

front which one has come to expect in this city.

The Society of Native American Composers gave an opening program quite different from the badly ventilated concerts we have been used to from this society. It included Adolph Weiss' *Passacaglia for Horn and Viola* which, though obviously *Gelegenheitsmusik*, made skillful polyphonic use of the unusual sonority in a modal tonality. The *Woodwind Quartet* by Clifford Vaughan was a fresh little piece with charm, wit and an effortless fluency which managed to stay just this side of unobliging lighthandedness.

Ingolf Dahl

FOR SAN FRANCISCO, ORCHESTRAL MODERNS

THEY are writing symphonies again, if not for the first time in their lives – witness Milhaud, Stravinsky and Hindemith among the recently created Americans, and Schuman and Harris of the native-born who have been at it for a long time. A distinguished new addition to their works is the *Fifth* by Alexander Tansman, which he conducted at recent concert of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, and which has so far been heard elsewhere only in Cincinnati and Washington. This work is much in the character of the times. It is firmly and compactly built in the modern "classic" manner; the point of programming it immediately after Mozart's *Haffner Symphony* was well taken. In form and use of the orchestra as a plastic rather than a coloristic medium, the piece belongs to the 1940's; it belongs to Tansman by virtue of its restrained, finely drawn, reserved, but deftly telling and eloquent lyricism. In this, as in other recent works of the same composer, one may perceive that Tansman has finally made his escape from the fascinations of Stravinskyan rhythm.

At an earlier concert this season, Pierre Monteux put together a Pan American program, giving us the first North American performance of *Five Short Pieces for String Orchestra* by Domingo Santa Cruz and the first local performances of William Schuman's third symphony and Villa-Lobos' *Discovery of Brazil*, as well as the *Indian Symphony* by Chavez, which is no longer a novelty here or anywhere. The work by Santa Cruz, who is dean of the Faculty of Arts in the University of Chile, was brought to this country by Lincoln Kirstein, who wanted to use it for a Spanish-Colonial ballet called *The Noble Dancers of the Viceroy*. It should be admirably adapted to that purpose when conditions permit the ballet projects to continue, for it is very beautifully made, firm, luminous and sound in textures and rhythm.

The Santa Cruz, was, incidentally, the only Latin work on the program without folkloristic implications. In that respect it represents a departure from the norm of the better Latin music we have been hearing. On the other hand Copland's *Billy the Kid*, with which Monteux opened his season, represents a departure from the North American norm in being as folkloristic as all get out, and very effectively so. But it was not so many years ago that Copland himself was decrying the use of folk material in this very magazine as "providing a program for music" rather than genuine materials for music. Well, Copland has learned since that Carl Sandburg's *Songbag* does contain some very good material; I bring the matter up simply to suggest that broad theories and general programs seldom last long, and that genuine creative imagination is never limited by such ideas, even its own. The fact remains, nevertheless, that the great majority of the better Latin works are likely to be based on folklore and the great majority of North American works not based on folklore; I suppose this has to do with the fact that the folk life of the Latin countries is more homogenous than ours and is likely to exert a much stronger influence on contemporary urban culture.

The Villa-Lobos piece, at least in the first of its four suites, which is all Monteux gave us, proved to be one of that composer's lesser achievements. The Brazilian carnival fantasy for piano and orchestra, entitled *The Youthful Momus*, conducted by Maxim Schapiro with the Symphony later on, is better, but I have a notion that this composer's brutally original nature is most powerfully visible in his quintets for saxophone, piano, harp celesta and xylophone, or some such fantastic combinations.

The Schuman symphony is an austere powerful work, intense, big, dramatic and broad of scope. It is unquestionably the best new piece of the year so far. Other good orchestral pieces, however, were a virile, straightforward *Concerto for Orchestra* by Ellis Kohs, a young Californian now in the Army, and a deeply emotional *Ode* by Frederick Jacobi, inspired by a passage in the Hebrew Sabbath Service. Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand* and Shostakovitch's *Seventh Symphony*, quartet and quintet need no comment at this date.

Important works in smaller form were Prokofiev's gorgeous *Sextet* for woodwinds and strings (1923) played by the chamber music society known as the Music Lovers; the suave *Second Quartet* of Vittorio Rieti, written for and first performed by the San Francisco String Quartet; and a tuneful quartet by William Bergsma given by the same organization.

Among novelties not worth the trouble, to my way of thinking, were Prokofiev's *Russian Overture*, weaker than Prokofiev has any right to be; Samuel Barber's pale purple *Violin Concerto*, José Iturbi's trivial *Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra*, and a nauseating little item by William Reddick called *Espanbarlem* which Iturbi inflicted on us in the role of guest conductor. An all-American Young People's concert conducted by Rudolph Ganz (Hadley, MacDowell, Still, Sousa and Herbert Haufrecht's dreary imitation of *Peter and the Wolf* entitled *Ferdinand the Bull*) was a perfect example of how not to conduct an All-American Young People's concert.

New things scheduled for performance this season include Milhaud's *Opus Americanum Number 2*, an orchestral piece about to become a ballet; David Diamond's *First Symphony*; the *Fourth Symphony* of Vaughan Williams, Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*; and a quartet by Jean Françaix.

Alfred Frankenstein

BARTOK'S LATEST; "AMERICAN REPERTORY"

THE most important of the novelties brought forward by The Cleveland Orchestra during the course of its twenty-fifth anniversary was the *Violin Concerto* of Béla Bartók. The soloist was the orchestra's new concertmaster, Tossy Spivakovsky. Its success at the regular concerts was so great that Rodzinski decided to repeat the performance with Spivakovsky in Pittsburgh, where it met the same enthusiasm. Bartók wrote the piece in Budapest between August 1937 and December 1938, dedicating it to the Hungarian violinist, Zoltan Székely who presented it on April 23, 1939, with the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. The Cleveland performance, the first in America, was given January 21, 1943.

The *Concerto* is cast in the traditional three movements, but with a difference. The principal themes of the first movement re-appear in varied form in the last. Indeed, the final movement, in rondo form, is conceived as a free variation on the opening, and contains only one wholly new theme. The first movement is in sonata form, without an introductory orchestral exposition. The violin announces the broad and passionate main theme after six measures for harp and plucked strings. It immediately proceeds to develop the theme, introducing a canonic treatment of it by the whole orchestra. Violin and orchestra join in a vigorous presentation of the fugato-like transition. Bartók himself calls the legato second subject, "a kind of twelve-tone theme, yet with pronounced tonality." By "pronounced tonality" he undoubtedly refers to the fact that an internal pedal