

The Brazilian evenings with their showy torrid pieces were the most fun of all. We don't hear much Villa Lobos in this country and here was a chance at two of his most astounding works, *Choros No. 8* and *Choros No. 10*. The verve and originality of these savagely primitive scores with their remarkable instrumental and percussive effects, their dense almost tropical textures and their curious form, inspire much far-reaching speculation about the music of our hemisphere. I was familiar with several short works by this fiery composer, some uninteresting or unconvincing, and only one, a song *Xango*, which gives any hint of what is contained in these big *Choros*.

There is also scheduled a Swiss concert with Honegger and the less known Frank Martin whose works deserve more consideration than they have had here. And speaking of what is to come—where, in all this foreign pageant, are Mexico and Carlos Chavez?

A word about the highly acclaimed acoustics of the Music Hall. They are, to any impartial ear, neither excellent nor bad enough to mar one's enjoyment of the music. By being in the Fair they seem to have taken on that curious metallic and inexpressive quality which I heard all about me from the loudspeakers.

These concerts have made one important contribution. They prove that outside the traditional repertory of our symphony orchestras there are lots of scores worth hearing, both old and new. Never again will we believe our conductors when they return from summer vacations abroad with news that no works of any interest are being written. Every foreign concert at the Fair has proved just the opposite.

Elliott Carter

## TROUBLED WARSAW IS HOST TO THE NATIONS

THE hazardous political situation in Europe had an unprecedented effect on the seventeenth music festival which the International Society for Contemporary Music held late in April at Warsaw. Many performers were forced to cancel their engagements at the last minute and could not be replaced. A whole chamber music evening was thus called off because the Czechs, who were to present works by Jerzy Fitelberg, Milan



COSTUME DESIGNS BY

*Jared French*

FOR

*Aaron Copland's*

BALLET

*Billy the Kid*



• *Three Sketches by Ka*



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AMERICAN  
LYRIC  
THEATRE*

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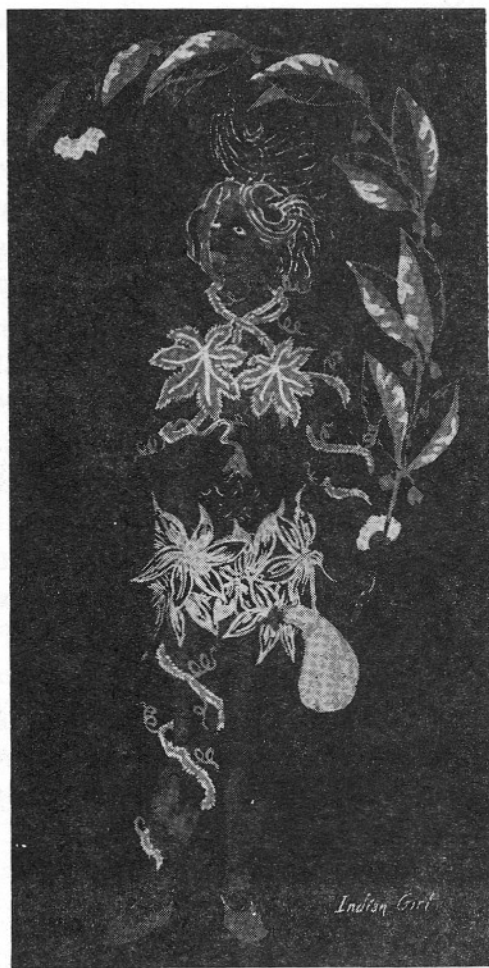
**T**he BALLET CARAVAN will present American works with American subjects, music, choreography and décors, in its first New York public appearance, in the spring festival of The American Lyric Theatre at the Martin Beck Theatre.

