



Conductor Robert Boudreau and Sir Arthur Bliss.



BIG BANG: Kay Handelman.

them. But "or two more for this tour," said Robert Boudreau, the musical director. "The company didn't think that number would be tactful."

Stiff

But there is nothing canned about the music on the programme. Most of it is strictly modern stuff commissioned from men such as Sir Arthur Bliss and Aaron Copland specially for an orchestra with double blowing power and no strings except the harp.

Sir Arthur, in a blue gaberdine raincoat, spent an hour rehearsing the orchestra in a stiff wind yesterday.

Mr. Boudreau, the orchestra's enthusiastic 33-year-old founder and conductor, told me why it began.

"As a trumpet player in a symphony orchestra, I always had to sit quiet for 184 bars and then blow," he said. "I decided to do something about it. Why shouldn't the brass and woodwind instruments have a repertoire of their own?"

For the past five years, during the summer break in the American orchestral season, he and his players have been covering the waterfronts of the Allegheny, Ohio, Kentucky and Mississippi rivers playing to the people on the bank.

Mr. Boudreau added: "We get 3,000 to 5,000 people a concert, and, boy, we play some wild stuff."

Soft

The wild stuff includes a *Symphony on the Wind* ("It begins with a blade of grass sighing"), a Mexican work called *Cuanámaco*, and *Metaphors* by Chou Wen-chang, influenced by Confucius.

It will be interesting to see how Henley, in regatta week, Christ Church Meadows, the Brocas at Eton, and other places where the sweet Thames runs softly, take to it.

And there is, more familiarly, the *Eton Boating Song* and *Ol' Man River*, to say nothing of good old Handel's fireworks music—with fireworks when the north-west wind permits.

Handel had trouble with his fireworks at the first performance just down the river at Vauxhall in 1743.

It rained, and to get them to ignite they brought the whole scaffolding down in flames. With an eye on the L.C.C. regulations the American Wind Symphony Orchestra has decided to keep the firecrackers for a calm night . . . if there is one.

Ranged basins