

fact the more real will be its hold on us. The true eloquence of music is therefore no attribute of mere emotion. It is present in every melodic curve and modulation of an organic design. Before the plenitude of this complete design, we realize the inadequacies of emotion as such. For emotion in itself is a formless thing. No limits contain it and every attempt to express it purely from its own grounds is doomed to amorphousness. This may seem a rather remote way to approach a composition but if we examine the actual textures of either of these works we will find evidence enough of a slack and unfulfilled design. Hearing this music, I had almost continually a sense of unformed substance spilling over, indifferent to bounds and to essential direction.

Aaron Copland's *First Symphony*, conducted by Dr. Koussevitzky, is a surprising mixture of maturity and indecisiveness. One of Copland's first fruits, it has the virtues and faults of a style that is not quite formed. All the elements of this work have real originality, but in the process of amplification they do not always find the authentic and complete expression to which their distinction would entitle them. A certain uniformity of mood, a constant dwelling on what has already been stated mars the beautiful first movement. If the scherzo just falls short of its effect, it is the finale which is the real surprise. The opening page of the movement is an astonishing piece of music. It starts with a simple triadic motif, slowly gathers weight, elaborating its texture, gaining more and more power with amazing sureness and freedom. The effect is one of extraordinary exhilaration. The whole process of accumulating strength has been so free of any merely mechanical accretion that one reacts to this music with the same joy with which one might witness some spontaneous and inevitable gathering of natural forces.

Israel Citkowitz

BOSTON HEARS AMERICAN WORKS

THERE was a time when American composers contented themselves with organizing sectarian guilds to perform each other's works before limited but sympathetic audiences.

Successful as these societies were, their influence, so far as the general public was concerned, was definitely circumscribed. To reach the public has now become the paramount concern of the composers. It was such an aim that led Vladimir Dukelsky not long ago to form his short-lived "composers' protective society," that inspired Copland's conferences between critics and composers at Yaddo, that doubtless gave rise to the League of Composers' new policy of commissioning works to be played by widely recognized organizations.

Boston now promotes this appealing cause by placing its Federal Emergency Relief Association symphony orchestra, (which plays before two thousand and more weekly at the Opera House) at the disposal of the "neglected" American composer. Thus far there has been much more of manifesto than of musical demonstration. A first all-American program, given March seventh, was a preliminary effort to inspire confidence in future experiment, rather than to indicate accomplishment along the proposed lines. The "modern" contingent included Douglas Moore, Ernest Schelling, and Carl McKinley, scarcely a needy triumvirate—to say nothing of MacDowell who represented the departed generation along with Paine! Moore's *Pageant of P. T. Barnum*, has been performed almost a dozen times in various parts of the country. As to Schelling's *Victory Ball*, I need scarcely observe here that it is much more familiar than it deserves to be. *Masquerade* by McKinley, very much in the mediocre style of Schelling, has been given innumerable times by the leading orchestras in the country.

This selection was made, I trust, merely to secure public good will. Future programs will be subject to a committee made up of Walter Piston, Aaron Copland, Hugo Leichtentritt, and McKinley, men who surely can arrange a far superior demonstration—even of such semi-popular music as is demanded here. The project has many advantages, most notable of which is the absence of any obligation to social patronage and a paying audience. Theoretically, under these circumstances the committee should be in a position to dictate public taste, rather than the reverse. We shall see.

With or without the E R A concerts, however, Boston does

not lack a goodly share of performances of native music. Besides the programs of the Boston Symphony, there are the tri-weekly events of the People's Symphony, under Fabien Sevitzky, who feels it incumbent on himself to include at least one American work per program. But since the sponsors of these organizations seem to pride themselves upon the catholicity of their taste, many inferior products are offered along with more nourishing fare.

Thus, Dr. Koussevitzky makes his annual tribute to staid New England conservatism by performing a work of Frederick Converse. The *American Sketches*, heard early in February, is highly derivative music whose pretence of being indigenous depends on such superficial devices as a jazz suggestion, a Negro theme, a reel, an Indian processional. Nor was the *Concerto Lirico*, for piano and orchestra, by Alexander Steinert of the younger generation, very much more satisfying. The composition is rather discursive and thin. The other American works on Koussevitzky's programs, both Copland's *First Symphony* and Berezowsky's *Concerto Lirico* have been given in New York by the Boston Symphony, and are therefore treated elsewhere in this issue.

Sevitzky's American courses included several trivial and banal items by Horace Johnson, Mabel Daniels, and others. But the opportunity he gave to hear Sessions' *Black Maskers* was gratifying, though his performance somewhat obscured the structural contours and was poorly balanced. Since the completion of this work, Sessions has found for himself a manner quite different from the post-war style exhibited here—which is not to depreciate the music. The phantasmagoric shades, the strident utterances, the quite dissonant texture must provide an elegant background for Andreyev's symbolical drama; the score was written for such a performance at Smith College in 1923.

In the American chamber music field, Copland's *Two Pieces* for string quartet were presented by the Chardon String Quartet in Cambridge, in a performance that won favorable mention for both music and interpreters. Walter Piston's *Three Pieces* for flute, clarinet, and bassoon, an early work, was heard at a concert of the New England Conservatory. These engaging morsels, shaped in Piston's usually suave manner, reveal a whimsical

style, quite characteristic of current music for woodwinds.

Arthur V. Berger

DANCE NOTE

THE recitals of Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman are always important dance events. Let us attribute the failure of the large new Humphrey-Weidman opus to an unfortunate choice of music. Roy Harris' *Clarinet Sextet* is one of its composer's best works and one which stands on its own perfectly well, when it can draw complete attention to itself. It is a complete composition. Dance music is something else and usually something less in one way or another. It is generally less complete and it is desirably dependent on the dance which is its planned complement. To point to exceptions is to be bromidic. The Harris *Sextet* is not an exception. In the Humphrey-Weidman choreography there were "impulses" which were not noticeable in the music, and again time after time there were musical "impulses" which received no consideration in the dance.

Martha Graham's new work *Course* (music by George Antheil) is one of the most exciting dances presented on any stage. It must be seen again before any accurate report can be made of it. Its breathless swiftness, vigor, and healthiness are unique. The separate sections have an unaccustomed classic purity about them; choreographically it is unlike anything the writer has seen before. The truth is that *Course* passed by so quickly and excitingly that the audience was left with only a magnificent impression and an overwhelming enthusiasm; analysis was impossible.

L. E.

MUSIC HO! A BRILLIANT SURVEY

CONSTANT LAMBERT, whose book *Music Ho!* (published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935) is subtitled "A Study of Music in Decline," might better have described it as "A Study of Contemporary Music." That it is the "decline" is the author's personal assumption. However, his pessimism is by no means unrelieved, for he concludes jubilantly, thanks to his