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Louisville Philharmonic Society

Columbia University
in the City of New York

[NEW YORK 27, N. Y.]

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

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Mr. John Marshall
Rockefeller Foundation
49 West 49th Street
New York 20, New York

Dear Mr. Marshall:

I have examined the project of the Louisville Philharmonic Society with great interest. I heard the concert of the Louisville Orchestra several years ago in Carnegie Hall and was much impressed by the spirit and vitality of the performance, as was everyone with whom I talked. There is no doubt but what Mayor Farnsley and Mr. Whitney have done a great service to musical culture by commissioning and performing well so many new works. Because they have demonstrated that such a progressive policy is practical and is approved by the community, they deserve every encouragement.

The present plan is progressive and daring in its scope. I subscribe to the statement of purpose in its entirety. I like especially the idea of guaranteeing four performances of each commissioned work and of making the works available on tapes for cultural interchange. I have a few doubts about the program from a practical point of view. They must know their audience potentialities, but even at a low admission price I fear that audiences may not be interested in programs consisting entirely of contemporary music featuring repetitions and including student works on a weekly basis. Both the ideas of including student works and repeating the works three times are attractive but will they be as attractive to audiences as they are to you and me? Doesn't it strike you as over-sanguine?

But what really disturbs me is their expectation that the sale of records will gradually wipe out the deficit. The demand so far for recordings of American music has been very slight and most commercial recordings go out of print soon after they are issued. Our experience in the American Recording Society has been somewhat encouraging. With eighteen records issued the first year, we sold 56,000 copies - an average of 3,000 per record - but this was by book club technique, not by ordinary commercial issue. Also, we have selected works of demonstrated audience value and have had

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the pick of the American repertory, most of which has never been recorded previously.

I am surprised at the statement on page 12 that most of the existing music has been recorded. We have been limited to one work a composer and many of them are being recorded for the first time. I cannot believe that it would be possible to sell 10,000 copies of every new work that is commissioned.

Apart from its over-optimism, the budget looks sound and modest and I have confidence that the artistic standards in selection and in performance would be high.

Yours sincerely,



Douglas Moore

DM:bl