

Bartók Béla

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Sir Thomas Beecham

Hated "Modern Music"

Sir Thomas ^{*Beecham} was a stern, uncompromising critic of "modern music." It wasn't tuneful enough — and he admitted simply that he liked music that had a melody.

"I have no interest in these 'systems' that many composers are using nowadays," he once said. "They don't mean anything to me."

He had his own definition of what made good music — "good music is that which penetrates the ear with facility and quits the memory with difficulty. . . . You must be able to remember music, otherwise it does not mean anything."

"No opera house could exist for a week if it did not play operas written 100 years ago or more," he said; "not one that has been composed in the last thirty or forty years has remained in the repertoire who has written a melody that people will whistle or sing?"

"Composers should write tunes that chauffeurs and errand boys can whistle. If modern composers could forget all that they have been thinking about for thirty years and just follow the examples they have we might get some music."

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