

never lost. By reintroduction of these themes, by restatements of movement or phrase, the whole ballet is tied together and sustained, depending as little as might be on any element of story or explanation to carry it. Candide's Panglossian introduction to the natural sciences with Cunegonde (Elinor King), and the high-powered, if unsatisfactory, seduction by Paquette (Cleo Atheneos) are moments of brilliant and juicy fooling. We may look in vain for Souls, Laments, Révoltes. We find a complete theatre-piece—smooth, wise, witty, and above all without the growing-pains evinced so often by the dance's larger undertakings. So that, whether Weidman has captured Voltaire's exact satiric intent seems to me, in the light of the entertainment offered, not worth quibbling about.

Paul Love

WASHINGTON — FESTIVAL AND EXPERIMENT

THIS year the festival of chamber music at the Library of Congress took quite a new direction. Former festivals have been primarily occasions for the performance of brand new compositions; in this one only seven of the fifteen works performed were in the contemporary idiom, and only four were new. These four were a string sextet by Bohuslav Martinu, a string quartet by Ildebrando Pizzetti, a group of short pieces for string quartet by Adolf Busch, and a wind quintet by Gustav Strube.

It was not an impressive list of novelties. The best of the works, the Martinu *Sextet*, seemed perhaps better than it really was because it was the only one that seemed to have any chance at all of comparing favorably with the Bach and Beethoven. It is a turbulent and violent piece, with its six instruments climbing all over each other in their rush and eagerness. But its turbulence is not an uncontrolled passionate tearing of its composer's shirt. It has form and direction, and the brevity of restraint. This sextet won the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge prize last year.

The Pizzetti *Quartet* struck me as being about the poorest example of this composer's work I have yet heard. Pizzetti is a thoroughly musical and thoroughly creative personality, and nothing

he does in large form can be completely bad, but this *Quartet in D* seemed to me to be quite thin and quite dull by contrast with the same composer's *Trio*. Perhaps it did not have the proper interpreters. It was played by the Busch quartet, a group of soloists who make up an ensemble of the richest conceivable sonority and brilliance, but who are at their best in German music and not in Italian. Their playing of the Beethoven *Opus 127* was extraordinarily fine, but they may have missed something of the spirit of the Latin music of Pizzetti.

Busch's own *Nine Pieces for String Quartet* proved to be a group of bagatelles of no very astounding interest, and Strube's *Wind Quintet* was not a very great success. The wind quintet seems to be a hopelessly inflexible medium. It is true that a good many composers of great genius have written wind quintets, but they are all as dull as ditchwater. Mozart wrote glorious concertos for the horn and the flute and the bassoon and the clarinet, and some of his greatest chamber music is for combinations of wind and string instruments, but his chamber music for wind instruments alone is about as interesting as a series of first year harmony exercises. Mr. Strube did what he could with this unhappy and unfortunate combination, which never should have been inaugurated as a traditional ensemble, but the paralyzing stiffness of the medium prevented his achieving the results which his genial personality and distinguished musicianship usually attain.

Of the other contemporary music at the festival two works, the Copland suite and the Hindemith *Kammermusik* are considered elsewhere in my chronicle of the Chicago season. There remains only the Stravinsky *Octet* to be discussed. When I first heard this work at the Salzburg festival in 1924 it seemed I had never heard so glittering and well-oiled a musical machine. With the passage of time the work has lost its charm, and at Washington was interesting only as a historical relic. It is a connecting link between the war-time Stravinsky of *The Story of a Soldier* and the *Concertino* for string quartet and the neo-classical Stravinsky of today. It shows the style of Stravinsky throwing off the fantastic extravagance of the war years and settling into the more restrained and mature manner

of *Oedipus Rex* and *The Symphony of the Psalms*. But judged by any absolute standard it is just another piece for wind instruments.

Any review of the festival must touch upon two of its most interesting features. One was a performance by students of the Juilliard school of Cimarosa's *Matrimonio Segreto*. This was done in English, and was not only sung in English but was understood as English, and anyone who heard it could not help but come away convinced of the justice of the English side in that old and somewhat silly row. And the high point of the festival was the performance by the Kroll sextet of Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht*. Once in a while fine performers will come together with a great work and an inspired moment. That sudden, unpredictable, unrepeatable thing happened the morning Kroll and his associates played *Verklärte Nacht*.

