

t With nearly 500 millions of us hungry every night, the crisis does take on unimaginable proportions) Simon Winchester reports on attempts by the international agencies to cure the world's hunger pains

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NEAR THE CENTRE of Rome, within sight of the Colosseum and the immense monument to Victor Emmanuel, the United Nations flag whips crisply before a vast slab-sided obelisk. The marble structure, built by Mussolini as a colonial office from which to administer the far-flung possession of the new Roman Empire, now houses the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, a costly and huge bureaucracy dedicated for the past 30 years to improving the lot of the hungry. With 462 million men, women, and children conservatively estimated to be going to bed each night having consumed less than their bodies take merely to tick over, the FAO cannot, in the very broadest terms, be congratulated heartily on having done a good job.

Indeed, the FAO cannot even be given credit for arranging the one forum at which the global fears for nutritional survival were fully expressed—the World Food Conference of November, 1974. That huge jamboree, whose rhetoric seemed at first so empty, but which, in retrospect, is now appearing to have been a passably worthwhile exercise, came only after pressure from the nonaligned countries meeting in Algiers the year before. The existence of the mighty secretariat of FAO which has permitted Rome to remain, at least until now, the food policy capital of the world, prompted organisers of the conference to hold it in the Eternal City: there are signs now, though, that the policy-making bodies of the future that were born at the conference, will be sited elsewhere.

' The 'Director-General of the 'FAO until December 31 was Dr Addeke Boerma, a genial, well-fed Dutchman who first pointed out the enormity of a global problem at a news conference in 1973, a year or more after the rest of the world realised something was afoot. His colleague officially defends his early reticence by saying that the "experts" held him back from saying anything dramatic because of its "possibly disruptive effect" on the world Commodity markets. Dr Boerma, in an interview shortly before he left office, was no longer so withdrawn.

He is particularly critical now of the United States, and its present Secretary of Agriculture. Dr Earl Butz. The CS, Boerma says, should be more mindful of its moral responsibilities to the rest of the world." and should be aware of its "international image." "I worry." Boerma says, .. when a

country like Bangladesh cannot afford to buy American grain. I worry that the US refuses to allow an international agreement limiting prices of grains. It is all right in trade between Japan and the US, when Japan can afford to pay anything the US asks. But Bangladesh cannot, and Dr Butz knows this. That is what I mean by America's moral responsibilities." Dr Boermals criticism is limited, though, only, to the present and recently past American administrations. He is aware of congressional action to increase the amount of aid to the it RISKS " _ the Most Seriously Affected countries. in the jargon. He is aware, too, that had a man like George McGovern beaten Richard Nixon in 1972. or were Hubert Humphrey to trounce Gerald Ford in 1976. an international agreement on grain prices could be hammered out under the auspices of the UN. uI can't get into details about the elections, though. It just seems wrong to me that we should all have to wait on the outcome of a presidential election in America to find out what sort of a global food policy we are going to have in the next few years. It would change! though, if a Democrat were to get in next time."

Dr Boerma leaves 'the FAO, after eight years as its head, at a time when the responsibilities of the international community to deal with the food crisis are more serious than at any time in the past. He recently called it the outstanding development of the past two years . .

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seeds of. starvation , a

Dr Addeke Boerma (left), Director-General of the FAO until the end of last year, is particularly critical of the United States and its present Secretary of Agriculture, Dr Earl

' Butz (right). sIt just seems wrong to me that we should all have to wait on the outcome of a

Presidential election time America to find out what sort of a global food policy we are. going

to have in the next few years. It would change, though, if a Democrat were to get in next time.!

due realisation by the international community that this problem is not only so grave but so deep rooted in the structure of world society that it can only be solved if it is treated as a matter of the highest political importance." He rejects concepts like the utrizigell'01t illifeboatil tthryWV which was once popular, as morally wrong.

It held that some countries must be regarded as basket cases, and must be tossed aside for the greater good of mankind as a whole.

He is thankful the problem has

become politicised, even though he has headed an organisation that has striven unceasingly, and perhaps fatally, for neutrality; he feels that new food has become a political tool so, like nuclear weapons and hydrocarbon fuels, its place in the world structure will become a matter for international accommodation and negotiation.'

