition. I hope to give it its first performance soon,

Silent Movie Leaves Audience Speechless

When a reviewer is transported back forty years in the word of motion pictures to an era whose best film qualities are today almost commonplace and whose worst qualities have long since been weeded out, he is somewhat at a loss for words. The Swedish epic of 1924 — "Gosta Berling's Saga" — must have been a remarkable film in its day. Photographically it is quite excellent. The acting is reasonably restrained compared to some of the overdone atrocities that preceded sound and more subtle dramatic techniques in getting the point across. The fire scene and the flight from the wolves brought a new vista in action to the films in their day. In a couple of the dining-room scenes at Ekberg the director even shows that he felt the need for a wide screen (almost 30 years before it was developed) and found a most ingenious substitute by fading the top and bottom of the picture into darkness.

But all of this does not hide the fact that today's audience finds this film extremely funny. The out-dated make-up techniques, the melo-dramatic flourishes, and the general obviousness with which everything is done all serve to date this film and remove it from serious consideration by present-day audiences.

Yet the fact is that most motion-pictures are just as rapidly dated by the eccentricities of the time at which they are produced. It is only necessary to compare the late thirties and early forties films on TV, or even the mid-fifties films at theatre re-runs, with present-day first-run films to realize this. It is only the occasional film which stands out as ageless. Although the period (rather than current and hence rapidly dated) costume and many of the photographic qualities which enable films to outlive their era, one must conclude that "Gosta Berling's Saga" is still sadly dated.

PREVIEW: This Sunday the Film Society will view three featurettes from widely separated points on the globe — "View from the Farm" from Africa, "Momma Won't Allow" from England, and "Small and Big Kids" from Japan.

perhaps here in Fredericton at my second concert, on March 18. During the past Christmas season, I also recorded a tape for a solo performance on the CBC Distinguished Artists series. I played Beethoven's Sonata No. 3 in C major, op. 2, no. 3, which I played here in Fredericton at my concert in the fall. The CBC program will probably be broadcast some time in March. It was produced by Irving Glick, who is himself a composer, and it should make a good program."

All four events prepared by Mr. Helmer have the sponsorship of UNB's Creative Arts Committee, and, as Mr. Helmer's stay at UNB is partly subsidised by the Canada Council, admission to all events is free to everyone.

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