Notes: How North Carolina Cares for Its Orchestra
By RAYMOND ERICSON
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Back in 1943, the North Carolina General Assembly made an appropriation of $4,000 to support the North Carolina Symphony for two years. Despite the modest sum, this was a historic move in being one of the first such acts on the part of a state government. The people of the Tar Heel State called it, with disarming cracker-barrel humor, the "Horn Tootin'" Bill. Last year, the same law-making body was still breaking paths: It gave the orchestra $610,000 for one year, the largest sum to be granted a symphonic group by a state—more even than the comparatively rich New York State Council on the Arts offered the New York Philharmonic.

That grant helped to raise the North Carolina Symphony's budget to $1,600,000, a figure that put it in the top, or "major," classification of American ensembles established by the American Symphony Orchestra League. To celebrate its new status, it will come to New York for the first time to play in Carnegie Hall on March 9. It will be a state occasion, in one sense, for the program will use the services of the Duke University Chapel Choir and Chorale and Janice Harsanyi, the latter a soprano well known to New Yorkers who teaches at the North Carolina School of the Arts. They will be heard in Poulenc's "Stabat Mater." Also on the program will be Ned Rorem's "Assembly and Fall," a Bicentennial commission for the orchestra.

The Reynolds Tobacco Company is footing part of the expenses. The state's new governor, James B. Hunt, Jr., who decided to learn to play the violin after hearing the orchestra play as a child, will come along. So will Sara Hodgkins, secretary of the Department of Cultural Resources, which—Other states, take notice!—has cabinet status.

John Gosling, a former trumpeter, a product of the Juilliard School and Catholic University, is the conductor. He has had only two predecessors: Lamar Stringfield, a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer who led the orchestra from its beginnings in 1932 to 1935 during which it was supported by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and Benjamin Swalin, who revived it in 1940 almost single-handedly, and remained with it till his retirement in 1972 with the title conductor emeritus. Under his leadership, the orchestra became a truly state organization, traveling to the smallest communities as well as the large cities and developing a strong program in the schools. Today, its 70 members give around 250 concerts a year.

A New Concertmaster

The New York Philharmonic has a new concertmaster this season, and while his coming was duly announced, his arrival was somewhat obscured amid the orchestra's unusual schedule this past fall. Rodney Friend's first appearance in his new post was outside the regular subscription programs, in the Mahler festival in Carnegie Hall that began on Sept. 26. There wasn't

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John Gosling, conductor of the North Carolina Symphony, appears in Carnegie Hall March 9.

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much chance for him to win attention. That occasion will come in the concerts starting on March 10, when he is soloist in Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto.

A concertmaster has more to do than the public sees, which is to sit in the first chair, play the occasional violin solos in an orchestral score and to signal the tuning before the concert, when the orchestra is to stand in response to acknowledge applause and when it is to leave the stage. He has to supply bowings for his colleagues and convey some instructions from the conductor to them. He is, in fact, called the "leader" in British orchestras.

England is where Friend is from—for the past 12 years he has been concertmaster of the London Philharmonic. His moving here, he said in a recent post-concert chat, depended on the happiness of his family, and he was glad to report that his wife and three children were thriving in their home in Tenafly, N.J. "We are not city people, and we lived in a comparable suburb of London before we came here," he said.

What differences has he noticed in his five months here? "A concertmaster's work is the same anywhere," he said. "I know it's trite to say it, but music remains a universal language. Musicians are musicians, and your colleagues are like you—they've spent their lives learning to play their instruments. There is no real difference between orchestras when you're working with those of the highest caliber. I know about the Philharmonic's players' reputation for being tough and cynical, but it isn't justified at all.

"The work is harder here. In London we rehearsed a program and played it once. Here we play the program four times. The first three times are easy, but the fourth, which comes after a two-day interval and the rehearsing of a new program, becomes difficult. I've had to play a lot more music here, including more contemporary music."

Friend, who is 36, was reluctant to talk about the Philharmonic audiences, but he noted that in London no one would think of walking out during a performance the way they do here. "I realize," he said, "that some listeners walk out in protest against the new works that they don't like. But I think that there are better ways to protest, such as booing. The players have spent a lot of time rehearsing a new work and they deserve to be listened to. The people who walk out are disturbing not only the rest of the audience, which is the much greater part, but the orchestra as well."

Electronic Music

The Institute de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique, generally referred to as IRCAM (pronounced "ear come"), is part of the controversial, recently opened Centre Beaubourg in Paris. IRCAM has been much written about, but it is still probably not widely known that it owes a good deal of its technology to America. When talks were first held in the summer of 1973 by Pierre Boulez, its director, and his team on how best to implement it, one of the members was John Chowning of Stanford University. He was in town the other day for the performance of a work of his and to give a lecture, and he had time to talk briefly about his participation in IRCAM.

Chowning, besides being a composer, is director of the Comput in Music and Acoustics This operates as part of Intelligence Laboratory, w ment is worth millions scientists as well as mus considered the most sophi flexible equipment of its kin

It was admired so by such colleagues as Luciano they decided to have it co Paris organization. (They a a two-week crash course i Stanford two summers were at least two major in this move. IRCAM woul fully working machines, s problems that attend buildi ent one were eliminated. It that information between S Paris could be exchanged ea models of electronic unit composers at such places a