He leaves with some regrets. One. that the Soviet Union has never deigned to become a member of FAO, though in truth. it would be difficult to see what difference the membership would make, other than to increase internal squabbles and produce even more committees and subcommittees than exists already. He regrets that mankind has such a short memory, and is forgetting already that there was a real crisis two years ago, just because there appears to be no crisis today, thanks to the bumper rice crop.

u I regret that in my eight years I have been unable to persuade governments to speed up their arrival at conclusions about this problem. I constant nagging of the developing countries who have participated in_

FAQ: we get so bogged down in irrelevantities. I am disappointed there is still no overall understanding of the regret the ,

massive nature of the food problem. I take comfort, however, in the fact that we are now seeing food being used - . or talk of it being used - as a weapon. That kind of talk will make x people sit up and take notice and that is what they need to (103'

Dr Boerma called the 1974 World Food Conference a definite advance in the war against world hunger." It seemed at the time to have produced little of value in' the battle which had been waged constantly at least for the three decades during which the FAO had existed, and which had been persistently a loser because of the lack of political will it among the nations involved in the fight. With the benefit of hindsight. though; rather more constructive things can be said about the 'conference and its recommendations, of which three still stand out. The first was the establishment of Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture. within the FAO. It sits there under the powerful eye of one Mrs Binder; who administers a bank of telex and cable clerks in touch with experts around the world who will provide an educated assessment of the crop situation - or the weather, or the possibly relevant political or commercial situations -. for analysis at FAO headquarters. The result is a bulletin board, brought up to date every week or so. According to the latest tally in Mrs Binders office. there are cri-

tical food shortages in the following countries, for the following reasons:

0 Angola-because, of the war ,and the number of 'idisplaced 'per-sonsfh

. Ethiopia - recent droughts had ruined the new crop of teff grass.

. General

0 Grenada-torrential rains.

Q Honcluraswthe maize crop had been ruined by drought.

0 Mauritania-a grasshopper invasion had spoiled crops.

QlNiger-e-drought, a spillover from the VSahelian disaster.

0 Timor-polit:ical disturbances.

, But, it seemed obvious to remark, what was the good of identifying the areas with foodfcrises on their hands if no one was teld about them? uAh

yes." oiiicials replied, it this informa-tion is extremely sensitive. If We told you how much grain Honduras was importing at the moment (they did)

It could have important commercial and possibly political side-elfects. Our information is given in total cont'idenee and must be given out by us in total confidence toof" So the

BBC will now go to film the hunger in Grenada, and hearts and minds of eminently responsible people in the affluent world outside will never know of the Grenadiansi plight;_ it all seemed 'a fairly naive. if not cynical. abuse of information.

The second important recommendation of the conference was for the establishment by the UN Assembly of a

semi-autononious body known as the World Food Council. And there it sits, too, with the Soviet Union as a member, astonishingly enough, with a secretariat of a dozen or so, in a wing of the main FAO building. It held a conference in Rome last summer, but appears not. to be quite. sure what to do with itself, although its mandate calls for it to mestablish a world food strategy." Jealousy within the FAD for November

"body inside, or. outside FAO this arrogant sibling is more than evident: one senior FAO official of assistant director-general rank voibed suspicion that an American, an elderly former Michigan State University chairman, was its head. He argued too that the council was just another example of the UN's ' interminable decision-making process: ti A decision to set, up a new organisation toistudy a problem. rather than streamline or modify the eXisting onef'

Even apologists for the WFC don't seem to be able to muster much enthusiasm. One spokesman said that the pomt of the organisation was to

bring a more "subtle" approach to the food crisis because it is the only where governments can, at the very highest level, out in suggestions about how to deal with the food problems. One might also say; though, that the council is unique in that it is the only forum where disagreements can be voiced at the very highest level: splintering, in a world where splintered ideas rule supreme, would seem a greater risk in the council than anywhere else. -

