

Staging the work presents a real difficulty. A satisfactory solution is almost impossible because the essential problem is treated in picture book fashion, and the realistic basis resolved to a game of Questions and Answers. Moreover, from the standpoint of dramatic technic, the work seems to escape the confines of its form because of its content. With this wavering between convention and freedom of the theatre, one element rides roughshod over the other. We were already amazed in Schönberg's *Von heute auf morgen*, in Berg's *Wozzeck* and especially in his *Lulu* to find the celestial symbol of ourselves suddenly taking body on the stage in the form of ordinary people. But imagine how much greater will be the astonishment of the audience at discovering that something buried long, long ago, is now being carried to the grave in a "De Luxe Funeral." Because of these disparate elements the director faces the task of keeping the work from breaking into fragments, of preserving unity while building it up from minute details.

The younger generation has a claim on Krenek, a stronger one than on those classical figures of modernity, Schönberg and Stravinsky. He is closer personally, he stands nearer to it spiritually. He owes that generation the duty to follow the road of art to which his ability, his knowledge and his courage have predestined him, that road on which the artist expresses "what is." Krenek must eventually follow this road. For it presents the supreme questions of life—hunger, and the final satisfaction of hunger. And this is a question which will soon—whether we await the solution with rejoicing or with foreboding—be raised by our era, and by our era be solved.

Kurt List

HOW NEWS COMES TO PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA'S furtherance of contemporary music gains little support from the so-called "higher circles." Whereas the city boasts of some of the country's leading musical organizations, its programs have been sadly lacking in contemporary music representation. Repression seems to be the slogan. Transcriptions abound, intertwined with fair doses of the standard moderns. The Philadelphia Orchestra gives programs which,

in many instances, are annoying—Bach-Weiner, Bach-Reger, Bach-Caillet, ad infinitum. Even Ravel's arrangement of the *Pictures at an Exhibition* is not of sufficient merit; the version of the Orchestra's "official" transcriber is played.

Among the new works presented by the Philadelphia Orchestra for the first time were Tansman's *Piano Concerto, Number 2* and Bernard Wagenaar's *Triple Concerto*. The former is a work still bubbling with post-war inflections, while the latter was a three-ring circus for the display of the tremendous technic of Messrs. Barrere-Salzedo-Britt. This is not the Wagenaar we know in the *Divertimento* or the *Second Symphony*. In addition to the Tansman and Wagenaar there was Harl McDonald's new neo-Tschaikowsky *Symphony*.

As for the other orchestras around town, the Italo-Philharmonic gave a first American hearing to Santoliquido's *Twilight on the Sea* which proved to be just insipid Italian impressionism.

But worthwhile contemporary music is not entirely absent from this, our third largest city. Three concerts of modern chamber music have just been completed under the direction of Paul Nordoff. First hearings were given to De Falla's *Fantasia Baetica*, a truly remarkable work, and Paul Nordoff's *Piano Quintet*. The latter is one of the finest pieces of American chamber music heard in years; it moves along intense, dramatic lines and has an uncanny scherzo.

More than all other organizations, the Philadelphia Music Center persistently plays new works. This year on a calendar of some forty concerts, fully fifty per cent of the works were "firsts"—either Philadelphian or American. Among the high-lights were two Soviet pieces—a *Suite for Violin and Piano* by Ajavzian and a *Sonatine for Piano* by Kabelevsky. Henry Cowell's whimsical *Little Suite for Violin and Viola* showed this composer quite diatonically satisfied. Mossolov's satirical songs based on advertisements in a Soviet newspaper, Weprik's drab, dark brown *Viola Suite*, Tibor Serly's *String Quartet*—all were well worth hearing. In addition, the Music Center orchestra gave the premiere of an *Elegy* by Milton Adolphus, a young American; this is well-knit, vertically conceived music though inclined to

sectionalism in form. Another "first-time" by this orchestra was the *Concerto for Strings* by David Evans, Welshman. Evans might be called a Welsh Hindemith; such vigorous string writing has not been heard for a long time.

Neo-romanticism, simple nothingness, and downright good music respectively were to be found in Spanish Gustave Pittaluga's *The Cuckold's Pilgrimage* (Benefit Concert for Aid to Spanish Democracy), English Benjamin Britten's *Simple Symphony*, and American Anis Fuleihan's *Concerto for String Orchestra and Piano* (Philadelphia Chamber String Sinfonietta). Pittaluga sounded like undernourished De Falla. Britten, in this work, writes like an astute, painfully naive student; for example, all four movements ended in a V-I cadence. With Fuleihan, however, we have a personalized, creative mind. The concerto vibrates with a strange color never heard before. Especially effective is the basic motif of the opening movement which is developed into a very individual structure.

This city boasts of but two string quartets—one (String-Art) is not giving any concerts this season, the other (Curtis) in their lone concert of the year performed the quartet of Samuel Barber, Curtis-trained. No one can deny the technical equipment of this young man, but one may inquire whether he realizes that the year is 1938 and things are not so placid as his carefully tailored quartet would make us believe.

First hearings were given to Hindemith's solo sonata for viola d'amour and the first of the three piano sonatas. The feeling of "drying up" seemed very apparent in *Piano Sonata, Number 1*.

The Philadelphia WPA Music Project, though in a better position than most to further the cause of modern music, consistently evades the issue. The Composers' Forum Laboratory gives evenings to third-rate men. While the Project does present a certain amount of American music it usually consists of works by composers of a past generation—Gilchrist, Zeckwer, Von Steinberg, or those who have nothing more to offer than academic twaddle—Schmitz, Norma Silverman, Skibinsky, Bien, Hahn. All this, with a truly first-rate orchestra on hand to do well by any work! The only redeeming features have been the Composers'

Forum evening of George Boyle with (among other things) his splendid *Violin and Piano Sonata*, and the Ballet evening which gave the world premiere of Evelyn Berckman's splendid score, *County Fair*.

Arthur Cohn

THIRD SERVICE FOR THE TEMPLE

THE *Sacred Service* of Mr. Isadore Freed is the third of a series for the Liturgy of the Reformed Synagogue to be introduced by Mr. Lazare Saminsky at his Three Choir Festival (the first two were by Frederick Jacobi and Ernest Bloch). Mr. Freed's work unquestionably deserves to be classified as important music. To this reviewer such music must have both social value, which may be translated in terms of service to society, and artistic value, expressed in terms of mastery of technic and crystallization of style and idea. Mr. Freed's *Service* is both useful and masterful. The music has its own life and integrity quite apart from the text. The tone of lofty religious meditation seems to come from an inner compulsion. A text is, after all, only the outer garment. It serves to uncover the realm of music that imbues the thought and feeling of the creative musician. If the form is religious, as in the present instance, then inevitably the music will rise, flood that form, be molded by it, and in turn make its own mold.

Mr. Freed's *Service* consists of eighteen separate but related anthems, responses, and laudations, grouped into five large sections: Invocation, Sanctification, Reading of the Law, Adoration, and Conclusion. The work rests, harmonically, on a modal base of ancient tonalities whose ingenious use gives the *Service* its archaic flavor. Mr. Freed achieves the very desirable end of producing Jewish music without ever once being pseudo-oriental. This is an esthetic *tour de force* which only the rigorously disciplined artist can effect. Mr. Freed's discipline in handling the various sections of the *Service* is what makes it significant to the musician and interesting to the layman.

The work is scored, generally, for four part chorus, baritone solo and organ. At times, as in the inspired *Lift Up Your Heads*,