

animated textures reflect contemporary international style and the forms are self-renewing, not limited by the length of folk tunes.

Donald Fuller

SPRING STYLES IN NEW YORK

SEVERAL older musical styles unexpectedly burst into bud this spring and delighted everyone. They also exhibited, on the ground, a proud sapling or two which they had evidently fathered during the winter.

Thus the Cuban-American Music Group presented, at the Museum of Modern Art, a concert of works which, except for two recent pieces, were written in Cuba during the twenties. The scoring of three songs from Amadeo Roldan's *Motivos de Son* for small chamber orchestra supplemented by claves, bongos, marimbula and piano, creates a sharp, rhythmically shattered sonority. The work is a veritable tonal instruction sheet on how to break down folk material – Afro-Cuban in this instance – into usable matter for composition, how to mix classical and native instruments and how to shape the whole. But one is really not aware, in this model divertissement, of the technical address, so complete and charming is the integration of means and substance. Roldan was certainly one of the Americas' most gifted composers.

The *Primera Suite Cubana* by Alejandro Caturla (who also died four or five years ago) is a tense, rather strange sounding piece for woodwinds, brass and piano. The gloomy manner of the *Comparsa*, which is constructed around a piano ostinato, is attributable to the use of the lowest woodwind registers. The *Danza* is more brilliant but the whole lacks Roldan's clarity. Also played were Pedro Sanjuan's *Sones de Castilla*, extended pictures of Spanish landscapes, and Joaquin Nin-Culmell's lyrical *Quintet* for piano and strings, which was modelled on Falla's *Harpsichord Concerto*.

The brilliant new works were by José Ardévol, professor of composition at the Havana Conservatory, and very young Julian Orbon. Ardévol's third *Sonata a Tres*, for two trumpets and trombone, is made up of clean and lively neo-classic lines well put together. It has a slightly heady sound. Orbon's *Homage to Soler* (one of the inventors, with Domenico Scarlatti, of the Spanish style) is an especially beautiful and sharply dissonant reflection on this antique composer, using motive fragments directly out of his works.

Virgil Thomson's *Sonata da Chiesa* received its belated first New

York performance under the composer's direction at a concert by the New York Little Symphony. It is a modern version of the Italian church sonata, and its scoring for a fascinating combination of E \flat clarinet, trumpet in D, French horn, trombone and viola would sound well under the conditions of church acoustics. The opening Chorale, a large binary form, consists of antiphonies. Midway and at the end all instruments join in, and thus the two large parts are bound together. A Tango serves as the temptation section, a symbolic descent into Hell. The brilliant and thoroughly worked-out Fugue, which concludes this exciting churchly confession, seems to set up, like a summa theologica, an unanswerable formality of faith.

The I.S.C.M. presented a program including Artur Schnabel's *Sonata* for violin and piano, Miriam Gideon's *The Hound of Heaven*, Hindemith's *Übung in drei Stücken* and Roussel's *Quartet in D Major*. Miss Gideon's setting has a diffuse harmonic texture, but it contains some striking melodic ideas and is well conceived in its scoring for voice, oboe and string trio. The big surprise was Schnabel's sonata, a lengthy four-movement work which is difficult for both instruments. It is like no music I have heard before, almost completely polyphonic, yet with the large form kept clear. The idiom seems near that of Schönberg as does the philosophic outlook. (It also suggests Roger Sessions.) One is reminded of them by the deep and dignified meditative content.

An I.S.C.M. Forum Group program included John Ward's *Three Chaconnes* for voice and piano in the pleasant Vaughan Williams style, and Dika Newlin's Mahleresque and neo-academic song, *Bredon Hill*. Ben Weber's *Sonata* for 'cello and piano, Opus 17, is a recent development of the twelve-tone syntax with a relaxed, almost Schubertian quality about its vocable melodic contours.

Norman Dello Joio's *Symphony* for voices and orchestra on a text by Stephen Vincent Benét was given by Robert Shaw and the Collegiate Chorale at a concert of Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians. In this work, Dello Joio has moved away from a strictly art-music style. His former delicate lyric powers have yielded to a vested-interest texture characteristic of the radio and movie world and are here greatly blown up. The work lacks real musical ideas despite its "symphony-of-a-thousand" extent and scoring, and seems questionably sincere in its mechanical patriotic devotions. A number of slick popular arrangements preceded the symphony which, when it began, sounded very little different in subject or manner.