The remaining suggestion does, however, meet with general approval, perhaps in part because it deals with money and expenditure rather than ideas and oratory. It also was proposed at the conference in Rome. and it is called the International Fund for Agricultural Development. It aims to be an internationally administered fund of \$1.250 millions, with the aim of providing fresh, uncommitted money for aiding agricultural development in the 'developing countries. Expenditure is directed by an international voting system. Behind the scheme lies the basic philosophy of our global approach to the food crisis - that, given that both Production and means of distribution 'of' production are at fault, the only way to alleviate the hunger of the 460 millions in the MSA nations is to pour funds in to permit these same countries to develop their own agricultural resources and feed themselves. IFAD, the conference thought, was the way forward. Alas, the fund has fallen on the stony ground of the international squabble. For a start, no one knows quite where it should be sited. Jokingly, FAO officials wonder whether it might not go to Cairo. With Israel being represented, could not two birds be killed with one stone? But that is essentially a joke of exasperation. The niggling debate over where IFAD should go is precisely the kind of exercise in futility of which Dr Boerma complains; progress in IFAD will be made in spite of it. On more constructive aspects, IFAD does appear to have promises, at least, of money. The US has pledged \$200 millions (the pledges are actually all made in Special Drawing Rights, so the dollar figures are estimates); the EEC the same. OPEC has promised \$500 millions - Saudi Arabia will give \$150 millions, Iran \$100 millions, Kuwait \$50 millions and so on. Canada and Scandinavia will make the rest. The Soviet Union has not said how much it will contribute, and probably will give nothing. But the target will almost certainly be met, and the possibility that by 1985 the fund will;

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for nothing but the: goocl 1'b'f agnc '-- --
tural economies of the developing
world, is a consummation both
devoutly to be hoped and, indeed, for
which one might justihably pray.
Support for IFAD comes, one will
see. from West-ern-orientated countries
and OPEC. It is not unreasonable to
suspect that geopolitics played a part
yin-the decision of, say, the United
States, to contribute so heavily. As
one senior FAO official put it: it The
truth of the matter is that it is in
Asia that the really hungry countries
are to be found - the countries that
will go on being hungry for some
time unless we give them
help. The Communist countries of
Asia - China, North Vietnam, North
Korea - appear either to have solved
their problems, or to have problems
that pale before those of some of the
non-Communist Asian nations. Ameri-
ca must realise it makes political
sense to help the UN help these coun-
tries: she gets-a humanitarian image
out of her contribution, and the UN
makes sure it goes where it is needed.
And hungry people. by and large,
aren't so happy to turn to Moscow for
help' '

In a recent address Dr Boerma
talked of the "Thirty Years War"
against hunger. In the three decades
we have come a miniscule distance -
one would say that. since we have
failed to solve the population crisis,
we are worse off than we were after
the Second World War. And with
nearly 500 millions of us hungry every
night, the crisis does take on unima-
ginable proportions.

The sound of one hungry child
crying in the night is terrible enough
to hear: imagine, if you can, one
hundred of them, and then the wall
of one hundred cities like London,
with everyone crying the same cry,
of pain, and hunger, and fear. It has
been a badly fought war --. one 'in
which the warriors have lacked Will,
information. and concerted aims.-
But there have been visionaries:
one was the first Director-General of
the FAO. a Briton. John Boyd-Orr. His
vision, his defeat, and the possible
solutions that might run along the
Food Council and the International
Fund and all the other wilted commit-
tees that the FAO has used as
weapons of war, will be the subject
of another article. .

TOMORROW : Visions and solutions

ANTONIN ARTAUD (1895-1948), Mad theorist or prophetic Visionary? Theatrical heretic or idealistic har-binger? The answer depends on whether or not you believe that in the beginning was the Word; and whether or not the act of theatre starts with a written text. Jonathan Miller has said that " the idea that you can by-pass that (linguistic) code and go downstairs to a code to which all human beings 'have access is_a piece of eighteenth-century romanticism which is just rubbish." Yet Artaud is often described as the spiritual father of the theatrical avant-garde (though he might disclaim paternity of some of its wild-eyed products) ;. and he has certainly been an inspiration to mature pioneers like Barrault, Brook and the Living Theatres Julian and Judith Beck. '

Indisputably, though, his life was tragic and, in practical terms, unproductive. His one attempt to put his Theatre of Cruelty theories into practice, Les Cenci in 1935, was a disaster that ran for only 18 performances. though it reintroduced theatre-in-the-round and was apparently the first production -to use stereophonic sound. And he spent much of his time in mental institutions: the longest period was from 1937 to 1946, the last part of which was spent at Rodez where, under the supervision of Dr Gaston Ferdiere, he received constant electric-shock treatment. Marowitz's self-styled hodge-podge does, in fact, centre on the collision of Artaud and Ferdiere : it the extreme version of the artist versus the extreme version of the bourgeois mind."

