

strong thing. I admire it and I give myself to it with pleasure. When applied to a subject-matter suitable to its limitations, as in *Mahagonny*, it produces a work that has style and carrying power. So too in the *Dreigroschenoper*. Less in *Les Sept pechés capitaux*. Very little in *The Eternal Road*.

None the less, the music of *The Eternal Road* is the most interesting aspect of the show. I recommend it to composers' inspection. I cannot find, however, that *The Eternal Road* has much interest or existence beyond the professional realm. Such is the lack of any basic convention about time and place in the execution of the whole spectacle that it never gets out of the theatre. No convincing illusion is created, scenic, linguistic, musical, or human, excepting at moments that of a vaguely czarist persecution, and no consistent illusion is created at all. Hence my prediction of its ineffectiveness in creating that wave of sympathy for the Jewish people in their present world-plight that would be the only possible non-commercial justification for the deployment of so much Jewish money and talent.

Paul Bowles's music for *Dr. Faustus* is excellent. There isn't enough of it to interfere with the main business of the production, which is the recitation of Marlowe's "mighty" lines. What there is is of a rare musical richness and of a great precision. It is conceived, as is the whole production, in the "modernistic" manner and in the "functional" convention. The most excruciatingly musical should be able to listen to the orchestral interludes with pleasure, while the tone-deaf will not be dependent on them for a comprehension of the play. More nearly average people will probably find them expressive and pointed. They have also the historical interest of marking both by the professional workmanship of their texture and by their impeccable cut and placement Mr. Bowles's definite entry into musical big-time.

## ON THE HOLLYWOOD FRONT

By GEORGE ANTHEIL

THE musical man of the hour out here is Boris Morros, the small, genial, and Russian generalissimo of Paramount's

musical destinies. His first deed, upon entering the Paramount lot a year ago, was to discharge more than half of the existing music staff. His second was to manipulate Stokowski into *The Big Broadcast*. Next he engaged Werner Janssen to write a special score for *The General Dies at Dawn*. By the midsummer of 1936 nobody at Paramount seemed to like the Werner Janssen score; they thought it discordant and monotonous. But the preview of *The General* left nothing to be desired. The critiques were flattering and Morros was justified. Thereupon he called me from Santa Fe to score Paramount's newest and most expensive picture, *The Plainsman*, making it clear that he wanted a score unlike other Hollywood products and emphatically my own. Paramount was horrified again but reflected that after all Cecil DeMille, the dean of Hollywood directors, would be adequate to meet any difficult musical situation which might arise; and as a result I had no difficulty whatsoever with *The Plainsman*.

Then last week the Hollywood newspapers announced in their calm way that an Austrian composer had been engaged by Paramount to score their newest and most expensive production, *Souls At Sea*. The man, it seems, is Arnold Schönberg, who has been, for some time, a resident of Southern California. Combined with this bit of news they also thought fit to add that a Russian composer had been engaged for Paramount by the name of Igor Stravinsky.

In any other newspapers, the coupling of these two names by a single motion picture studio would have appeared in bold letters. But Hollywood has a way of taking the world's greatest reputations in its stride. Schönberg, according to Morros, has accepted the commission and will soon start work on *Souls At Sea*; but he will have, as an understudy, one of the studio staff composers, Ralph Ranger, who will simultaneously compose a second score in case of emergency! As for Igor Stravinsky it is understood that he has accepted Morros' invitation to come here but that a picture will not be assigned to him until he arrives in Hollywood. (Neither Schönberg nor Stravinsky, it must be added here, have either denied or confirmed this rumor.)

Electrified by the prospect of having Schönberg in the next

office and Stravinsky just across the hall, I went home to brood upon the scenario of my next picture, *The Years Are So Long*. Picking up the evening paper I read that Stokowski had just returned to Hollywood; the newspaper had it upon good authority that Paramount was planning to take over Metro's idea concerning Stokowski and his appearance (as an actor) in a film version of the life of Richard Wagner.

And now Honegger has been contracted by R.K.O. to write the music of *Joan of Arc*, starring Claudette Colbert. Completed score is already in Hollywood and will be adopted at the studios.

This movie meal may be a little rich; however I for one much prefer, the indigestion of Hollywood to that of Europe. I have just read an English book of the sheerest nonsense called *Film Music*, by Kurt London (Faber and Faber) which is a pretentious (and expensive) volume prefaced by Constant Lambert, "This book gives a very thorough account of present-day microphone technic and its problems which should be valuable to the cinema composer" etc., etc. Upon first glance Mr. London gives us just exactly 107 pages (out of a possible 271) of thoroughly antiquated cinema methods of recording; of writing music for the *silent films* (imagine!) and the *silent film* orchestra: he also describes fully a great number of antiquated synchronization apparatuses (with full photographic illustrations) which in the past have been very dear to the memory of Mr. London. In the remaining 164 pages he descends to a consideration of what he fondly believes to be present-day methods of recording and composing sound film. This is, indeed, the prize section. Here Mr. London offers a number of dazzling theories including that of Sarnette, who would background all films with an orchestra consisting entirely of brass. I wonder, indeed, what American director would refrain from saying (at that soul-disturbing time when, at last, this all brass score is being recorded to the film in the recording rooms) "take that — — brass orchestra out of the score; I want the audience to hear what my characters are saying!" And removed it certainly would be. London is much opposed to the string orchestra and seems to have arrived, esthetically, at the Stravinskian 1925 *Octet* and *Piano Concerto* period. He is most amusing, however, in his references to Holly-

wood; throughout the entire book there are just exactly three of these. He feels it necessary in his final reference to point out that "Hollywood is the center of American film production." One gathers, however, that he would prefer not to talk about America at all. This book, with its enormous compendium of snobbish and antiquated misinformation delivered with steam-roller authority is a monument to that familiar gracelessness which Europe so often showers on America and its products.

Elizabeth Bergner's *As You Like It* (Escape Me Never in the Forest of Arden) is very bad indeed, but William Walton has written a really splendid score for the picture. It is too bad that Walton should go through such an experience for it is evident that he has a tremendous talent for picture composing and that this special medium suits him very well. I hope that he will continue to make music for the pictures nevertheless; it is indeed very discouraging to write an enormous score and have it fail through no fault of one's own. But movie producers in London and Hollywood will probably consider that a composer connected with an unsuccessful picture is a good composer to steer away from. In this business the saying goes "one is only as good as one's last picture." Walton should continue, nevertheless. He has a special feeling for atmosphere although he is not always deft with his dialog. I liked especially his microphone orchestration, and the development of the score as an organic and picture whole; it was smooth, and did not "chop" or startle when to be startling was not the order of the day. As for Bergner with her writhings and her coyness and her constant chasing and being chased around trees—if you can stand that you should go to *hear* it.

## WITH THE DANCERS

By EDWIN DENBY

GRAHAM—SHAN-KAR—ENTERS

**I**N December Miss Graham presented a new heroic dance suite for herself and group called *Chronicle*. It deals with divi-