

0200 R

53169

Louisville Philharmonic Society

It was, on motion,

LOUISVILLE
PHILHARMONIC
SOCIETY, INC.

RESOLVED that the sum of Four hundred thousand dollars
RF 53041

(\$400,000), or as much thereof as may be necessary,
be, and it hereby is, appropriated to the LOUISVILLE
PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY, INC., toward the composition,
performance and recording of new works by living composers,
this sum to be available during the period ending December 31,
1957.

The following considerations were presented:

Humanities: The Arts

Previous Interest: None.

General Description: The Louisville Philharmonic Society was incorporated under the laws of Kentucky on April 6, 1936, under the name of the "Louisville Civic Arts Association." Its present name was adopted by the amendment of its articles of incorporation on April 2, 1942. The Society received exemption from federal income taxes in 1948.

During recent years, the Society's orchestra, known as the Louisville Orchestra, under the direction of Robert Whitney, has achieved unusual national recognition. The quality of its performance is high by any standard within the repertory it attempts, namely compositions which can be properly performed by an orchestra of fifty pieces. These are mainly works composed before the ambitious orchestration of the nineteenth century, and works of twentieth-century composers. Because of the Orchestra's concern with contemporary music, it began five seasons ago to commission contemporary compositions, and when possible brought their composers to Louisville for performances much as other orchestras employ soloists. During these seasons the orchestra has introduced twenty-four new works by such composers as Norman Dello Joio, Roy Harris, Arthur Honegger, Heitor Villa-Lobos, William Schuman, Darius Milhaud, Paul Hindemith, Virgil Thomson and Otto Luening. By arrangement with Columbia Records, the Orchestra from time to time issues recordings of these works.

The present proposal is to intensify this commissioning of new work by providing for the creation, performance and recording of forty-six compositions a year during a four-year period, beginning in January, 1954. These new works would be presented in weekly concerts in Louisville except during a summer period of six weeks. The program of each concert would consist of the new works of the three previous weeks and the premiere

of the new work of the week itself. After thorough assimilation of the work by the Orchestra in rehearsals and four public performances, it would be recorded on magnetic tape, and copies of these tapes or other recordings would be made available for broadcasting to the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, to the National Association of Educational Broadcasters for use by non-commercial radio stations in the United States, and to radio companies abroad. In addition, the Society proposes to make and issue twelve long-playing records of commissioned works each year, and to sell them (if more desirable arrangements for distribution do not materialize) at an annual subscription rate of \$65. In any case, the Society will continue to release the more successful of newly-commissioned work through Columbia Masterworks at a rate increasing from one record a year to as many as four a year.

LOUISVILLE
PHILHARMONIC
SOCIETY, INC.
(Continued)

It is the intention of the Society to commission each year thirty compositions by composers whose inclusion is justified by their previous work and twelve by student composers whose reputations still have to be established; four commissions would be given for operas not to exceed thirty minutes in length by composers of established competence. Between one-half and two-thirds of the works commissioned would be by American composers, and the balance by composers from other parts of the world, including Europe, South America, Central America, Mexico and the Near East. A similar distribution would be attempted in programming the weekly concerts. The selection of composers will be the responsibility of the Society. It is proposed, however, to request the Critics' Circle, Inc. of New York (which represents virtually all of the periodicals in the New York region which carry serious criticism in music) to name, and to revise from time to time, a panel of eligible composers to aid the Society in making its final selection. It is further proposed that two trips be made by representatives of the Society during 1953, one to Europe and the Near East and one to South America, Central America and Mexico, to discuss the commissioning of composers outside the United States. A preliminary list of composers who would seemingly be eligible includes over one hundred and fifty names. The commissions proposed (including the extraction of parts at the composer's expense) are \$1,200 for works by established composers, \$2,000 for operas, and \$500 for works by student composers.

Finances: A grant of \$400,000 is recommended to be available during the period ending December 31, 1957, on the basis of annual budgets approved by the officers. The amount now requested is based on carefully worked out budgets which can be summarized as follows:

	¹⁹⁵⁴ 1st year	¹⁹⁵⁵ 2nd year	¹⁹⁵⁶ 3rd year	¹⁹⁵⁷ 4th year	Totals
Total expense	\$272,749	\$286,669	\$304,589	\$322,509	\$1,186,516
Total income	80,350	158,975	235,785	311,050	786,160
Deficit	\$192,399	\$127,694	\$ 68,804	\$ 11,459	\$ 400,356

Estimates of income depend in considerable measure on securing an increasing audience for the weekly concerts in Louisville (rising from 300 in the first year to 900 in the fourth) and on increasing income

from subscriptions for and sales of records. Present estimates may be over-optimistic, but it seems assured that by the end of the fourth year the project will have neared self-support if it has not already achieved it.

LOUISVILLE
PHILHARMONIC
SOCIETY, INC.
(Continued)

Future Implications: If self-support were achieved, as is expected by the sponsors, no further assistance from the Foundation would be necessary. Indeed the sponsors are confident that if self-support is even approached they will be able to find support in Louisville for continuation of the program. The officers, however, would not wish to rule out the possibility of recommending further aid from the Foundation.

Comment: Startling as this proposal may seem on first acquaintance, it proves to have surprising cogency. That Louisville should be its location is due to the initiative of the Louisville Philharmonic Society, first in having developed a fifty-piece orchestra capable of high quality performance of such music as is now being written, and, second, in having established the practice of commissioning and performing such compositions on the more limited scale that now prevails. Though members of the orchestra are paid at union rates, the expense of the project in performing costs is relatively low because of the size of the orchestra and because overhead expenses are covered by the orchestra's regular budget. The Society has always enjoyed unusually good and close relations with the American Federation of Musicians. The Louisville Free Public Library will make available the most modern tape recording equipment, which is already connected by high-grade telephone lines to the concert hall. This hall has proved to be exceptional in acoustic quality both for performance and for recording.

Though the project is under the auspices of the Society quite independent of the City of Louisville, its development is due in large measure to the enterprise and initiative of the City's present mayor, Mr. Charles Farnsley. Through his efforts the Orchestra has reached its present favorable situation; its regular activities are assured through the Louisville Fund established by Mayor Farnsley from corporate and individual contributions; it has an excellent concert-hall at modest rental; and it has the first-rate recording facilities. It is Mayor Farnsley's basic contention that musical composition need not operate at present on the basis of a "scarcity market," but that (as he believes this project will demonstrate) there is a market for a much larger output of high quality if such a market is properly organized.

By encouraging such an imaginative and artistically creative project in Louisville, a medium-sized interior city of our country, a tangible stimulus should be given to the decentralization of the musical life of this country. Louisville is not at present a location where music is heard and written about by leading critics. However, Virgil Thomson, music critic of the New York Herald Tribune, has made suggestions as to public relations and critical coverage which the sponsors propose to adopt and which should ensure for the project the national recognition which it deserves.