But Artaud's influence today rests largely on *The Theatre and Its Double*, a volatile, impassioned collection of essays published in 1944 but mostly written a decade earlier. In them, Artaud rejects the dictatorship of the written text, reverence for masterpieces and the whole notion of a theatre aimed at solving social or psychological conflicts. Instead he wanted a theatre of primitive, elemental magic. a theatre of non-naturalistic ritual spectacle and a dream-like atmosphere in which the spectators taste for crime, his erotic obsessions, his savagery, his chimeras, his utopian sense of life and matter, even his cannibalism pour out on a level not counterfeit and illusory but interior." Not all of Artaud's ideas, of course, were new. Baudelaire had written: "Do not neglect the marvellous element in drama-the magical and the romantic." Gordon Craig saw literary men as the despoilers of the true purity of the theatrical art. And directors like Reinhardt and Meyerhold had al-

ready broken down traditional barriers between actor and audience. Yet Artaud's ideas have had a peculiarly tenacious grip in France, America and over England over the past 30 years; and Marowitz shrewdly suggested why. Anyone who produces a theatrical blueprint is automatically passe: anyone who produces a creed is never dated. Probably if Artaud had been more successful or theatrically productive, he would never have been so influential. Remarkably like Gordon Craig, another revolutionary who only ever did a handful of productions. Artaud was a prophet rarely exposed to theatrical loss.

Where though does one find evidence, of Artaud's influence? In England, primarily in the work of fringe companies like Pip Simmons or the old-style Freehold and in the new willingness to carve up classic texts to produce a collage. But what, I suspect, we have really done in England is to graft many of Artaud's ideas on to an essentially verbal theatre.

The bourgeois theatre has, in short, appropriated Artaud just as a lot of fringe theatre has wilfully misunderstood him. That celebrated phrase, Theatre of Cruelty, has become an excuse for many a gut-tearing, vomit-filled spectacle. But, as Artaud was at pains to point out, "It has nothing to do with the cruelty we practise on one another, hacking at each other's bodies, carving up our individual anatomies or, like Ancient Emperors, posting sackfuls of human ears, noses or neatly dissected nostrils, but the far more terrible, essential cruelty objects can practise on us. We are not free and the sky can still fall on our heads. And above all else theatre is made to teach a belief in stripping away everything inessential from the act of theatre, an austere, monastic discipline, an encouragement to the actors to use their bodies as instruments in reaching beyond human endurance. It is what Peter Brook aptly calls Holy Theatre. Grotowski," he wrote, "makes poverty an ideal; his actors have given up everything except their own bodies; they have the human instrument and limitless time - no wonder they feel the richest theatre in the world."

But what has the sacerdotal theatre of an ascetic Pole to do with a theatre like ours where even subsidised companies are very much at the mercy of the box office? He reminds us that the human body is a fantastically expressive instrument which the average actor doesn't know how to use (be it instances the reliance on the head resonator as the sole means of amplifying the voice).. Like Stanislavsky,

. Tuesday January 6 1976

Peter Brook: reproducing the effect of deep-focus photography

Peter Brooks returns to London for the next week's production of 'The' , which is an event which prompts a reappraisal of modern theatre, Michael Billington selects key figures in the battlefield of modern theatre. From Artaud to Brook and back again.

Twentieth-century theatre is a battleground filled with the clamour of conflicting ideas: text versus spectacle, total theatre versus poor theatre, creative actor versus all-powerful metteur en scene. Elitism versus popularity, private obsessions versus public themes. It is perhaps, a sign of drama's primacy among the arts that the question 'What is theatre?' can never finally be resolved.

But if anyone has in recent years tried to achieve a fruitful synthesis, it is surely that questioning, peripatetic maestro, Peter Brook, whom I once described as the best director the English theatre doesn't possess. On January 15, however, Brook returns to the London stage with 'The Ik': a product of his Paris-based International Centre of Theatre Research based on Colman's anthropological best-seller about a banished Northern Ugandan tribe, 'The Mountain People'. Brook himself describes the work as 'the fusion of two opposed elements which expect them to be fun for anybody else.' If Brecht is made dull, British critics moan: if he is vivaciously presented, they complain we 'are being false to his intentions.'