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are for Elliott Carter's *Ballet Pocahontas* •

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Ristic, Josef Zavadil, Karel Jirak and Vladimir Polivka, were not permitted to attend. The saxophone concertino of Roman Palester was also abruptly removed. Late substitutions for certain conductors and soloists also lowered the level of performance; unfamiliar compositions were heard in an unprepared way that hurt and sometimes even destroyed their true effect.

A welcome surprise was the warm interest evidenced in the festival by the Warsaw public. The great hall of the Philharmonic, the auditoriums of the Conservatory and of the Opera House were filled with attentive people. And although the social aspect was glamorously in evidence, the music festival being held under the exalted protection of the president of the Polish Republic, Professor Ignacy Moscicki and of other important figures, actually the most significant element was the eager audience, which made tremendous efforts to understand and participate in the often complex musical activity.

The music covered a wide territory extending from romantic lushness to atonality; indeed the twelve-tone scale was generously represented. In character, too, the works varied from sacred to profane. There were grotesques and parodies and compositions of a folklore base with, however, not so many of the last two types. This is a welcome sign; grotesquerie and folklorism have been so overdone, often to conceal mere paucity of invention.

The *Symphonie* of the Spaniard, Josef Valls, which opened the festival, is fresh music, based on dance material, quite light and grateful, revealing a pleasant skill. In contrast came *Five Orchestral Pieces* by the Englishman, Christian Darnton, the composer's first effort in the twelve-tone system. They do not seem rigorously bound however. Quite short, lasting altogether eight minutes, they show the greatest concentration of material and expression. The fundamental motives in highly compressed musical language are not further developed but they are eloquent and full of meaning. This work was well received. The *Légende Epique*, by the Belgian Marcel Poot, an effective well-sounding piano concerto, revealed a great balance of form and a transparent and agreeably flowing tone. There followed the *Passacaglia and Choral* of the Yugoslav composer, Slavko Osterc, a work that sticks to old patterns. And then came the last movement of the

*Violin Concerto* by the Russian, Vladimir Vogel. After an impressive introduction by the solo violin, this passes to a contrapuntal development of the basic motive, also built on the twelve-tone scale. An interesting work, it reveals the composer's real musical power. Nothing could have offered a greater contrast than the *D-Major Symphony* of the French composer Jean Rivier, which by its brilliant instrumentation succeeded in holding the audience the entire time. This work is French in tonal as well as formal material, in its sense of proportion and balance.

The festival then proceeded to its two chamber music concerts. The first opened with the effective *Kammerkantate* by the Swiss, Conrad Beck. Remarkably well sung by the Italian singer, Ginevra Vivante, and with an excellent accompaniment by the Polish Radio Orchestra under Gregor Fitelberg, it proved one of the most significant works of the festival. Introspective and intense, it appears to have developed from stringent inner necessity. On the other hand a *Concertino* for trumpet and string orchestra by Knudage Riisager, the Dane, was pleasant, optimistic, cheerful music, frankly old-classic. The Hollander, Robert de Roos, conducted his own composition, *Five Etudes for Piano and Orchestra*. Apparently interested in tonal and technical problems, he made a different setting for every piece; one for the right hand with orchestral accompaniment, and another for piano with percussion. The clever, amusing *Rengaines* of the Belgian, André Souris, a skillful orchestrator, delighted the audience; they had to be repeated. Another work based on the twelve-tone scale was Luigi Dallapiccola's *Tre Laudi* to medieval texts. They are simple and somewhat archaic, ostensibly primitive, laden with religious pathos. There was a second sacred work that evening, Poulenc's *D-Major Mass*, which is simple, flooded with light, of great delicacy and fineness and freely flowing. It seemed to soar above all earthly burdens.

