

Billy Rowe's Notebook

The National Endowment for the Arts is a willing, if not knowledgeable, orchestrator of symphonic bias in its continuing use of tax-papers, and matching private funds, to dole out millions of grant dollars to symphony orchestras throughout the USA. Just last week this quasi-official federal agency announced a record \$10.8 million of government and matching funds grants to such orchestras to keep them musically sound through the '79-'80 performing season.

What lifted these eyebrows and inspired this write beef are figures which came this way from a study of 121 symphony orchestras throughout the nation. First, none are black and of some 20,000 professional musicians making the long-haired music within them, only about 150 of them are black.

businesspersons who are beating on the doors of the music-whirl seeking an equal opportunity spin. They can take it from here that many of the 500-bro-sis attending BMA's founding convention left with a bit of skepticism, wondering if they were being conned, or was BMA a NATRA clone? Time alone will tell!

Lobby Sights and Sounds
Convention planners were applauded for laying down no-nonsense rules. No hitting on women not your own, and no visible pot smoking. BMA veep **Smokey Robinson** smoothly moderated the hottest panel of the confab--the one involving black promoters who can not see the halls for all the white cats with contracts on the black stars.

He even had to straighten out his good buddy, **Stevie Wonder**, who got the wrong hearing of what he had to say.

To tip the iceberg the Endowment did earmark \$25,000 for this unusual largess for "Music of America," a Brooklyn Philharmonia series which includes works by contemporary Black, Spanish and native American composers. This drop in the pit is the only spelled out benefit to minority musicians, excluding white women who are more abundant in such orchestras than blacks or other "minorities."

Endowment and public funds will continue the orchestration of bias in the personal arrangements of symphony orchestras. With no dependency on the box-office for financial success the picture is bleak indeed for black classical ambition as there are no joyful outlook for them in an art form which receives more money than any other component of the federally-subsidized cultural programs.

Now don't let this write beef give you the idea that the Endowment for the Arts is the only organization which seems to have closed eyes to musical bias. Not by a long shot, the recorders of pop music have been at it just as long, but in a different way. In hopes of stemming the tide of black exclusion in the higher and more lucrative white echelon of this worldwide profession, **The Black Music Association** was founded a year ago. It held its founding convention in Phila in mid-June and I got these comments from Major Robinson, my main eye and ear man. According to him, "BMA" is in noway shaping up as a musical NAACP. In fact thinkers departing the convention wondered in ear-shot how an org. expecting to right the wrongs against blacks in the retail and promotional fields of music, can do so without some civil rights action.

The major beef at the convention dealt with the various forms of rank discrimination within the popular music industry against blacks, who by and large are the foundation of the trade, but are denied their rightful share of this billion dollar industry. Ken Gamble and his partner, founders of the Philadelphia International Records, who conceived the BMA

idea, were not the only and creative persons, but highly conservative businessmen.

The question is, will they adopt a new technique to resolve the problems of those angry and bitter black



Lionel Hampton, whose innovations in the world of jazz on the vibes span more than four decades, teams up with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra on EVENING AT POPS Sun., July 15, at 8:00 on UNC-TV Channel 4, 26, PBS. [PBS broadcast Sunday, July 15 at 8 p.m.]

NCSA Concerts

Two concerts in Crawford Hall Friday and Monday evenings at 8:15 p.m., will mark the send-off for two groups of musicians from the N.C. School of the Arts who are leaving for classical and jazz performances in Europe.

The closing concert of the summer International Music Program Friday evening will be an all-orchestral program, to include both the Overture to "Tannhauser" and "The Arrival of the Guests" from the same opera of Richard Wagner.

Monday, July 16, the NCSA Jazz Quartet will play its only Winston-Salem concert before departing for Europe. The concert at 8:15 p.m. in Crawford Hall is not included in the subscription series of the International Orchestra.

Members of the quartet, all regular NCSA students, are Kofi Burbridge, flute; Jon Metzger, vibraphone; Joseph Farley, bass, and John Hanks, drums. The quartet members will tour with the International Orchestra in both Germany and Italy, and will play independent booking at U.S. military bases during the tour. The International Program performers leave for Europe on Wednesday, July 18.

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