

brooding. One is made glad by every such evidence of the determination on the part of our composers to hold to what is true and what is their own.

A scene from an opera, *Paolo and Francesca*, by Dorothy James, revealed another sign of sincerity, feeling and the ability to write for orchestra. Miss James, I believe, had till this concert never heard a score of her own performed. She displayed a remarkable instinct and style for her medium.

Most of the works on this year's program, in common with those of preceding years, have shown that there is something idiomatic and personal which sets our composers apart from those of Europe. Far better, they are going their own way, seeking their own expression, carrying a style that shall one day mark and distinguish America. The testimony of these concerts is that we can make music and that we will make music.

Bernard Rogers

THE COOLIDGE FESTIVAL—MUSIC AND DANCE

IN former years the programs of the Library of Congress festival of chamber music were divided about equally between music of the standard repertory and compositions played for the first time. This year's festival, which ran from April 23 to 25, brought forward only one first performance, that of Prokofieff's *Quartet*, opus 50.

The opening concert of the series was given by a group of dancers, trained by Irene Lewisohn, who performed to the Bach *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*, to a group of troubadour tunes arranged for voice, viola and harp by Carlos Salzedo, and to the Bloch *Quartet*. The middle piece, the troubadour tunes, was like some crude woodcut at the head of an old black-letter ballad broadsheet come to life. It had all the vivacity of these old dancing figures and their spontaneous casualness and frankness. Of the other two dance creations not as much can be said.

In the choreography to the Bach a male figure danced and prostrated itself before a group of women clad in curious costumes of red tights and oil-silk envelopes. In the Bloch *Quartet* a woman dressed in a billowing yellow gown lighted with violent shadows so that she looked like something designed by Rockwell

Kent had an awfully hard time deciding whether she should or should not dance in a well that was the main feature of the stage setting, enjoyed a short respite from doubt when a huge man appeared, and eventually succumbed to a lurid group of erinnyes, succubi or heebie-jeebies that seemed to be on her trail.

I suppose one might accept these choreographic accompaniments of Miss Lewisohn as purely plastic creations, but there was a vague annoying "overtone" of symbolic narrative about them. On leaving the hall one expected to find books and pamphlets on rhythmic breathing and the Oversoul for sale at the door. The trouble lay in the choice of music. The *Toccata and Fugue* is no more to be danced than the *B minor Mass*, and the Bloch *Quartet* likewise is too big in its musical conception to call for or to allow visual accompaniment. Great music is not only self-sufficient but is actually defiant of visual assistance.

The second program of the festival was given by the soprano, Nina Koshetz, and the guitar player, Miguel Llobet, who made his American debut on this occasion. Mme. Koshetz, as everyone knows, is a superb singer of concert songs, and if she would learn that the art of singing a song and the art of acting a character part are two different things at least one of her hearers would be better pleased. Mr. Llobet revealed himself as an astonishing technician choosing his program with very bad taste. He performed nothing but typical virtuoso music, full of cadenzas, last-minute touchdowns, and breath-taking monkeyshines on the high trapeze.

The third concert was in line with the contemporary interest in the music of the eighteenth century. It was given by a group of Philharmonic men conducted by Mr. Gabrilowitsch. The program consisted of symphonies by Haydn and by Frederick the Great, the sixth Brandenburg concerto, and Respighi's suite, called *The Birds*, which is an arrangement of a group of old pieces with the hen cackles and cuckoo calls it once amused composers to write.

In the fourth concert the Brosa quartet presented the new Prokofieff work. It happens to be an off year for Prokofieff in New York, and some of the exaggerated and unfair damnation that had greeted *Le Pas d'Acier* in the metropolis met the new

quartet in the capital. It proved to be typical Prokofieff—energetic, tuneful, somewhat sardonic, and youthful to the point of immaturity. Sabanayeff has written “Prokofieff is not an eaglet who will grow up to be a big eagle; he is a stabilized eaglet who will remain such.” Nevertheless the slow finale to this new quartet is a movement I should like to hear more than once before deciding that there is no maturity of feeling in all of Prokofieff.

The concluding concert of the festival was given by Holle’s Madrigal Singers, from Stuttgart, an organization new to this country. They sang German and Italian madrigals, a couple of Mozart trios, and choruses and part songs by the modern composers Petyrek, Reutter, Schönberg and Bartok. The Schönberg work, called *Peace on Earth*, opus 13, was the most important of these, but it is distinctly a piece for a big chorus and not for a madrigal group of ten. The Petyrek settings of texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* were full of tricky spots of vocal coloring and harmony. For these modern works, and for the rarely heard continental madrigals, Dr. Holle’s group is a very welcome addition to American musical affairs.

Alfred V. Frankenstein

NEW DRIFT IN GERMANY’S I.S.C.M.

IN Germany of late there has been a marked change in the place and problems of the International Society for Contemporary Music, particularly of the local groups. The I.S.C.M. was originally organized to be the agent of a musical union between different races and the pioneer of modern music among the German bourgeoisie and intellectuals, who had been uprooted by war and revolution.

The music loving Germans, after the isolation of the War, eagerly welcomed any distraction from its psychosis that would offer new fields for development and regeneration. This new musical material, originating mainly in France, Russia and Italy, reached Germany abruptly—“from another world”—without any process of gradual assimilation. The bewildered public and most musicians at first completely failed to understand it whether they accepted it, instinctively or snobbishly, or whether they disliked and stubbornly rejected it.