

and heavy songs by Normand Lockwood and Melville Smith, Douglas Moore's elegant Shakespearian settings, a simple and feeling tune by Ernst Bacon. Others were by David Van Vactor, Leo Sowerby, Quincy Porter, William T. Ames, Ben Quashen and Harry K. Lamont, none of whose efforts made a lasting impression on me. The parodies by Edward Ballantine, though amusing, are hardly to be considered as a contribution to song literature. All in all there was great variety, but not much net profit. I think if Miss Fairbank limited herself to several groups, each with only three or four songs by one composer, the contrast could be used to advantage. Here there were too many dribbles, all clashing against each other, so that even a good song had difficulty asserting itself. A proper setting would do wonders for even the lesser lights.

Donald Fuller

## SCHÖNBERG'S BIRTHDAY; THOMSON'S BUGLES

THE second instalment of the New York season has been much more exciting than the first, both in the quality of new music presented and in the manner of its performance. Several beautiful new works decorated the period and though the time of the holidays was, as usual, weak, this year seems to be a good one for living music.

The celebrations surrounding the seventieth birthday of Arnold Schönberg provided a number of opportunities to hear his music in New York under excellent conditions. Artur Rodzinski did a superb job of the *Ode to Napoleon* with the strings of the Philharmonic, Edward Steuermann at the piano and Mack Harell reading the Byron poem. The performance was not only spirited and understanding but distinguished by its accuracy of intonation; Rodzinski trained each section alone until pitches and dynamics were solid and then worked the combination into really inspired delivery. It so frequently happens that an orchestra playing a dissonant chromatic work (twelve-tone or not) throws up its hands and aims only in the general direction of the correct pitches, that one can not be too grateful to Rodzinski for his brilliant insight and musicianship in insisting on care and justice towards this fine work.

Kurt List, analyzing the *Ode* in these pages, referred to the sound of the final section as an "exalted glow." This ending is a marvelous contrivance, balancing and shifting like a wave; at once tender and impersonal, it is a berceuse for a national hero. In fact the whole work is Schönberg in an utterly new and fascinating role, *Pierrot Lunaire* turned

civic, optimistic and public. The melodrama sounds a little like that of *Pierrot* though much less exaggerated, and the music itself is less ornate but every bit as moving and new.

Leopold Stokowski conducted the New York City Symphony in Schönberg's *Chamber Symphony Number 2*. This work was begun in 1906 and completed in 1940 but shows no joints or crevices. A shaky rendition somewhat clouded the piece but I was able to gather that it is an intensely personal and tragic work with more than one of those magic seals which have been the Schönberg signature from the earliest days on. The last section contains a stunning descent over a pedal-point that reminds one of a similar passage in his *Pelléas and Mélisande*.

The I.S.C.M., at the Dalcroze Auditorium of the City Center, held a reception in honor of the birthday during which Edward Steuermann played the *Three Piano Pieces*, Opus 11; *Five Piano Pieces*, Opus 23; and Ethel Luening sang five songs from various opus numbers accompanied by Fritz Jahoda. This was the first performance of the piano pieces I had heard. They left me wondering where most pianists have been for the last thirty years. The pieces in Opus 23 make a grand sound and open up many new keyboard ideas, though it is possible they might take a bit of care to prepare and are, of course, a challenge both to the fingers and the head. Steuermann played these works in his usual concentrated and authoritative way.

Virgil Thomson, as guest conductor with the Philadelphia Orchestra, presented a new *Suite for Orchestra* which consists of five of his portraits beautifully made for orchestra. Thomson's music is always intimate and of a sociable nature. This set of pieces is drawn from his observations about several of his friends in the form of portraits so that one sits down for a companionable peek into the family album of tonal photographs. The pieces have all the free informality essential to dealing with living models; all ears are not the same shape, a leg is here a bit long, one nose points, another does not. So there is no purely musical form in the traditional sense but a swift tracing of the salient design out of each subject's "life-line." Three of them I found particularly attractive. The *Bugles and Birds* (a portrait of Picasso) is sturdy, dissonant and hard, and has several soft hoverings of the woodwinds for relief. The following *Cantabile for Strings* (Nicholas Chatelain) is a consonant and serene polyphonic piece, melancholy in expression. The *Fugue* (Alexander Smallens) is built on strong fanfare material with

rapid scales and makes a very bright sound. The orchestration of these works is adroit and effective, employing the gamut of modern individualized colors.

Dean Dixon in the superb concert that introduced the American Youth Orchestra at Carnegie Hall included a *Suite Dansante*, Opus 8, by Nicolas Rakov, eclectic and vaudevillian, and the *Townpiper Music* by Richard Mohaupt, which was quite amusingly made up out of many wiggly woodwind tunes all sounding gay and walkable. Dixon has set up a fine and exciting orchestra of young people, from whom one can hopefully await the performance of serious new music both because of the aliveness of the ensemble and its spirited leadership.

William Grant Still's *Old California* which Pierre Monteux conducted with the Philharmonic is one of his lesser pieces and really doesn't get much beyond being a possible movie score, though Monteux' masterly baton almost made it sound credible.

Leopold Stokowski's Christmas present at the City Center included Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* and Nicolai Berezowski's *Christmas Festival Overture*, a piece built on Russian children's tunes that sounds as comfortable and cheering as logs crackling on the hearth while you trim the tree. The fade-out shows grandfather's sleigh vanishing round the bend while the little bells jingle away in the hills.

