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***The Institutional Promotion of British Composers at the Beginning of the 20th Century: “The Royal College of Music Patron’s Fund”***

At the turn of the 20th century the debate about a “British School of Music” was in full swing. One means to achieve such a school was seen in the writing of either explicitly national or so-called “cosmopolitan” music, depending on the respective standpoint. However, another instrument to support British composers and musicians lay at a financial and institutional level. In 1903 Sir Ernest Palmer donated 20.000£ to a trust, which was to be called “The Royal College of Music Patron’s Fund”. The income of the Trust Fund should only be used for the promotion of British(-born) students either by enabling performance of new works, by providing a travelling scholarship, or by assisting performers in making a public appearance. This paper focuses on three points. First, the constitution of the Fund itself: by looking at the minute books the attitudes of the members of the Committee reveal the attitude of this comparatively new institution towards external intervention. Second, the selection process of works for the bi-annual concerts, alternately dedicated to chamber music or works for orchestra or with orchestral accompaniment: By evaluating the examiner’s reports on works submitted the discussion will concentrate on the orchestral concerts. Whose and which kinds of works were submitted? Which hierarchy of orchestral genres was passed on the younger generation of composers? How did the examiners comment on the submitted works, and what were the aesthetic values behind their decisions? Third, the reception of the concerts and their sustainability in relation to the further career of both composers and their works will be considered.

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