

Husbandman, Eric Hawkins, concentrated in herself the rigors and re-
prieves of the frontier woman, whose life vacillates between the awful-
ness and the wonder of nature, the threats of Hell and her love for her
man. The score was more serene and relaxed than the dancing, but on
the whole the music and choreography were felicitously mated.

In all three ballets it was a joy to find Martha Graham finally sus-
tained by good music. And the music itself was well performed by a
small orchestra of nine strings, flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, bas-
soon, trumpet, and piano. Altogether, it was a very pleasant birthday-
party.

S. L. M. Barlow

BOSTON OPENS AN EXCITING SEASON

WITHIN the first three weeks of the current orchestral season in
Boston, we have heard performances of William Schuman's
Prayer in Time of War, David Diamond's *Second Symphony*, Arnold
Schönberg's *Theme and Variations for Orchestra*, Opus 43b, and Bohuslav
Martinu's *Concerto for Two Pianos*. The scope of the first programs and
the announcements and rumors of future events would seem to indicate
that we are in for an exciting year.

Schuman's music is by this time fairly familiar to Boston audiences.
Its virtues – its undoubted originality, urgency, and sincerity – were ap-
parent enough in his *Prayer*. On the whole, the music was relatively
restrained, but it seems to me that the composer could do with a few
more stylistic inhibitions. The present work was marred by the recur-
rence of clichés which a more self-conscious composer would have
shunned or at least handled with more tact. Even more than in the earlier
works, one has the impression that the composition is a compilation of
devices, effects and formulae rather than the product of a unified style.
It is not that the formulae are in themselves objectionable – that, of
course, is a matter of taste – but when they are employed one by one,
section by section, they tend to emphasize the periodic nature of the music.

The Diamond symphony, which was having its premiere perform-
ance, achieves greater synthesis. This is the first time that Boston has
had a chance to hear any of Diamond's music, and some members of the
audience noted with obvious relief that the piece was not overly modern.
This bespeaks a limited understanding of modernism, for the conserva-
tism of the symphony was more apparent than real. On the whole, I was

impressed by its freshness and individuality, particularly in the slow first and third movements. Both the second and last movements seemed less coherent, and I must confess to having felt that their orchestration was not always appropriate or consistent. But I say this on the basis of one hearing only, and I should certainly like to hear repeat performances. The reaction of audience and critics was sympathetic if not overly enthusiastic.

The Schönberg variations were originally composed for band, and in the orchestral version the theme, march-like in character, remains scored for wind instruments only. The orchestration of the subsequent variations is effective although dated. From time to time reminiscences of Bruckner, Mahler and Strauss cropped up to the annoyance of nearly everyone except myself (as far as I could make out). The variations are distinctly tonal in the predominating key of G minor, and it was curious to note the essentially academic quality of Schönberg's music when divorced from the twelve-tone technic. Nonetheless, it is impossible not to admire his technical mastery or the sureness and clarity of the tonal effects. I was amused to notice the persistence of Schönberg's reputation as a revolutionary; most of the audience refused to believe that it was not listening to the most wicked twelve-tone music.

Everybody seemed to like the Martinu *Concerto*. It was conducted sympathetically by Koussevitzky, and the rousing good performance of Luboshutz and Nemenoff contributed to make it one of the memorable events of the season. The program notes quoted Martinu as saying that there were elements of the concerto grosso style in the music. Except for the sequential character of the music and the presence of a driving, rhythmic motive typical of the eighteenth century concerto style, I found little to support this contention. On the whole, the first movement is closer to the nineteenth century formal and harmonic procedures. The second movement reminded me of Szymanowski with its post-impressionistic chords and figuration. I liked very much its middle section which was more diatonic and less "fruity." The texture of the finale, as of the first movement, is perhaps over-complicated. Yet there is a drive and go to it which certainly compensates for these minor defects.

The next two concerts will feature Hindemith's *Theme with Variations, according to the Four Temperaments, for Strings with Piano* and Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra*. The Hindemith work received its first performance this summer at one of the so-called "Seersucker" symphony

concerts with Lukas Foss as soloist and Richard Burgin conducting. I found this latest work to be among his most charming. It represents a new departure for the composer in the care which he lavishes upon sonority. The orchestration is clear; the balance between piano and orchestra is neatly adjusted; and the thematic material possesses a grace and lyrical quality which one associates with his more recent compositions.

In Cambridge, the Harvard Music Department is sponsoring a program of the music of Schönberg. Included are *The Ode to Napoleon* and a transcription of *The Second Quartet* for string orchestra. The participating artists are Edwin Steurman, Norma Farber, and members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Richard Burgin. The part of the narrator in the *Ode* has not been assigned at this writing.

Irving Gifford Fine

FIFTEEN NEW WORKS IN ROCHESTER DEBUT

AT the symposium of American orchestral music given by the Eastman Rochester Orchestra in October under Howard Hanson, fifteen scores were heard, all in first performances. In general, the major merits were in the works of large proportions: two concerti and three symphonies.

Morris Mamorsky's piano concerto is a Leviathan-like work which swims blissfully in its ocean of ink. The author has considered Gershwin and found him good. The results of his contemplation are less good. It is a pity that a man as lavishly vital, and one with no mean technic, should fail in the act of self-criticism. The score is too long; it is also too thick, too loud, too encrusted with ideas of all persuasions. The piece shows a talent. But this talent is like ore as it comes from the ground. Mamorsky scores with abandon, sometimes with brilliance. The glitter is not that of the gem-stone. More promise than achievement is shown.

Joseph Wagner has written a three-movement first symphony that lasts eighteen minutes. There is something refreshing about the conciseness, modesty and adroitness of this composer. He is an old hand with the orchestra, although occasionally he makes the old mistake of thick writing for low winds. There are enough ideas, and they usually have charm. He does not woo the grand manner, nor does it come to him. When he has told his story, he departs. This is a lyric piece, in spite of its exuberant rhythms and frequent flashes from the "dry" instruments — xylophone, side-drum, wood-block, etc. The work is really a *sinfonietta*,