A group of compositions by Harry Hewitt consisting of songs with accompaniment of orchestra or piano and one piece for orchestra, *Prelude to Spoon River*, were played by Joseph Barone with the New York Little Symphony at Carnegie Chamber Hall.

The big chamber music event, to my notion, was the John Kirkpatrick concert at Times Hall which gave us Carl Ruggles' *Evocations*, *Four Chants for Piano*. Kirkpatrick played these in a wonderfully rich and penetrating way. They are disquisitions of devout belief which take their place alongside the works of Victoria and Gibbons both for the purity of sound they share with the works of these composers and the high contemplative reason which informs their expression. The piano is praying in each of the movements, spinning a serene and vocable mantram and giving forth a space-filled resonance that seems to be the by-product of some kind of saintly introspection. The presence of this pure polyphony, which instead of joggling out a distortion of eighteenth century counterpoint presents a completely fresh and real integration in terms of today's sensitivities, is comforting. I, for one, am always glad

to know when someone gets where he is going, as Ruggles has; and to know that he didn't get tangled up with that invention out of science-fiction, the Stravinsky time-machine.

Kirkpatrick also played the *Third Sonata in E* by Ross Lee Finney. It has a beautiful slow movement, though I found the work in general more eclectic than was necessary considering that the ideas are strong and could support a more consistent idiom.

Lopatnikoff's *Violin Concerto in D Major*, Opus 26 was played at Town Hall by Joseph Fuchs and exhibited again that composer's fine workmanship as well as his occasional slips from thematic grace. The opening Allegro is very trim and vigorous and is followed by a lovely slow movement full of singing and quiet, but the third part, although developed in the same orderly manner, is afflicted by the kind of corny material that could only be done justice on a paying radio program. The shock is quite severe after one has perked up his ears and heart for two fine and serious movements.

The new English composer, Edmund Rubbra, was represented at Times Hall when Dorcey Smith and Louise Behrend played his *Second Sonata* for violin and piano. I must be an old fuddy-dud for I found not a whit of life in the piece which seems to stream on almost indefinitely, sounding plush and lax with glimpses of the whole world, animal, mineral and vegetable, on the route. Now we sing *Cherry Ripe*, now we dance a foreign dance, and now we wail, oh wail.

Rose Dirman, soprano, accompanied by Vladimir Dukelsky presented at Times Hall in their concert of Unfamiliar Music Old and New a group of four Soviet songs to texts by Pushkin, and an American group consisting of Dukelsky's own *Three Chinese Songs*, Hindemith's *Echo, In the Woods* by Paul Bowles, and the *Ballyhoo Zoo* by Elie Siegmeister. I found the Russian works had an amazing similarity of romantic speech; they were well composed and quite forgettable. Dukelsky's Chinese songs are sweetly impressionistic if patronizing, the Hindemith, quite a fine piece of his recent style; but the Bowles song was the pick of the afternoon. The simplicity and tenderness of the vocal contour is a great pleasure and one feels consistency and assurance throughout its forest-haunted length. Rose Dirman's clear musical voice was well suited to this song; indeed she sang all the modern music excellently.

Fritz Jahoda played at Town Hall *Two Preludes* by Frederick Hart, *Two Piano Pieces* by Norman Lloyd and William Schuman's *Three--Score*

Set which is a brief but enjoyable piece.

Boris Koutzen presented his *String Quartet in B* at Town Hall during his violin concert. This is stream-of-tunefulness music. I had always wondered why Glazounov, Fauré and several other composers put me to sleep so promptly until I realized that this kind of music is essentially lullaby stuff and murmurs on without spaces in any of the parts. While the Koutzen quartet did not put me to sleep, it does have a dangerously ambrosial character and is far too continuous for my taste.

The Forum Group of the I.S.C.M., a growing and vital medium for the less frequently heard composers, is giving a large program of concerts this year on the air and in public recitals. The music presented is, naturally enough, of a wide variety of persuasions and shows plainly the number of allegiances to which the members, particularly the younger generation, are subject. This is all to the good and makes for interest in the discussion period which follows each concert. The concerts held at the Dalcroze Auditorium of the City Center have so far given Paul Schwartz' *Chamber Concerto for Two Pianos*, Elliot Carter's *Pastoral for English Horn and Piano*, *Le Chemin D'Ecume (Six Asiatic Poems)* by Jacques de Menasce, Harold Brown's *String Quartet*, *Three Dutch Songs* by Johan Franco, *Five Pieces for Piano* by Jeanette Siegel, *Three Songs* by Ned Rorem and a *Piano Sonata* by William Ames. Of these Elliott Carter's work seemed to experiment with texture and tone color the most directly and had some effective slow sections, enlivened by interesting piano sounds. Menasce's six songs were smoothly written and evocative, well made for the voice and clear in texture. Jeanette Siegel's pieces seemed to me to show signs of an original and firm talent and had space and melodic power in their substance as well as a new kind of basic nervousness which held the interest. The Rorem songs were well written in the French style only a good bit heavier in sound.

Lou Harrison

## JEROME MOROSS; YOUNG MAN GOES NATIVE

JEROME MOROSS' *First Symphony* is a lusty and joyful work, full of humor and brightness and charm. Like its predecessors, *Tall Story*, *Suzanna* and *Frankie and Johnnie* (the last now added to the repertory of the Ballet Russe, six years after its Chicago performances), it is an attempt to write an American music based upon the use of native American materials.