

deserving of mention were the terse little serenade of Victor Alessandro and Robert McBride's *Rhapsody on Mexican Themes*, which, though much too long, succeeds in being frankly entertaining, a quality which some American composers seem studiously to avoid.

Robert Sabin

### MORE PESSIMISM BY CECIL GRAY

A DISTURBING book is Cecil Gray's *Predicaments or Music and the Future* (Oxford University Press). If his prognostications are true, then indeed the twilight of the musical gods is upon us.

This final volume of the trilogy, which includes *A Survey of Contemporary Music* and *The History of Music*, is even more pessimistic, more prejudiced, than the other two. But Mr. Gray makes his deductions with such conviction and pitiless logic that his fearless stock-taking may, in the long run, prove constructive.

He calls the work a study in constructive criticism, and it deals with problems of esthetics, philosophy of art, with history and evolution. He turns the X-ray on present day music and finds signs of disease, of sterility. The methods of practically all the twentieth century composers come under that head: Strauss, Debussy, Delius, Milhaud, Honegger, Poulenc, Schönberg, Stravinsky. Mr. Gray sees in them the end of romanticism. Each new path, polytonality, atonality, nationalism, neo-classicism, is merely a cul-de-sac: "In art nothing which is pure innovation has any enduring vitality."

Besides examining his sick patient, Doctor Gray tries to prescribe for his recovery, basing conclusions presumably on logic, not on prophecy. He accepts Busoni's words as prophecy of a new kind of classicism, but not neo-classicism, which is "an entirely artificial thing." Berlioz, the unrecognized genius of the nineteenth century, presents the long melodic lines which the future polyphony should employ. Mr. Gray looks forward to a type which he calls "prose melody." Bartok is "among the foremost melodists of modern times;" he possesses creative imagination and, in spite of his "sadistic obsession with discord," his work seems to be a desideratum of the music of tomorrow. Opera is included in his prescription; "it satisfies some imperious esthet-

ic need of humanity which no other form of art can satisfy."

Hindemith's music, anti-national, anti-individual, anti-sentimental, reflects the material, efficient machine age and "ferro-concrete architecturalism" of the present day. But the author suspects that it may turn out to be an exaggeration of present tendencies rather than an anticipation of the future.

To Mr. Gray's enthusiasm and propaganda Sibelius owes much of his popularity. Mr. Gray regards him as the supreme classical model for composers of the future.

He closes his book on a pessimistic note: "There can be no hope for English music until this fatal confusion of artistic with false social and ethical values has been broken down."

*Marion Bauer*

### COMPOSITE STRAVINSKY

**M**ERLE ARMITAGE, the California designer of unusual books, realizing the fugitive nature of many significant words written about Igor Stravinsky in newspapers and periodicals, has gathered some of them into book form. A most attractive form it is, beautifully printed by G. Schirmer, with twelve portrait studies of the composer by Edward Weston, two line drawings by Picasso, and reproductions of pictures by Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Kandinsky, Merida, Napolitano, Klee, Biberman, and Elise. These Mr. Armitage offers not as interpretations nor as symbols of Stravinsky's music, but merely as expressions in another medium "concurrent with the period in which Stravinsky has worked."

The articles and critiques express widely divergent opinions by Eugene Goossens, Jean Cocteau, Manuel Komroff, Louis Danz, Erik Satie, Henry Boys, Jose Rodriguez, Olin Downes, Emile Vuillermoz, Merle Armitage, and Boris de Schloezer. De Schloezer's essay is the longest and forms an abridged analysis of Stravinsky's work. The entire volume gives one a more intimate insight into the aims, philosophy, and achievement of an unique personality, a man of genius, and an individual thinker. His own words are frequently quoted, and the writers have put down impressions of the man, often first hand, and of his music, registering eleven different critical reactions.

*M. B.*