

But equally typical of this drastically Anglo-Celtic nature, in the following *Largo* of Sessions' symphony, his very personal melos is covered by a delicate crust of chilled heartiness and humanness. One is moved by the same quality in the opening measures of the song from the *Black Maskers*, one of the most beautiful lines ever created by American art. One is bewitched by its dark glow and caress.

Of Sessions' latest works, the *Concerto* for violin and orchestra exhibits in its *Largo tranquillo* a melodic thread of steel-like resistance and flexibility. This music is marked by a spiritual climate in some way related to the sharp freshness and hidden aggression of the very air of New England.

But again, the opening bars of the *Romanza* of the concerto has that alluring melange of sombre glow and humanness that strikes one in such related acts of art as Edgar Poe's *Ulalume* and Sessions' song from the *Black Maskers*.

The principal weakness of Sessions' larger forms is an over-expanded unfolding of all the derivatives, sequels, side-thoughts hidden in his main thematic idea.

This draconian completeness, a fully exhausted development, does not appeal to my own creative taste. But one watches with admiring respect such frenzied, overpowering tenacity of aim and thought.

The energy of the organizers of these one-man concerts—the New School, their sponsor, and Aaron Copland, their director,—should be highly commended. Such concerts are a very usual thing in Europe. Only that absurd provincial distrust by Main Street of anything that rises from its own midst has made the American musical societies shy at giving comprehensive recitals of one man's work. A composer who is a master of his craft and has important things to say, surely has the right to take the public by its neck and make it listen. It is almost a constitutional right.

Lazare Saminsky

PREMIERE IN ROCHESTER: ROGERS' FRESCOS

AN American composers' concert in Rochester usually affords musical interest of a varied sort—though this was not the case on January 16 when Dr. Howard Hanson conducted a

program of orchestral works by Edgar Stillman Kelley, Bernard Rogers, Leo Sowerby, and William Grant Still.

Dr. Kelley's *New England Symphony* was first heard in 1913. It still stands rather poorly as a musical creation; Dr. Kelley's contemporaries (he is today seventy-eight years old), MacDowell and Chadwick, had infinitely more to say in their music. The banalities of thematic material, lack of imagination and handling of various musical forms tend to push this work farther into oblivion. One thing can be said for it; a rather decent job of usual orchestral formulae relieves some of the more helpless and duller portions of the score.

Leo Sowerby's *Prelude to the Suite of Ironics* needs no review here. It is not new, and I can add nothing to its already established impression.

Anticipating a work by William Grant Still is like awaiting a box of assorted sweets. To this writer, Mr. Still's new work for piano and orchestra, called *Kaintuck*, commissioned by the League of Composers, is a feeble attempt to write popular, light, contemporary music. According to program notes, "Mr. Still is again occupied with suggestion of the music of his race but he is never obvious in such music; he makes no use of hackneyed material but embodies his subject in music of highly original character." Evidently the writer failed to notice that it was only the obvious which tended to make the music attractive to the audience. Series of luscious, improvisatory chords in syncopation against a background of sentimental melody in the full orchestra—and bad melody at that—were representative of Mr. Still's most forceful utterances.

With the work of Bernard Rogers on this program it becomes clear that he has something definite to say in contemporary music. His is music of impassioned restraint; neither obvious nor banal, it presents a habitual logic, and an individual and subtle tonal taste. Representative of his work is the first of the *Two American Frescos*, a simple tonal painting of the natural aspects of the Mississippi River. The entire movement is confined to the reiteration of a highly rhythmic motif over a sustained C major tonality. The most exciting effect is a general four measure crescendo to a tremendous climax which immediately sub-

sides. The second fresco, *An Ojibway Battle Dance*, utilizes an Indian melody, *The Man Who Stayed at Home*. Mr. Rogers shows a refreshing individuality in dealing with an Indian dance. Not only is the rhythmic and thematic material invigorating but the orchestration is reduced to a rare simplicity astonishing for its vitality and personality. It is clear, from these Rochester concerts that Bernard Rogers has the gift for expressing his own ideas with force and sincerity. His work was a real premiere.

David Diamond

DANCERS, EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN

THE contemporary dance is for obvious reasons represented by artists of two different though not necessarily opposing groups: the *theatrical* and the *formal* as they might be termed. Both Yvonne Georgi who until recently has not appeared here since her recitals many years ago with Harald Kreuzberg, and Trudi Schoop who won fourth prize in an International dance competition a few years ago, belong to the first of these categories.

Georgi has the misfortune to give solo concerts at a time when we are accustomed to a richer and a more intellectually patterned dance. Here *métier* is theatrical and there is nothing which seems more stale—due to the fact that there is little or no sustaining intellectual interest—than outmoded “theatre.” Her dancing is not altogether at fault since she seems to have quite a sufficient amount of technic. The subject matter (*Salome, What the West Wind Saw, etc.*), her over-pretty costumes ineffectively lighted, her choice of banal music which for the most part was ill-suited to dancing, all of these combined to weaken the theatrical effort.

Trudi Schoop, on the other hand, has a quality which allows her to transcend the lack of material things which she could obviously use to good advantage: scenery, orchestra, etc. Her *Fridolin on the Road* is a real character—one whom we smile at, pity, and probably ourselves help to kick about a bit upon actual acquaintance in life. Miss Schoop's characterization is effected almost solely through the peculiar employment of her hands, and in her smiling, fearful face. These manners scarcely constitute (strictly speaking) dance; nor is what she has designed or directed in the placing and replacing of the dancers' bodies choreo-