

Taube gave us a *Vorspiel zu einem Märchen* by Toch, whose delightful *Spiel für Bläserchester* was also heard. This *Gebrauchsmusik*, written for the Donaueschingen festival, is a brilliantly successful attempt to adapt the modern style to the orchestra of wind instruments. The number of technical difficulties, of course, bars it to a great extent from the usual military repertory of marches and overtures, but the work is worth the trouble. Taube also introduced a *Suite* by Wolfgang Jacobi, an earnest work which shows talent, and a *Concertino* for piano by the highly gifted young Swiss, Beck.

Herbert, the Berne conductor, has announced an evening of symphonies for the later season. Among other presentations he gave the premiere of *Six Small Pieces for Orchestra* by Wiesengrund-Adorno, which revealed this young composer's spiritual kinship to Schönberg's circle. The works are in Webern's style, musical aphorisms of great expressiveness and significance.

The most important concentrated production of new music was given by the Berlin section of the International Society for Contemporary Music. One interesting performance was devoted to the vocal works of Schönberg and two musicians spiritually akin to him—Steuermann, whose *Piano Sonata* proved itself more important than the songs of the second man, the aforementioned Wiesengrund-Adorno, who here gave the impression of empty imitation of the master.

Although, in review, one finds a whole series of new, interesting works that were heard in Berlin, modern French music seems to have won little consideration on these programs. No important work of Milhaud, Poulenc, or Auric was presented. Honegger, too, appeared infrequently. Not only he, but Ravel and Prokofieff are too seldom guests in our concert halls. Here is an opportunity for the Berlin audience to make many more worthwhile musical contacts.

*Nikolai Lopatnikoff*

### REDISCOVERING THE DYNAMIC LINE

**W**HAT is the Dynamic Line and how does it operate? Imagine a piece of music tracing in its course every change of dynamic color, not only the more obvious *pianissimo* to *fortis-*

*simo*, but every slight gradation of nuance and accent, *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, attack and release, and you will have a Dynamic Line.

This is not an arbitrary idea to be associated with external expression marks. It is inherent in all music. It might be claimed that there are natural dynamics and artificial dynamics: the former inherent in the music, obeying certain principles which seem to be natural laws; the latter those which the composer imposes arbitrarily in his attempt to express an individual interpretation and emotion, in unexpected accents and effects not inherent in the natural rise and fall of tonal volume.

Certain laws of dynamics have always been accepted without question as obvious; Jacques Dalcroze enumerated them in teaching eurythmics. Thus the natural tendency is to increase the volume of tone as the pitch goes higher, and to decrease it with a descending passage: every phrase has a climactic point, usually its highest tone; the volume increases to that point and diminishes as it leaves it. Repeated notes and repeated figures increase in volume if begun from a *piano* or diminish if begun from a *forte*. Every repetition of a rhythmic or melodic group demands a change of dynamics; if repeated notes or a figure lead to the return of a former melody, the natural tendency to a *crescendo* will be accompanied by a *rallentando*. Or if the passage be of long duration there will be an accelerated *crescendo* followed by a retarded *diminuendo*; if there is a sweep of rapid notes carrying a passage to an emotional climax followed by notes of longer value, even though they descend the scale, they will receive stress.

To these self evident rules may be added the fact that the Dynamic Line is guided by the melodic line. Dr. Daniel Gregory Mason aptly speaks of the "tonal profile," the shape or design of every musical phrase which has to be projected to the mind of the hearer by means of gradations of sound.

These are only a few of the laws of inherent dynamism. If they were explained as essential and not as superimposed, we might usher in a new era in the interpretation of music at the hands of artists and in the editing of musical scores; with the Dynamic Line universally recognized and understood, it would be unnecessary to overload the scores with "expression marks." Particu-

larly is this true of Bach and of all pre-romantic composers.

But furthermore we might find a solution to more vital present day problems. There is a special relevance in such dynamic knowledge for the contemporary composer who is trying to eliminate all *emotion* from music. His attempt to abolish artificial dynamics may be successful but how can he dispose of natural dynamics? The hope of doing away with all expression is based on a false premise. He may believe that he has made music from which all emotion is absent, but though it may be diametrically opposed to romanticism, it will be just as artificial if it is opposed to natural dynamism. Any of the natural laws may be arbitrarily reversed, and indeed with the advent of romanticism, many of them were. Practically all the music of the nineteenth century, beginning with Beethoven, became subjective; Bach was the peak of objectivity. The twentieth century has reacted strongly away from the subjective to the objective, away from romanticism to a new realism, away from program music to the absolute, away from an artificial dynamism to a rediscovery and conscious employment of the inherent Dynamic Line.

A detailed study of Beethoven's use of dynamics is illuminating when one finds an early edition with his own markings and not those of editors who have imposed their varying interpretations upon the works. He did not use apparently arbitrary means to stress his emotional subjectivism but he actually extended the natural range of the Dynamic Line. There is in every instance a logical reason for the dynamics which seem to be artificial. Certain combinations of emotional causes with Beethoven always produce the same dynamic results.

Because the superimposed dynamism of romanticism became an exaggerated imitation of something which had once been of constructive force, it has been repudiated by present day youth. But what we need today is the conscious use, in its place, of the natural Dynamic Line.

Daniel Gregory Mason in the essay, *The Tyranny of the Bar-line*, in his book, *The Dilemma of American Music*, says on this subject "Closely akin to the absurd idea that expression is superficial, to be put on and off like a glove, is the equally widespread one that it is peculiar to the individual artist, and more or less

waywardly adopted by him. . . . It is only the charlatans or the mountebanks that distort a work of art in order to set their personal stamp upon it; the real interpreters are aiming not at distortion but at a just proportion; at centrality not eccentricity. . . . . Interpretation comes to mean nothing less than the art of making music intelligible to the universal mind. This art is a perfectly definite and to some extent communicable one, involving certain principles capable of formulation—though of course, it cannot be reduced entirely to rules any more than any other living art. . . . .”

*Marion Bauer*

### HIDDEN IRISH TREASURE

**I**N this age of great harmonic development, it may prove valuable to observe certain little known modes of melodic usage. A special style of unfamiliar conception, not to mention actual tunes, may offer the composer the basis of a new and individual music. This, it seems to me, after a visit I have just made to Ireland, is the opportunity its indigenous music holds out.

Irish folk-music has been heard the world over. Thousands of folk-tunes have been collected and written down—after a fashion—but here is the point of real interest. One finds, on actually going through the back country of the west of Ireland, and hearing the tunes sung in the old style, that the written form in which one has previously encountered them is the merest indication, a skeleton on which to hang the flesh and blood of the real melodies which can be realized only after many hearings. The notation recalls the frame of the tune to one who has already known it, but it can never represent the actual sounds to one who has not heard them. The singers call their music “traditional” because it has been taught by father to son, mother to daughter, distinguishing this authentic style from the so-called “modern” one adopted by Irish singers who learn tunes from notes and sing accordingly.

Those who have never attempted to set down the music of a people are surprised at the difficulties of notation, and wonder just what features baffle our sophisticated system of graphic representation. They are, of course, the very things which make the