

apparent ease and fluency, is really quite a tour de force. Hindemith has bound himself throughout to the actual rhythms of the Mallarmé text which inspired the piece, although not a word of the poetry is actually uttered. Thus in a literal sense *Hérodiade* is a song without words. The *Four Temperaments* has no such unique basis, but its inspiration is also literary, for Hindemith's preoccupation with the temperaments, or prevailing human moods, reflects the neo-medievalism which so often influences his musical thinking. The purity and clarity of structural design certainly suggest the dance. Deft and varied writing is combined with the melodic warmth Hindemith hates to have called romantic when it appears in his music – as, happily, it does more and more.

On Chicago's first all-Harris program at the University of Chicago all the works were unfamiliar here, except the *Piano Quintet*. Some bright and entertaining *Improvisations on American Folk Tunes* were played by Johanna Harris; the *Lamentation* for soprano, viola and piano, and the *Whitman Suite* for chorus, string quartet and piano duet, were also heard. The *Lamentation* suffers from the deficiency already apparent in the earlier *Quintet*: its rhythmic figures fail to develop or even to become more vigorous, and pieces which start well get terribly long and static in the middle. The *Lamentation* seemed to have a great many half notes. But the Whitman pieces, brasher and more percussive in idiom, made a better effect because difficult polyphonic problems were avoided.

Along with the sure-fire *Suite Française*, Darius Milhaud conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in his second *Opus Americanum*, originally intended for *The Man from Midian*, a ballet about Moses. Without something to watch on the stage the music seems overlong. Yet the work is interesting for its special eclecticism: somewhere in this big score is a touch of almost every style in which Milhaud had ever written previously, besides mementos of a good many earlier composers whose music had a hand in the formation of his own idiom. Still the piece is surprisingly homogeneous, mainly because each of the nine movements is solidly constructed, but also because Milhaud's massive and thick way of orchestrating gives the whole score a characteristic instrumental sound.

Cecil Michener Smith

## ROCHESTER'S FALL FESTIVAL OF AMERICANS

SIXTEEN works by Americans were given first performances during the twenty-first symposium of American Composers' Concerts last fall, with Howard Hanson conducting the Rochester Symphony Orchestra. Vincent Persichetti's *Piano Concertino* was certainly most enthusiastically received of all. Though a young composer's work, written some time ago, it shows unusual command of the orchestra. The style has various romantic

ingredients. Like many one-movement pieces this suffers slightly from sectionalism, but it is exactly the right length. . . . Harrison Kerr's *First Symphony*, in one movement, was written about twenty years ago. The first part of the work, which showed remarkable technical command, was considered best. As with the Persichetti piece, later sections tended to lapse into an episodic treatment, with occasional references to the romantics. . . . Anthony Donato also was represented by a one-movement *Symphony*, workmanlike but without much substance. Considered section by section Donato's work is often refreshing, but again one misses unity of the whole. Italian opera influences are here, as well as marks of the Harris style.

Beatrice Laufer's *First Symphony*, in three movements for a change, is more successful in its basic plan than in orchestration, though it lacks a conclusive ending to the last movement. . . . George Henry's *First Symphony*, a serious work which yet makes much of orchestral color, sounds as if the composer had been writing it over a long period of time. The orchestra is well handled, yet the work itself seems most inconsistent in style: folk music, Gershwin and impressionism are all present, and the unexplained appearance in the last section of a familiar hymn tune was simply bewildering. . . . Likewise there is orchestral assurance in Don Gillis's *Third Symphony* – subtitled *A Symphony for Free Men* – yet this hardly compensates for the inordinate length or obvious structure of the piece. A few motives simply repeated or treated sequentially take up much of the time; there is little real development. Why not a work on a smaller scale?

Grant Fletcher's *Song for Warriors*, based on a Slavic folksong, has an incisive theme, unmistakably Lydian. Here the orchestration is over-aggressive. . . . The *Serenade* for chamber orchestra by Arthur Berger has a curiously irrelevant title, since the music is cold and distant. The form of this short piece, much of which might have been written in the twenties, is unwarrantably loose. . . . Paul White's *Andante and Rondo* for cello and orchestra, in which Luigi Silva performed the solo part, is unpretentious and ingratiating. . . . Charles Haubiel's *Nuances*, a suite for flute and strings, is expertly orchestrated.

The symposium also included a *Suite* for strings by Radie Britain, *Introspective Poem* by William Parks Grant, *Two Pieces* for chamber orchestra by Blaise Montandon, a *Suite* for strings by Eda Rapaport, William Naylor's *Short Piece* and a *Folk Dance* by William Fichandler. . . . At one of the sessions Dr. Hanson gave first readings of four compositions by advanced composition students at the Eastman School – orchestral works by Ingram Walters, Walter Ihrke and Peter Menin (whose *Folk Overture* has since been heard elsewhere), and a setting of a Whitman text for soprano and orchestra by Floris Ferwerda.

Charles Warren Fox