

RESPIRATION SUITE

As the Rhine courses through the Netherlands it passes the little town of Alphen. It is here that the "Respiration Suite" was born and dedicated to Wallace O. Fenn on the evening of September 12, 1962. Although it went largely unnoticed by the busy world, for those who were there it will long be cherished as an historical event and a sentimental occasion. On this evening two professional disciplines, physiology and musicology, met and celebrated. On the one hand there were several hundred physiologists from all corners of the earth, interested in the function of the lung; and on the other hand there were the finest Dutch wind instrument artists, interested in the lung as a functional device for the creation of harmonious sounds. The climax of this occasion was the World Premier of the Respiration Suite, composed for this occasion by Jurriaan Andriessen and performed by the Dutch Wind Ensemble under the baton of Thom de Klerk. However, the event which made this historical occasion particularly dear to respiratory physiologists was the dedication of the surprise Respiration Suite to Wallace O. Fenn.



But let us go back to view the events which preceded the dedication. After several days of regimented sessions, symposia, and lectures of the XXII International Congress of Physiological Sciences at Leiden, the respiratory physiologists were looking forward to Wednesday afternoon. This was the time that had been set aside for all sections to engage in informal talks, merriment and dinner.

That afternoon the respiratory physiologists assembled at a little

inn at Warmond, to the tunes of a Dutch band organ, and embarked upon two large glass-enclosed boats and sailed for several hours through a series of lakes surrounded by the picturesque Dutch countryside. The free flow of "young" and "old" genevre on board, provided by our host, J. G. Godart of N. V. Godart, contributed to the conversational mood and merriment but hardly prepared us for the welcome at the town of Alphen aan den Rijn, where as we docked band music greeted our ears. Not only were the children there to meet this strange group of international scientists but also a 35-man brass band in bright red uniforms, waving a 20-foot banner, "Welcome Respiratory Physiologists." We heard someone remark, "It looks as if respiration physiology has finally become a respectable science." With this touching and resounding welcome we disembarked, to stroll through the Avifauna Bird Reserve, beautifully landscaped and containing a magnificent collection of exotic birds, and assembled for dinner in its spacious restaurant.

Relaxing in armchairs after an excellent dinner flavored by a Riesling and a Beaujolais, we were now to be entertained by the Dutch Wind Ensemble with a concert sponsored by the Musicians Foundation "Eduard van Beinum." First we were officially welcomed by Dr. Arend Bouhuys and his Committee of the University of Leiden, who not only had organized this magnificent affair but had secretly planned with the composer, Jurriaan Andriessen, for the composition and dedication of this surprise Respiration Suite to Wallace O. Fenn. As Dr. Bouhuys reminded us and as it can now be read on the jacket of the recording of "Respiration Suite", "An understanding of the musical performance of these (wind instrument) artists, in a physiological sense, rests to a large extent on the work of Dr. Wallace O. Fenn and his associates on pressure-volume relationships of the lungs and chest, on the composition of alveolar air during breath holding, and on physiological effects of pressure breathing. In honour of his outstanding contributions to respiratory physiology, this Respiration Suite has been dedicated by its composer to Dr. Fenn.

"In the four movements of the Suite, the composer has given a musical impression of various aspects of respiratory physiology. The first movement deals with the most fundamental function of the lungs: the exchange of gas through the alveolar-capillary membrane. Movements 2 and 3 indicate the wide field of action of respiratory physiologists, working and enjoying themselves anywhere from the depth of the oceans to outer space. The suite ends with a dynamic impression of air flow into and from the lungs, the very breath of life."

The "Respiration Suite" was written for double wind quintet: (2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and 2 French horns.) Jurriaan Andriessen entitled the four movements: Blood-Air Dialogue, Deep Sea Saraband, Minuet at High Altitude, and Flowing Air. These descriptions are most fitting and will always remind us of Wallace Fenn's wide and varied interests and contribution to respiratory physiology.

Note: A few recordings of the Respiration Suite are still available (Produced by Riker Laboratories Ltd., Loughborough, England.) Anyone who is interested in obtaining one should write to Dr. Arend Bouhuys, Department of Physiology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.