

chestra, an arrangement of the slow movement of an early symphony, was given its premiere here by the American Symphony Orchestra.

#### NEW BALLET SCORES

The important new score of the Dance Players' opening season is that for *Prairie* by Norman Dello Joio. Though the work was originally a concert piece, and its excellent integration with the spirit and matter of the ballet is thus due largely to the choreographer, it reveals a theatrical bent and decided feeling for the dance. If the style is as yet without strong personal characteristics, it is nevertheless full and consistent, lacking in unabsorbed eclecticism. Deepest moods are struck in the slow music, which has tenderness, humanity, and frequently nobility. Faster passages at times tend to run away on the surface, but vigor and élan are always present.

Stefan Wolpe's score to *The Man from Midian* is a definite disappointment. It lacks style. The quieter and more consonant moments are soggy when not out-and-out banal. There was a great discrepancy between these and the sharper, dissonant quick passages, though here at least a certain level of dramatic intensity was attained, say that required by a none too demanding incidental music. I found quite enough hysteria on the stage. The less apparent noble strength could well have been brought to the fore by the music.

*Jinx* is done to Benjamin Britten's familiar *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*. It is a work of minor charm, which served as a most satisfactory point of departure for the ballet's form and development. Henry Brant's cheap hodgepodge for *City Portrait* is perhaps intended to mirror the (banal) musical tastes of the characters. More relationship with the events it certainly does not possess. I doubt if it could even point up the tragedy on the stage by contrast, though that would be one way of solving the problem of the score — with little credit to the composer. Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid* remains its strong, simple self.

Donald Fuller

#### SOUTH WINDS IN CHICAGO

WE cannot complain about the Good Neighbor Policy and what it has done for spring programs in Chicago. The Illinois WPA Symphony offered two suites, Pedro Sanjuan's *Liturgia negra* and Amadeo

Roldan's *La Rebambaramba*, and a *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* by Hector Villa-Lobos. Hekel Tavares' *Concerto in Brazilian Forms for Piano and Orchestra* was played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Of all these works, the one by Tavares received the best performance and it was the least worthy. It was a superficial, uninteresting set of exhibition pieces. No part of the exaltation, grandeur, deep religious feeling, authentically American expression found in the program notes was reflected in the concerto itself. However, the idea of strengthening the cultural solidarity of the Americas got across, and the audience was very pleased, probably because there was nothing Brazilian about the work, and nothing unfamiliar, and the forms mentioned in the title were only informally present. Tavares, hailed as Brazil's Stephen Foster, earned the added distinction of being called Tschaikovskian.

The performance given the Villa-Lobos work was so uncertain and unconvincing that it was very difficult to get from it any idea or feeling about the music. It seemed to be a delicate, highly sensitive and carefully detailed piece. Climaxes which might have been powerful and expressive came upon the orchestra, taking it unawares. The soloist had a very difficult time and didn't conceal his anxiety. However, this occasion served to feed an appetite to hear more Villa-Lobos and in better performances.

The Sanjuan and Roldan suites presented Afro-Cuban materials, the Roldan far more successfully than the Sanjuan. It is impossible to overlook the fact that Roldan is no longer living. I would like to hear the music he might be writing now. *La Rebambaramba* is a clear and exciting score. Of its four movements, three have intoxicating dance qualities. The second movement is slow and seems like an animal that is sleeping beautifully and with strength. Six percussion players have integral parts in all the movements. Melodically simple and direct, rhythmically alive and rich, the work gave the orchestra a new sound character. José Echaniz, a guest, conducted the work and you could tell that he really meant it. Music and performances of this standard will turn our current flirtation into true love.

