

organized tonal pattern that shapes David Diamond's tender and direct *A Flower Given to My Daughter*.

III

The Coolidge Quartet gave us a chance to hear some of Virgil Thomson's chamber music on a program at the New York Public Library. Also played were an able and sensitive *Quartet* by Mary Howe, and the *Second Quartet* of Paul Hindemith, which is post-graduate Brahms. The Thomson *Quartet Number 1* is not so striking a demonstration of the Thomson tradition as his choral and vocal compositions, which I find more individual and contemporary. Its easy flow and melodiousness are attractive; perhaps they would be more satisfying if the material were more striking and individual. There is considerable immersion in the eighteenth century, not however à la Stravinsky. The *Quartet Number 2*, presented at the last of the House Music evenings sponsored by the Town Hall Club, is a more interesting piece, especially in its imaginative first movement. There is certainly nothing quite like these quartets, whose special approach precludes neither simplicity nor naturalness.

The House Music series has for its purpose the presentation of one contemporary American work at each concert, followed by audience discussion. On this particular evening (the only one I attended) the results were not notably constructive. The audience couldn't be galvanized into action, and when the questions finally started coming they were more about *Four Saints* than about the piece performed. Perhaps open forums like these need a number of given starting points of some significance, to insure a clear relative course in debate. Nevertheless the mere idea of the House Music series is in itself an antidote to the New Friends disease referred to previously.

Donald Fuller

ROCHESTER'S ELEVENTH U. S. A. FESTIVAL

I LIKED this year's Eastman School Festival of American Music, presented as usual under Howard Hanson's energetic direction, because so many good new works were uncovered and because several others had their second or third performances – not just their first and final ones.

The repetition of Charles Naginski's *Sinfonietta for Chamber Orchestra* proved the value of such hearings. After two performances at the

Yaddo Festival last summer, I wrote a favorable report, but now I must confess to a definite change of heart. Too many holes in the score are due to poor orchestration. Class-room orchestral balance can be taught, but the mature ability of the orchestrator is a thing either within the composer or not. Naginski, it seems, did not possess this knack; one always senses a lack of "inside" meaty voices. The slow movement is still the best, with a threnodic pulsating line that is quite moving. The other work previously heard was a *Symphony Concertante* by Burrill Phillips, in which Mr. Phillips goes to town, instead of Mr. Bach. This I assure you moves and breathes fast, and gets somewhere as the crow flies. It is individual, full-throated and youthful, brilliant in effect. The slow movement has a young nostalgia for collegiate "flivvers," open galoshes and the flappers that wore them.

Two choral works of major proportions were greatly stimulating. Last year, after hearing an isolated aria from Bernard Roger's *The Raising of Lazarus*, I wanted a complete performance and now my wish was realized. This is comparatively early Rogers (before his appearance as a fascinating, facile colorist) but to me it defines his greatness. The piece has emotional fervor and intensity that never subsides. It exults organically, it sobs, declaims, and delivers utterances right out of the very heart of the material. My phrases may be purple, but they are the only ones that can describe the amazing, vibrating power of the score. Hanson's *Lament of Beowulf* is well-known; it has all the good architecture, the straightforwardness and basic soundness one expects from a full-grown romantic.

The outstanding symphonic works were by very young Edmund Haines and William Bergsma. Re Haines: symphonic form requires a large compositional stroke. In a symphony, which this one was, the composer must check himself constantly on dimensional balance. Haines succeeded; he carried the form through a basic development of the material. The first movement is dogmatically nervous and energetic, filled with an Americanism that does not rely on folk-tunes or programmatic gestures; the second has a super-spun line filled out with cascading, defiantly dissonant counterpoint; the finale shows vitality of a settled quality. Re Bergsma: he was represented by a work written at the age of sixteen (he is not yet twenty-one). His is a strong creative mind, to which the overworked word "talent" has been applied. The *Paul Bunyan Suite* has a splendid opening section, full of ironic-ictus scoring. I could not get

stirred up about movements two and three, both full of the usual run-of-the-mill ideas, but the third was exciting, its climax delivered smashingly under a frenetic top pedal point.

III

Though this year's festival did not lean too acutely to the left, one piece was decidedly on that side of the fence. It came surprisingly from last year's Prix de Rome recipient – William Denny. His *Sinfonietta for String Orchestra* has some first-class writing and some first-class faults. Its contrapuntal strength is weakened by redundancies. Composing for large masses of strings requires plenty of counterpoint to ride over the lack of a contrasting main color. Counterpoint there was and fair coloring; but in the end kinetic eighth-notes can grow boring. Denny needs to tighten his musical bridge work.

Hanson also introduced Bernhard Kaun, a name which I cannot recall ever seeing on any major organization's programs. Kaun's *Sinfonia Concertante* for horn and orchestra is a meaty piece for the neglected solo hornists. The listener, I think, feels a dark brown, garnet quality, as if the score were conceived with stopped-horn-tone technic continuously in mind. The piece is too rhapsodic; it needs an organic outward projection of material, instead of the introspective treatment and the, at times, reiterated-retrospective ideas built on top of each other; climaxes instead of the coagulating Mahler-Bruckneritis from which Kaun seemed to be suffering.

The many more items of the festival were chiefly on the minor side of the ledger. However as a suggestion let me call the attention of solo pianists to the "home-run-over-the-fence" part of Herbert Inch's *Piano Concerto*, and of ballet companies in search of authentic Americana to Burrill Phillips' *Three Satiric Fragments* (and incidentally his two-year old *Play Ball*). And finally, a word of praise for the magnificent performances given all the compositions, and the virtuoso conducting of Hanson.

Arthur Cohn

HOLLYWOOD MUSIC WITHOUT MOVIES

THE concentration of important musical figures in America is at the moment very heavy in and around Hollywood. Stravinsky, Schönberg, Toch, Gruenberg, Antheil, Zador, Achron, Castelnuovo-Tedesco and others are all living in Southern California which probably has the smallest audience for new music to be found anywhere. The Los Angeles Phil-