So where is Brechtian influence most visible today? First, in the look of the productions. Brecht and his chief designers (Casper Neher and Ten Otto) usually started from a bare stage and placed on it whatever objects the action of the play required: the technique exactly of the Hall-Barton-Bury Stratford. Histories in which a throne or a council-table becomes the focal object, of Brook's 'Lear' which began with a flat white setting and a table for gloves and fans, of Gaskill's Bond productions at the Royal Court, of Miller's latterday Shakespearean and operatic productions where a bench has often been the only visible furniture, of Bill Bruden's 'Spring Awakening' where the elements: 'The contribution of writers, coherent and thought-out, and the physical contribution of actors, disorderly but vigorous and alive? Brook's erstwhile collaborator, Charles Marowitz, recently brought to the Open Space a kaleidoscopic collage called 'Artaud at Rodez dealing with the last nine years of the allegedly demented French theorist; And the conjunction of these two events, directed by the men who mounted the famous Theatre of Cruelty season at LAMDA in 1964, raises all kinds of questions. Who really are the key influences on modern theatre? What have we learned from their theory and practice? How have they affected what we see on our stages? And is Brook's notion of a writer-actor collaboration a hopeful portent or just another trip up a theatrical Boneyard Street? I should add that my list of influential figures is highly selective. It is merely an attempt to find a pathway through the churned-up battlefield of modern theatre.

audience. If the process has been somewhat slower here, we should ask ourselves, whether this is the fault of the

theatre or of the society in which it-
functions.

Essential reading : Brecht on Theatre
translated by John Willett (Methuen).
Brecht: A Choice of Evils "by Martin
Esslin (Eyre and Spottiswoode).

AMERICAN ALTERNATIVES : American
can theatre is often regarded as a
glittering colliin (to borrow a Denis
Potter image) in which extravagant
productioni effects ydisguise a dead
centre ; and to some extent this is true.
Yet three particular American com-
panies - the Becks Living Theatre, '
Joe Chaikin's Open Theatre and Ellen
Stewart's La Mama - did in the 1960s
give the British theatre a series of
- formal

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ism; But in later work like The
Mutation Show and Nightwalk one
found technique without interesting
content: what Robert Brustein called
"the evolution of group activity with-
out 'an overview scattered
fragmentary moments that lacked a
imagination to give' them
direction and point." Can the writer,
in fact, ever be simply another citizen
in a democratic state ?

Ellen Stewart's La Mama Theatre
from 'Off-Broadway was another
troupe that seemed to hit a notable
high in the mid-1960s. Rochelle Owens
. Futz, an exuberant rural drama about
the hypocrisy of a society that con-
demned a man who reserved his affec-
tion for pigs, was sensational: erotic.
audacious and full of Dionysiac joy.
In work like this and Leonard Melfi's
Times Square, La Mama displayed a
blend of liberation 'and skilled tech-
nique that was often emulated, but
never matched by our own Fringe
theatre. But When, on a second visit
to London, La Mama turned their
expressive techniques to 'a work like
Arden of Faversham the result was
disastrous. In so far as their star direc-
tor, Tom O'Horgan, ended up on Broad-
way with Hair and Jesus Christ Super-
star, something of their style may be
said to have permeated mainstream
theatre;

value was in generating a new interest
in a theatre of pre-Hellenic exuberance.
Like a randy sailor, La Mama spawned
children all over the globe.

PETER BROOK (1925): What do
all the figures so far mentioned have
in common ? That they have all affected
in some way the work and thinking
of Peter Brook. Like all great men
of the theatre, he is a magpie who
takes just what he needs 'from differ-
ent theatrical traditions: Western and
Eastern, verbal and imagistic, rough
and holy. He bridges the gap between
theatre as laboratory and showcase,
elitist preserve and popular play-

