

O Ye Gates, there is a broadening of the contrapuntal web for which a six part chorus is employed; and in the Fugato of the Sanctification section there is some masterly eight part writing. One does not easily forget the brilliant quality of this Fugato, or the fine, energetic pulse of the *Who Is Like Unto Thee*. In the prayer for peace, *Etz Chayim*, the music rises to noble heights. The melodic line is simple and pure, superbly supported by rich and poignant harmonies. Woven into these large choral patterns are several moving solos for baritone, which were sung with magistral dignity by Moses Rudinow.

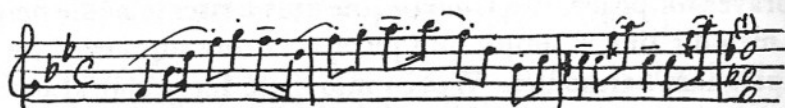
Pauline Konstantin

BOSTON CARRIES ON

BOSTON has just recovered from a second attack of Prokofieff. That incredible man, winding up his brilliant American tour in this city, conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra in an all-Prokofieff concert which compared rather favorably with the Prokofieff works done in January by Koussevitzky. The concert opened brilliantly with a suite from his ballet *Chout*, which strains the word "cleverness" to a snapping-point. It is a very well written work, with geniality to spare. One is thankful these days for a concertpiece that has a finale one can whistle while leaving the hall. The *First Piano Concerto*, played by the composer, showed up wretchedly in the light of its predecessor. Truthfully, it is not a good piece. It is full of difficult and brilliant piano passages which can really be heard because of the unpretentious size of the orchestra; but its one real tune is worked to death (especially, it seemed, since it was in D-flat); it lacks continuity, and it sounded like the student work that it is. When it was over, you asked, "Why?"

But then he redeemed himself. His orchestral fairy tale, *Peter and the Wolf*, is a masterpiece of its kind. It purports to teach the instruments of the orchestra to little Russian children by having each animal in the story (and animals abound in this story) represented by a particular instrument which followed the duck or bird or wolf through its complicated wanderings. There is a narrator who serves to forward the plot; he is at least a better

device than the operatic recitativo, for he makes a clean breast of it. The piece itself falls into "bits" which hang together quite unreasonably and beautifully. The best possible description of the work can be had from the little tune that is assigned to Peter, the little boy-hero:



The concert closed with the second Suite from his ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. This is a more serious work, a little too long perhaps for a suite. Some of it has a very strange beauty, which is the curious result of effort by a composer who is unable to write profoundly tragic music though he is trying to picture the grief of Romeo at Juliet's grave. It was more gentle sadness than grief; more poignancy than *Weltschmerz*; and if you could forget its "program" it would have seemed very beautiful indeed. The whole work, however, fell just short of success because of the discrepancy between its great length and extension and its musical material.

A very important premiere was the first *Symphony* of Walter Piston, a composer who can always be depended upon for the best in workmanship. Adverse criticisms were profuse and diverse: some thought the *Largo* unduly long and uninteresting; others found the work lacked emotional appeal. Whatever the case, (for opinions at a time as transitional as this must be conceded as personal) no one could deny the expert handling of the orchestra, the innovations in instrumental tone-color, the never-failing good taste, the masterly proportioning of the structure, and the fine lyrical sense which Mr. Piston has not often betrayed in the past.

Other modern works have not been many, and the credit for most of them goes to Dr. Koussevitzky. He gave us Ravel's *Schéhérazade*, a rarely heard and very charming song-triptych for soprano and orchestra. Mme. Olga Averino sang with amazing understanding and beauty of tone. Recently Dr. Koussevitzky gave a stirring performance of Florent Schmitt's *Forty-ninth*

Psalm for orchestra, organ, chorus, and solo voice. We were feted with Pizzetti's interesting and pleasant *Concerto dell'Estate*, and Malipiero's second symphony, the *Elegiaca*.

Bad music found its way in also. We had the misfortune to hear a 'cello concerto by one Thomas de Hartmann, another Gallicized Russian. It was nothing short of meaningless rubbish; but Paul Tortelier, the marvellous cellist of the orchestra, did so expert a job that many were deceived about the value of the piece. Somewhat unwillingly, I also mention Alessandresco's *Actaeon*, a symphonic poem of no importance played by Mr. Enesco while guest conductor here.

Leonard Bernstein

RECENT FESTIVAL IN ROCHESTER

THE eighth annual Eastman School Festival of American Music went about its business with considerable effectiveness this year. For instead of the dry impression that most music festivals devoted to one style of music usually give, here one got the feeling that in spite of the depression, the constant threat of a European, perhaps a world war, and the general intellectual disintegration which many people seem to feel, music was carrying on in this country not only hopefully but with considerable enthusiasm, and a new pulse of life. This, in spite of the generally conservative choice of the programs, was especially true of the works of the younger composers, Vladimir Ussachevsky, David Diamond and Burrill Phillips. The festival, almost entirely under the untiring baton of Howard Hanson, rose to a higher level of performance than is customary at the modern music affairs I have heard abroad.

David Diamond's *Elegy in Memory of Maurice Ravel* was the most original and daring new piece played. Scored for brass, harps and percussion, it was in the nature of a slow moving chorale with several variations. Diamond's ability to invent new sounding, logical, strong progressions of sonorous, dissonant harmony is highly developed and the listener who is not antagonized by dissonances that have real meaning would find the music in a fittingly solemn, tragic and noble vein with an impressive, dramatic mood. The *Elegy* is difficult to listen to not