The second chamber concert was in Cracow, where the guests spent two days. In place of Webern's Quartet, Opus 28, originally scheduled, three works were heard. First came the *Third Quartet of the Spaniard*, Joaquim Homs, interesting in its individual theme construction and with a certain inner tension. Then Piet Ketting's *Piano Fugue* played by the composer himself. This is



a concentrated work, increasing in dramatic intensity as it goes along, making great demands on the audience as well as on the artist. The old Dutch tradition which succeeds so well in uniting Nordic mysticism with a rigorous development seems to have found expression here. The third was the *Trois poèmes lyriques* by the Yugoslav composer, Demetrij Zebre, "of a lyrical nature, composed in an a-thematic style," to quote the program. It was youthful and experimental but not very exciting. The English Stratton Quartet played the *Second String Quartet* of the only woman in the festival, the English composer, Elizabeth Lutyens. This work is really quite feminine, very delicate and subtle, conscientious and of a noble lyricism; however it lacks profile.

The success of the evening was the *Second String Quartet* of the Hollander, Henk Badings. Although it came at the close of the three-hour concert, it stirred the fatigued audience to new attention. It is compelling for its nobility, its tonal beauty, and expression of feeling. No note seemed superfluous or unjustified. In its direct classical repose it may be perhaps more "modern," more precursive than many of the more atonal, radical works.

Also on the same program were the *Sonatine for Violin and Piano* by the Slovak, Eugen Suchon; the old Spanish-Jewish songs, *Coplas sefardies* in a special arrangement for piano and solo-voice by the Egyptian, Alberto Hemsí; songs by the Argentine, Honorio Siccardi, and a *String Quartet No. 1* by the Japanese, Kojiro Kobune, this latter more interesting as a union of Japanese and European elements than for its own qualities.

The final concert was given over to symphonic music. It began with the premiere of Boleslaw Woytowicz's *Twenty Variations in the Form of a Symphony*. The first seven variations form the Allegro; the theme with variations the second movement; a Rondo composed of variations 14 to 20 constitutes the last. This kind of form is characteristic of Woytowicz. It is also characteristic that on hearing the work we ignore its complexities, for the music is fresh and direct. The lyrical sections are typically Polish in their dreaminess. It was performed by the Polish Radio Orchestra under the direction of Fitelberg, as was also the effective, clever, and often played *Overture* by Szalowski. The programmatic piece of the Belgian, Gaston Brenta, *Le*

*Savetier et le Financier*, in spite of the intelligent and sure direction of the Belgian conductor, André Souris, did not come off so well because of a last minute substitution in the singer. The *Ostinato for Orchestra* by the Swede, Lars Erik Larson would never lead one to guess that the composer had been a pupil of Alban Berg. It is well-sounding music, moving entirely in romantic channels, smooth, nicely instrumented, sweet in spots—an agreeable repertory piece. Great demands are made by the Rumanian, Marcel Mihalovici's composition, *Praeludium und Invention*, which derives from old classical models, at times from the baroque organ compositions of Johanna Sebastian Bach. This is music of pathos and it merits attention. Finally there were the *Symphonic Studies* of the thirty-four year old Englishman, Alan Rawsthorne. Here is absolute music, rich in content and emotion. The slow movements are especially interesting, dreamy and contemplative.

In addition to the festival proper, there were as usual several other programs. A concert of contemporary Polish church music included Szymanowski's powerful *Stabat Mater*, Wiechowicz's *Romantische Kantate*, and the premiere of Kondracki's interesting *Cantata ecclesiastica*. Contrasted with this was a concert of old-Polish church music in the marvelous ancient Mary's church in Cracow, excellently given by the chorus of the Poznan Cathedral. There was also a really joyful, colorful, native folklore exhibition by the peasants themselves; and a gala ballet evening in the Opera, presenting Palester's *Das Lied von der Erde*, Kondracki's *Eine Legende von der Stadt Krakow*, and Szymanowski's famous work, *Harnasie*.

Emilia Elsner

## SEASON OF HINDEMITH AND AMERICANS

PAUL HINDEMITH has burst like fireworks over New York scattering performances everywhere. At Carnegie he conducted the Philadelphia in the *Suite* from *Nobilissima Visione*; at the Juilliard Alumni Concerts his *Flute Sonata* and