ground; and if anyone can synthesise the warring traditions of twentieth-century theatre, it is surely he. Yet it would be misleading to suggest he is simply a re-arranger of other men's flowers; for there are many qualities that make a Brook production instantly recognisable. And the first, and least-remarked of these, is his ability to use the stage-space in depth : he is. In fact, the Gregg Toland of theatre reproducing the effect of deep-focus photography. I first noticed this at Stratford nearly 20 years ago when, in a production of *The Tempest*, he had Ferdinand enter bearing logs at the topmost reach of the stage, suddenly making one aware of the unexplored possibilities of the space. And in last year's production of *Timon of Athens* at the Theatre Bouffes du Nord in Paris 'he produced an even more remarkable effect: in the foreground a military tribunal discussing a soldier's punishment, with the eye being led across a chasm to a cat-walk against the back wall where the soldier stood motionless and erect. Simple; yet how often does one find the three-dimensional possibilities of theatre being explored ? .

Another Brook ingredient is the overpowering image that symbolises the whole production: in *US* the scarlet skeleton with a green beret and a rocket! protruding from its hip that finally descended from the proscenium : in *Oedipus* the centrally-placed golden box that dazzled and blinded the audience as it spun; in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the swaying figures of Oberon and Puck spinning a plate from one to other in a magical harmony; in *Timon of Athens* the golden twine that bound the herbs tipsily swaying guests together in ravelled frenzy. He combines a great respect for language ; with a knack of creating images that work in harmony with the text: a test of any first-rate director. , But I suppose the key quality of a Brook production is its ability to explore new ground without erasing the old. " Any method, wrote Grotowski, " which is not in itself an extension of what is already known is a bad method." And the precise value of Brooks' recent experiments is that they spring from a lifetime's experience in Shakespeare, boulevard theatre, musical comedy and opera. When, therefore, in *Timon of Athens* Brook strips away all inessentials to the point where but otherwise their chief -

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Nureyev and Fonteyn.

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COVENT 'GARDEN - "i

. James Kennedy): '

Romeo and Juliet

Fonitely Nizetev,

TIME does not stand lqu W still, even
for Dame 'Margot.;Yetji,f;z..i after . her
Juliet to Nureyevis Romeo last night,
I had to say whether you should or
should not go to see her dance, my
answerwould be much as it was three
(or was it four ?) years ago when, in
the Guardian, I did try to answer that
question. _

My answer how would be, as it was
then, that you should see her if you
-had not seen her before and wanted
to be able to tell your grandchildren
about it; but if you had, seen her in
the time of her greatness (two dedades
ago), then be. content with that. What
is remarkable is not how much but how
little her Juliet has changed in these
more recent,iyears; it is some time
since she could really dance the role
as prescribed by Machil'lanis choreo-
graphy. And if now she has to rely
even more exclusively on that sweet-
ness of her personality which (still in
1976) can win hearts across the foot-
lights - well, this has Been her one
sure asset for a long time now.

. I thought her Romeo last night-even
though his dancing was by no means
effortlesse-did splendidly; he gave the '
role all it could take and a bit more.
An exercise not (to my mind at least)
in exhibitionism but in helpfulness to
- his partner; a gallant attempt to carry
more than Romeois just burden. And
it succeeded. Nureyevis super-emphatic
acting and dancing pilus Fonteynis
charm Were just enough. They gave us
not, perhaps, what MacMi'llan had in-
tended biibsomet'hing which many new-
comers to ballet-and their grand-
y ehildren-will remember with pleasure.

Q E H

Edward Greenfield

FrankIlPaukl

Kirshbaum

lT HAD never occurred to me before
this cycle of Brahms's complete cham-
ber music for piano, violin and cello.
how neatly the works divide themselves
into three very satisfying concerts.
each With two sonatas leading on to a
piano trio. Admittedly the cello
sonatars run o'ut before the last pro-
gramme of the three, and you get only
the odd .FAE scherzo in compensation
but, after that you can have the
grandest of the tvios, the B major
Opus Eight belying sits early opus
number. , '

One snag is that the pianist of the
ygroup never gets a rest but Peter
Frankl is an artist whose energy and
imagination Cnever f-atil him and here.
_ in all three works, it was his concen-
trating force which heilid the per?
formance-s together and built the con-
cent up to an exuberant clii-miax on the
Trio in C, Opus 87. There, alll three
artists were at their finest, not ondy
Frankl but his regular violinist part-

' ,ner, Gyorgy Pauk and the young
' .- vi'. :...- '
a ll ' l. I'. n