A Philharmonic Young People's Concert, under Rudolph Ganz's direction, presented the young pianist, Joyce Paull, in a performance of the *Divertissement on a Children's Song* for piano and string orchestra by Jacques de Menasce, a charming and adroit piece. It is a short set of variations in the French manner, with the leading role taken by the piano and tasteful comments provided by the strings. Phillipa Duke Schuyler, fourteen, and Edward Earle, thirteen, had works played which informed us of the progress of the youngest generation. I was rather amazed. Mr. Earle's piece, *The Misbehaving Clocks*, which was scored by Charles Wakefield Cadman, showed no embarrassment about using polytonality, atonality and free counterpoint. Miss Schuyler's *Manhattan Nocturne* is completely her own work. The scoring – for large orchestra – of this well put together tone poem is professional and there is a perfectly natural urban lyricism, lightly poised between Gershwin and Delius. At a tender composing age she already speaks easily in an idiom of consistent middle dissonance. What is going to happen when several more generations are raised on minimum modernity?

The New York Chamber Orchestra gave the first American performance of Shostakovitch's *Pantomime* and *Sarcastic March* from his music to *Hamlet*, the usual smart-aleck stuff of his youthful disillusionment. Tibor Serly's *Transylvanian Rhapsody* and John Klenner's *Fantasia* for viola and orchestra put me in mind of the Hollywood "situation." Ask any movie arranger what he is working on and he will promptly answer, "A Symphony." Both pieces imply that their composers have done much professional fixing up for big time, while working in off hours on a "serious" piece.

Joan Field gave the premiere of an extended *Sonatina* for violin and piano by Charles Sydney Freed. This has good workmanship, but its popularist romantic texture today gives it a curious ivory tower feeling. Adrian Fischer's piano recital offered Prokofiev's ugly *Sixth Sonata* and Paul Bowles's *Sonatina* (1932), eclectic in style and a little vague in form. Four of Jacques de Menasce's fine French songs, performed by Annette Royak, showed again his delicate feeling for melodic line and appropriate texture.

Temple Emanu-El presented its annual festival of American music. It was a pleasure to hear the scrawny but luminous *Heliodore* by Horatio Parker, whose works are regrettably not often performed. Lazare Saminsky's *Prelude to Man*, in his French quasi-Hebraic style, though asym-

metrical and impetuous in form, was well written for voices. There was an excerpt from Hanson's *Lament for Beowulf*, and shorter choral pieces by Bernard Rogers, Normand Lockwood, Elliott Carter, Randall Thompson and Virgil Thomson. Miriam Gideon's *The Hound of Heaven*, already discussed, received its premiere during this festival, which also included violin and piano works by Rebecca Clarke, Milhaud and Hindemith.

Lou Harrison

VARIATIONS FOR A JUBILEE

IN the Golden Jubilee celebration of Cincinnati's symphony orchestra contemporary interest centered on a contest and a grand American collaboration, entitled *Jubilee Variations*. The contest was won by William Grant Still with his *Festive Overture*, played in January; the *Variations* were presented late in March.

Eugene Goossens, now in his fourteenth season as conductor, offered ten American composers a striking A major *alla breve* theme, general indications of tempo and key, and finished off the resultant composition with a strong and extended finale of his own. The composers, in the order of their appearance, are Paul Creston, Aaron Copland, Deems Taylor, Howard Hanson, William Schuman, Walter Piston, Roy Harris, Anis Fuleihan, Bernard Rogers, and Ernest Bloch. With intelligent planning, a surprising degree of continuity and unity has been maintained, despite the individual personalities clearly evident in most of the variations. Similar in character were the allegro movements by Copland and Piston, both of them polyphonic and strongly rhythmic. Schuman wrote an effective four-part canonic piece for strings, the most quiet and expressive section of the work. Harris came dangerously close to overworking an ostinato figure derived from the opening notes of the theme. Rogers caught the fancy of the audience with the esoteric Oriental coloring of his *Variation alla Cinese*.

The Jubilee season brought to Cincinnati also, in the way of contemporary works, Heifetz' performance of Gruenberg's lengthy pseudo-nationalistic *Violin Concerto*, a week after its Philadelphia premiere. Hindemith's *Metamorphosis*, Stravinsky's *Dumbarton Oaks*, and Goossens' sensitive orchestrations of piano pieces by Debussy and Ravel were mid-season fare. Spring concerts presented Kabalevsky's *Second Symphony*; Haussermann's clearly constructed, conservative *Rondo Carnavalesque*;