

add nothing to either the literature for piano or to the luster of Bloch's name.

Boosey and Hawkes have just published Copland's *Quiet City*, while *Music for the Theatre* now appears in pocket score (Arrow Music Press), which latter is good news for music students.

## WITH THE DANCERS

— BY EDWIN DENBY —

MISS HANYA HOLM and her group presented us with a serious surrealist alchemistic fantasy. First a prologue: dancers in androgynous red tights and beautiful long blonde wigs did some calisthenic weaving and leaping. Then the main part: Several dancers appeared in elaborate costumes, a nest of light-bulbs on the head for instance. The audience recognized these as "surrealist" and tittered. But after the dancers came on, all they did was wiggle a bit, stand around, walk off, come back on, and do it all over. They looked afraid of messing up their pretty, fancy dresses. It was timid and dull; and it could have been dismissed as a minor mistake, if the program had not implied that this was official surrealism. Official surrealism, which kept clear a few years ago of Dali's decorous and cute Monte Carlo ballet, has its own terrific eighteen years of history; its cruel Peeping-Tom thrills — the thrills of a Peeping-Tom who gets to see only the empty part of the horrifying bedroom. I looked up an old Dali ballet libretto, from the pre-House Beautiful period of surrealism, published in George Hugnet's official *Petite anthologie du surréalisme* (1934). At a quiet moment, for instance, a dancer,

The lovely, restrained music of the *Quiet City* suite always gives one a sense of relief. This simple and moving music is for strings, English horn and trumpet, and has all the quiet eloquence one remembers from certain parts of *Our Town*.

who had unbandaged his arm, sops a piece of bread a lady has sat on, in a glass of tepid milk, and then — his face expressing a sweet and infinite nostalgia — he presses the wet bread under his armpit. At the end, while a chorus of legless cripples dressed as Japanese are yelling the tango *Renacimiento* (among other things), a woman with opulent breasts and metal shoes is savagely treading a heap of bread, as though seized with a delirium of the feet incident to wine-pressing; when a lot of motorcycles tied to ropes come roaring through the backdrop, and several ventilators and sewing machines fall from the top boxes and are crushed on the stage. The curtain falls slowly.

Miss Holm had another new number in her familiar agreeably fluid style in which the body is kept well in balance and the movement correctly produced from the small of the back. Some people find this agreeably lyric, and others, agreeably innocuous. I think it is all right, but it seems rather more proper than anything I know outside the theatre. Miss Holm herself is obviously an excellent dancer, and I would like to see her in a solo.

Two male dancers, Barton Mumaw and Eric Hawkins, have each given complete solo recitals. Mumaw is a very pleasantly proportioned young man with a natural gift, and I regret to say that I see little of interest in the kind of prudish "esthetic" schooling he happens to have received; I like the legs to be livelier. Hawkins, for his part, showed a thorough training in all the complicated exactitudes of the modern school; his dances, too, have interesting themes derived from work movements, from regional habits of gesture, from Amerindian dances, in the best of taste. Unfortunately, he never got going and so what he did felt like a lengthy announcement instead of like a dance. I enjoyed Henry Cowell's music for the Coyote dance on the program, and noticed again how an interesting acoustic accompaniment helps me watch a dance in a friendly and lively spirit.



In the Thirteenth Street studio of Miss Mayo's Repertory Dance Theatre is a homebuilt theatre which instead of looking dismal (as is the proper style in studio theatres) looks bright and straightforward. The dances looked it too. There was a piece in which the rhythm of ballet steps was brightly superimposed on the flatfooted grace of Bronx adolescents. And there was a "serial-ballet" which was most of it straightforward and part of it moving.

I went to the circus expecting to be shocked by the Bel-Geddes "streamlining," and found he had done more of a pants-pressing, hat-blocking job; the circus is still the mess we all like it to be.

For the dance lover, there is a graceful lady elephant who dances the conga with delight; an incredibly beautiful dancing horse called Belmonte; and a happy pack of leaping dogs who play volley ball with a balloon. There is one completely esthetic human act of two Japanese who walk up a tightrope to the gallery and slide down again backward, standing; why it seems so beautiful I don't know. I also liked a camel that went around disguised as a goose.

Some Colorado high school boys and girls called the Cheyenne Mountain Dancers, were to appear up in the Rainbow Room one night at one o'clock. But the dancers I found were Indo-Chinese, doing what seemed a Portuguese rumba. The headwaiter told me there had been a last minute change of schedule, and the cowboys had left. I asked how they were and he said, "Very colorful and neat."



The machine-gun dance in the second scene of *Native Son* gives me a chance to state that among other things Orson Welles is the greatest dance director in our theatre. And also that he is the only producer who gives us scenery which is a delight to look at; the only scenery that sets the size of an actor in a dramatic proportion to the frame of the set. I imagine it is the proportion of the actor to the set (as it is in dancing), and not the real detail on the stage, which makes scenery feel real. You can't help but see him in a real relation to the set, instead of as a man wandering about a decorated stage.