There was discussion at this festival about the make-up of the programs. Many felt that in an American festival in which much stress is placed on modern music, American music ought to be represented by more than one composition. This is an old row, too, but there is nothing silly about it. The Library of Congress festivals ever since they began, have served better than anything else as a kind of barometer, showing us the state of the musical weather at the time they are given, but no particular attempt seems to be made to show us the quality of musical creation in our own country.



Two days after the festival closed the Philadelphia Orchestra gave a concert in its home city for the exclusive benefit of a Washington audience, which heard the music through a new and remarkable kind of amplifier recently developed in the Bell Telephone laboratories. Large claims have been made for this amplifier, and the publicity will, no doubt, be kept up. Wherefore a few remarks about it now.

We were told that this amplifier would reproduce the entire range of audible sound frequencies, which it undoubtedly does, and which ordinary amplifiers do not do. We were told that it would distribute the sound throughout the hall more fully than the actually present orchestra. This it undoubtedly does *not* do.

But the most remarkable feature of the new apparatus is its ability to create the illusion of sound perspective. Its tones do not come from one single spot, but seem to be distributed over a certain rather small area. Furthermore the amplifier can produce the effect of sound in motion. In an experimental demonstration a sounding tambourine seemed to be carried all over the front of the stage. This feature of the equipment was not particularly impressive while reproducing the music of the Philadelphia Orchestra because the area from which the sound originated seemed only about a yard square. But if sound-perspective amplifiers like these can be made to work with sound films the movies will have a new device that will add realism to talking pictures.

The value of the thing as an aid to motion pictures is further indicated by the fact that the amplifier reproduces human voices better than any other electrical equipment so far heard. It does not reproduce the orchestra nearly so well. One cannot cavil at its reproduction of any one orchestral quality, but its presentation of the whole is overcast by a kind of electric scream. In brief, one may say that this new sound transmission is far more effective than the average radio broadcast, but far less effective than the sound of a good record played on a good phonograph. Unless the engineers who developed it succeed in greatly improving its reproduction of timbres their new device will remain something of no particular value. Certainly one would not want to hear concerts of this sort more than once, since one can get much better musical results with a phonograph at home.

The device, which Stokowski called the "ceno-orchestra," can lead to grotesque exaggerations of musical effects. Stokowski controlled the volume by amplifier dials located in the hall in Washington. Thus he gilded his own lily, for the orchestra in Philadelphia played with all the dynamic shading commonly employed, and that should have been enough. Stokowski added to it by fading the soft passages to inaudibility and building the loud passages into monstrosities of power. By so doing he not only threw all out of proportion the original dynamic conception, but wrecked the proportions of tone color intended by the

composers. He seemed to have forty foot trumpets and eighty foot trombones in his orchestra, while the rest of the instruments remained of normal size. *Alfred V. Frankenstein*

CRUSADING FOR AMERICANS AT ROCHESTER

WITH the projected performance of *Emperor Jones* in Berlin last winter cancelled (even before the Hitler regime) "because whatever the merits of the work, the German government feels it unfair to use public funds in these difficult times to promote the work of foreigners instead of native composers," a reciprocal feeling is inevitable that a little chauvinism, discreet or even slightly indiscreet, might not be inappropriate in America. The most concentrated effort in this direction during the last six or seven years has been at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, inspired by the crusading spirit of Howard Hanson, whose platform it is that all-American programs are necessary and desirable in order to give promising talents a hearing which will promote their development.

The festival this season (held May 2nd to May 5th), like its two predecessors aimed to present a cross-section of American music. The programs revealed a range of styles from that of Horatio Parker to Lazare Saminsky's. The first concert, presented by the School Chorus and orchestra, was made up of works too well known to need comment here—*Keltic Legend* by Lawrence Powell, the *Evocation* of Loeffler, *Harold Harfager* by Parker, and the Suite from Carpenter's *Birthday of the Infanta*.

The second program, given by the School's highly proficient chamber orchestra under Karl van Haesen, was made up of ten works. Bernard Rogers' *Rhapsody Nocturne* is sensitive music, emotional and exquisite with that orchestral color-sense which is characteristic of all his work. Roy Harris' *Andantino* for strings and woodwinds, romantic in feeling, has a chorale-like beginning and end, and a middle section which whips up speed in Russian-folk manner—a strange inconsistency of style for so short a piece. But it is interesting, nevertheless. Samin-