

characters in *War and Peace*. Andrei is fatally wounded and in his delirium dreams of Natasha. She appears before him and they recall their first meeting. We hear again the lovers' duet. The end of the opera is signalized by the retreat of the French troops from Moscow. The din of battle is heard from far off. There is the distant singing of a female chorus and then a guerilla detachment of women appears on the stage. The men take up the song which gradually gains in volume with the arrival of regular troops. Kutuzov enters happy and proud, expresses his gratitude to the soldiers and the guerillas, "Glory to you through the ages." The people sing praise to their hero and the opera closes with a great triumphal hymn.

S. Schlifstein

SHEBALIN'S OVERTURE, GLIÈRE'S CONCERTO

SINCE the outbreak of war Vissarion Shebalin, one of the Soviet's leading composers, has produced three important works – a musical comedy entitled *Flight from the Embassy* (subject taken from the period of Catherine II), a *Fifth String Quartet* based on Slav folksongs, and most recently, a *Russian Overture* for grand orchestra.

Shebalin is one of Russia's biggest talents. He boldly seeks new modes of expression, while at the same time proclaiming himself in the national tradition of Russian music. The foundation of his work rests on the materials of song. His brilliant, modern, polyphonic technic has its source in Borodin, founder of the "heroic" style of Russian symphonic music.

The intonation of the *Russian Overture*, as in most of Shebalin's work, is profoundly affected by folk music. It is also permeated with orientalism, whose origin again can be found in Russia's musical classics as in the *Polovetzky Dances* of *Prince Igor*. Without using actual folklore excerpts, Shebalin has created a really national work which at the same time embodies the characteristics of his own very original style.

The *Overture* opens with a series of strong heavy chords which give the impression of stern implacability. Breaks in the last bars of a three-four movement are filled by the roll of kettle-drums. A very expressive melody – the epic introduction to the *Overture* – which grows into a tempestuous allegro, is written for strings.



Using his instruments with great economy, he lets the orchestra develop sonorously until the climax is reached. Swelling strains grow into the epic cantilena of the second theme which opens with clarinet, and is taken up by strings.



Both themes are extensively developed, leading to a grand crescendo in the concluding bars of the *Overture*. The coda again re-affirms the theme of the introduction, whose melodious intonation permeates the whole piece, giving it a kind of triumphant majesty. The orchestration of the *Overture* is also subordinated to the central idea of the composer – to project a sense of the titanic strength of the Russian people. This purpose underlines the plan of gradual change in the timbre of the piece, which proceeds from the sombre and menacing concentration of the introduction to the heroic brilliance of the coda which closes in a picture of triumphant struggle.

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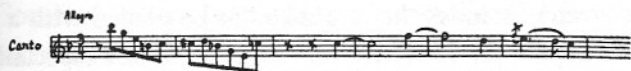
Reinhold Glière, one of Russia's best known composers has recently finished a new opera, *Rachel*, whose subject has been drawn from Guy de Maupassant's *Mlle. Fifi*, two new overtures for orchestra, and several patriotic vocal numbers the most popular of which perhaps is the well-known *End of Hitler*. In the fall of 1942, at the very height of the war effort, Glière finished work on his Opus 82 a *Concerto* for coloratura soprano with orchestral accompaniment. So far as I know, Glière's is the first work in this genre to be written on such extensive lines.

The *Concerto* consists of two long movements; the first is a lyrically expressive andante in F-minor which approaches the sonatina in form. The motif of the movement is created in the introduction and in the presentation of the first theme by the solo voice.



The second theme develops a somewhat more lively motion with the orchestra playing the first theme. The gradual fading of the solo voice concludes this movement.

The next movement in F-major, a grand waltz, blends brilliant virtuosity with tender lyricism, a combination apparent in the first bars sung by the soprano:



Towards the middle of the waltz the lyrical motif becomes dominant, and after an orchestral crescendo, opens into some brilliant passages:



The waltz concludes with a tempestuous presto.

There is no text to the vocal part. Indeed the emotional content is so great that the free flow of the voice is sufficient. The score of the *Concerto* is both colorful and transparent. Instruments used are two of each of the woodwinds, three horns, harp and string quartet. The soft cantilena of strings, the voice echoing the notes of the woodwind, the romantic chord in the horn, lend the piece a tender color as of spring awakening, which curiously is not without a reminiscence of Watteau's paintings. As always with Glière's music, this *Concerto* has the mark of bold simplicity, sincerity, and technical perfection. A highly lyrical work, it sounds out against the sombre background of war like an anthem of human feeling, a song of human gladness.

Igor Boelza

FANFARES BY AMERICANS

IN October 1942 Eugene Goossens, conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, invited several leading American composers to cooperate in reviving an experiment originated in London after the last war, when he asked British composers for new fanfares to be played at each concert following the National Anthem. Goossens suggested to the Americans that their fanfares be written for brasses or for brasses, woodwinds and percussion to be played forte throughout. The response to this invitation was inclusive, although some of the orchestrations included strings, and were not meant to be played forte throughout. All the scores have not yet been performed but it is the intention to play them before the symphony season closes.

The fanfares naturally vary in usefulness and in musical worth. Four men, Deems Taylor, Roy Harris, Grant Still and Henry Cowell, scored