

of labyrinthine polyphonies. Even in so consonant an idiom the magic hand appears; in the peculiar rhythmic balance and the poised ends of phrases, as well as in the personal melodic design.

In Kabalevsky's *Second Piano Concerto* (Philharmonic, with Nadia Reisenberg, soloist) one sees another Soviet composer wandering like Alice into the bourgeois wonderland. He seems destined for Hollywood. Nightclub stylisms and lush atmosphere, delicately stitched together with transoceanic cable, make our own glamor composers seem like vestal virgins.

Glamor boy Antheil, however, must be wooing a Russian contract. His *Fourth Symphony* (New York City Symphony) sounds like one of the big Shostakovitch pieces. His incorrigibly bouncy humors resound throughout this fancy collage of everything ever heard in a symphony. Antheil's disposition gets frightening – in the distinctly martial manner – but never morosely so. He claims temporal priority on a theme which sounds exactly like one in the Russian's *Fifth Symphony*. Neither version is worth the debate. The piece is very long and loud and coarse and rough and discouraging.

Lou Harrison

## SCORES FOR GRAHAM; FESTIVAL AT COLUMBIA

COPLAND'S *Appalachian Spring* and Hindemith's *Hérodiade*, to which Martha Graham presented dances in her recent New York season, are the most completely integrated and carefully conceived scores that have yet been written for her. Both can stand alone in concert performances, yet they add to the dances themselves an atmosphere of certainty and directness. The music has a sure sense of the theatre and measures out the steps and timing of the dance patterns with great effect. By calling the tune for the dance with such imperiousness, these works put a limitation on the dancer which she meets with many imaginative touches.

In *Dark Meadow*, to a Chavez score commissioned, like the Hindemith and Copland pieces, by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the musical and choreographic approach contrasts markedly with those of the two other pieces. The central part of the score consists of several extensively developed string quartet movements, in style like the composer's *Piano Concerto*. This would go very well in a chamber music concert; it offers very few clues as to what sort of dancing might accompany it. Introductory and closing woodwind sections, however, set the austere, Indian ritual character represented on the stage by that interesting combination of primitive and Christian symbols found in Mexican religious folk art. The music is almost continuously danced *against* rather than *with*, and this greatly heightens the subjective tension. Coming after Miss Graham's discoveries in many new directions, *Dark Meadow* returns to the older modern dance idiom

with an increased sense of projection that makes it one of her most perfectly realized works in this style.

During her late spring season last year two experimental works were offered, one by Merce Cunningham, called *Mysterious Adventure*, to an ingenious fancy of John Cage for the prepared piano. This score, a maze of shivery strange and delicate noises, is a play of sound with neutral content and mood which allowed the dancer great latitude. At the opposite extreme were the tiny little pieces of Charles Mills, interjected between long speeches, which served as background for Erick Hawkins' *John Brown*. The composer had the problem of projecting a very precise mood in a very short undeveloped moment of music. Thus the whole show rested on the choreography and the speaking, but at times the intense little fragments set the stage with remarkable surety.

## III

A series of annual festivals of American music at Columbia University was opened last spring with two evenings of chamber works, excellently performed by the Walden Quartet, and an orchestral concert directed by Howard Hanson. This suffered from inadequate rehearsal, but Dr. Hanson has a remarkable ability to put across the salient points of new scores practically at a first reading. His own *Fourth Symphony* and Walter Piston's *Second Symphony* have been reviewed elsewhere in these pages. David Diamond's brilliant *Rounds* for string orchestra were a little scrambled in performance, but the composer's idiomatic writing and his highly personal sense of movement were nonetheless revealed. The many shades of dynamics, accents, changes of register and phrase constructions give great flexibility and vivacity particularly to the fast movements. The material is largely diatonic, rather folksy in the Copland manner, and the continuity is most convincing.

Building one's style on the sentimental commonplaces of our music, not that of jazz bands or particular ethnic regions, just on the plain, old, trashy tunes that everyone has known for years, is a procedure analogous to that of Mahler in Vienna and Poulenc in Paris. This may be the idea Henry Brant had in writing his *Saxophone Concerto*. But at the same time he was concerned with brilliant orchestrations, with showing off the saxophone in all the novel ways that he and Sigurd Rascher, the performer, could think of. These two different aims do not go together very convincingly, but every once in a while a sour and sad mushiness or a raucous funniness hit home.

Two works on the chamber music programs praised by this reviewer several years ago in these pages seem today equally deserving of this judgment. Wallingford Riegger's *String Quartet*, by far the best work

I know of this composer, is full of vigorous and beautiful dissonance. He succeeds in domesticating the twelve-tone system and avoids the special rhetoric of the Viennese. The music is straightforward; tone clusters are hammered out, yet the texture remains transparent. Emotional balance and formal clarity are always maintained. Robert Palmer's *First String Quartet* loses some of its impressive somberness and expressive consistency by the inclusion of an additional movement, but it still has his stamp. The cross-accented counterpoint is a bit more comprehensible than that of some of his more recent works.

William Bergsma's *Second Quartet* is most effective, though the relation of one movement to another is not entirely convincing. It explores the moods and manners of the "middle modern" style with such innate musicality that one is attentive even though no personal adventure or experience seems to emerge. Yet saying what has often been said, only more skilfully, seems to be the goal of many members of the new generation. Frederick Jacobi's familiar *Second Quartet* and Robert Russell Bennett's cutely clever *Water Music* were performed. An oboe was added to the Walden strings for two rather similar pieces, Robert McBride's *Quintet* and Alvin Etler's *Six From Ohio*, both of which provided some sedate comedy.

Elliott Carter

## SYMPHONIC WORKS AND FAURÉ ANNIVERSARY

PERFORMANCES of new works on the Boston Symphony Orchestra programs this season have been restricted to the first forty-five minutes of the concert. The hour after intermission is broadcast on Saturday nights and the orchestra's sponsor apparently feels that Bartok's *Violin Concerto*, Copland's *Appalachian Spring* or Martinu's *Third Symphony* may drive away prospective purchasers of tractors. This occasionally makes for a curiously unbalanced program or rather two separate programs: one for the subscribers and the other for the radio audience and the subscribers. Local critics have been quiescent about the development thus far, but there are now signs of rising protest.

Advance notices of the Prokofiev *Fifth Symphony* were sufficiently glowing to convince the sponsor that it was a safe work to broadcast. It is an attractive, often exhilarating, if not completely achieved composition. Most of the themes — blatantly optimistic in the heroic Soviet manner — are loose, yet powerful, and calculated to provide ample opportunity for development. The touching lyricism of the *Second Violin Concerto* becomes at the same time more unashamedly romantic and less individual. The influence of Shostakovich obtrudes in the first movement especially; but the quality of the inspiration seems finer, if less truly symphonic in char-