Of the first performances, one, Philip Warner's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, played by the Illinois Symphony, was trivial and parlorish. The Chicago Symphony gave firsts of Henriot Levy's *Twenty-four Variations on an Original Theme* and David Van Vactor's *Gothic Impressions*. The Levy work was academic and sickly. Other works by other Chicago com-

posers, but which have been heard before, included Felix Borowski's *Symphony Number 3 in G Major* which gave rise to the adjective scherzophrenic, Leon Stein's *Chassidic Dances Numbers 1 and 3* which were vigorous and refreshing, but not breath-taking, Albert Noelte's *Prologue to a Romantic Drama* which kept struggling towards the same climax and falling away from it in the same way until it arrived at a very unpleasant effectiveness.

We also heard Harl McDonald's *Overture (1941)*, an empty, shallow work, and Ernst Toch's *Pinocchio, a Merry Overture*. It is too bad that Toch has not found some time to devote to experimental work in which he has not only professed an interest, but to which, back in the twenties and in Germany, he made valuable contributions. I think we could get along without his popularities and music for films long enough to hear his *Fuge aus der Geographie*, written for speech nine times as fast as spoken, or something else he might produce now in that direction.

One of the most deeply moving experiences we have had this spring was that afforded by Piatigorsky and the Hindemith *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra*. It was magnificently played, Frederick Stock conducting. It is a concerto in which the soloist is not merely displaying virtuosity, but one in which the 'cello is an individual and the orchestra is the group and the musical relationships are also human relationships. This is particularly clear in the last movement in which the orchestra sets forth in martial character, the 'cello remaining distinct and apart, poetic and not marching, having, as it were, another point of view. The 'cello maintains this individual point of view with increasing intensity and up to the last possible moment. It is clear then that the choice is one between insanity and conformance. The latter course is followed and the 'cello becomes a subservient part of an overwhelming orchestra.

Chicago is fortunate in having a very sincere and not-to-be-discouraged New Music Group. Under the direction of its president, George Perle, the group has a strong twelve-tone bias. During the winter a concert was given, presenting Steuermann and twelve-tone piano music. More recently, in the course of an informal evening with a lecture, we heard a sonata for viola, flute and piano by Perle, a piano work by Ben Webber and a viola and flute piece by Ernst Krenek. Of these pieces, the one by Perle was the most fluent, and this was due to the comparative lengthiness of his lines, the presence of clear repetitions, and the rhythms which were

dull but constant. The Webber and Krenek pieces seemed fragmentary, busy and nervous. Over all this work and its introversion, there seems to be a pall, and hearing it one can fancy himself at some sort of a shroud ritual. The New Music Group also presented Louis Krasner and Jacques de Menasce in a sonata program for violin and piano. A first performance was given of a work by de Menasce, and sonatas by Hindemith and Bartók were played. The *Sonata Number 1 for Violin and Piano* by Bartók was good to hear. In this work ideas seem to be suggested but never grasped, every moment passes just as one begins to realize its presence. It makes for dreams and visions.

Harry Partch who has been wandering around and between two continents for the last twenty years, always with only one idea in mind, has finally succeeded in Chicago in getting his Chromolodian constructed. This is an instrument which looks like an old-fashioned Harmonium, has the ordinary keyboard, but which produces Partch's overtone-inspired forty-three tone scale. Heretofore, Partch has performed his work using stringed instruments with special frets and a particular form of speech with exaggerated inflections and intonations. The Chromolodian gives a welcome definiteness to his work.

*John Cage*

## IMPROVING PAN-AMERICAN MUSIC RELATIONS

**D**URING the past two or three years the concentrated effort of our government has brought about a greatly increased interest in the arts of the Latin American countries. The group which follows international events in new music had long known the works of such composers as Villa-Lobos and Chavez, but the picture as a whole was, until recently, rather vague.

Today radio chains and orchestras give us a large number of Latin-American works and now publishers are beginning to bring out great quantities of them. Some of this music has high quality; but in a great many cases editorial judgment has been lacking in the selection and many inferior works have been performed and published. This has brought much dissatisfaction to the best musicians of Latin America, who quite rightly feel that their countries' achievements are unnecessarily misrepresented. Due to a lack of response to publishers' communications, unfor-