

and the tender, the stark severity, with its vibrant sonority, when he writes a religious piece – he always seems to ring new changes on these sentiments. The freshness of his inspiration remains a matter for wonder.

No other work of Hindemith has impressed me so for its imagination. Strict formal devices are always used with a purpose, not as an easy means of getting across a given tract of space. Hindemith, generally denounced for his prosody, was hardly less successful than others who have attempted Whitman settings. At any rate the poem is really projected. And I found it not at all disturbing that in his battle scene he used several well-known musical tricks to suggest armed conflict. This seemed only another indication of the humanization in the expressive message which Hindemith strives for throughout. Too much recitative in the solo parts occasionally stops the flow of this large construction. But its broad measures are generally exposed with command and great power.

Donald Fuller

MODERNISM "SACRED AND PROFANE"

LAZARE Saminsky's *Requiem* for chorus, soloists and orchestra (National Orchestral Association), commissioned by the Alice M. Ditson Fund, is an ambitious work, fragmentary in construction. In seven shortish sections Saminsky lays bare his meditations on the subject of death. The third piece, *A World Beyond the Uplands*, is an instrumental interlude to a poem by his wife, Lillian Morgan Saminsky (in whose memory the *Requiem* was written), beautifully scored for upper register instruments and very imaginative in design. Parts of the work dealing with death-the-skeleton were nasty-sounding and murky in color, frequently cut off short. Saminsky's detail throughout was of far greater interest than his somewhat unstable layout. His work has, however, an imaginative warmth and resonance. The same concert also offered first hearings of Robert Ward's vigorous *Jubilation, An Overture*, and George Kleinsinger's *Fantasy* for violin and orchestra.

An English program by this same orchestra introduced the overlong *Violin Concerto* by Richard Arnell (Harold Kohon, soloist), which was "stream of tunefulness" in idiom. Stanley Bate in his *Sinfonietta Number 2* is the composer primeval who scorns such civilities as counterpoint or variation. His ideas are given out in unpremeditated chunks by a forcefully scored orchestra. None of them can stand such cruel treatment. Another premiere, by Dean Dixon and the American Youth Orchestra, was David Block's *Symphonic Poem* – based on *The Tale of a Pogrom* – which I found fuller of catsup than gore. But Henry Brant's *Dedication in Memory of a Great Man* was a skilled and curiously stirring piece. A personality of surprising breadth lay behind its frank agonies, one capable of an unusually

wide integration of eclectic thought into private substance.

A new *Concertino* for oboe, horn and strings by Arthur Kreutz, solemn, respectable and vague in the Roy Harris way, was performed on an all-American concert by the Teachers' College of Columbia University. It derives from Harris not only in its harmony and texture but in its praiseworthy attempt to write nobly, entertainment value or no. The result is a kind of boredom one can admire. Harold Kohon, as conductor of the American Chamber Music Ensemble, presented first performances of Eda Rapoport's *Lament*, Johan Franco's *Suite* for string orchestra and Jean Miller's *Divertimento*. Only the last was listenable, with its rather neat cheer and very able scoring. Mrs. Rapoport's piece labored over a number of inexplicable silences and curious phrase confusions, while Franco's work cracked up in an unplanned morass of textural ineptitudes.

The American Guild of Organists held its Spring Music Festival here during May. The organ, our least defended orphan of the musical storm, has to shift for itself or beg the dubious mercies of the clergy. Manhattan has a large number of especially good instruments in easily accessible places, so we really could direct a little more attention to this medium. Poulenc's beautiful and dramatic *Concerto* for organ, strings and kettledrums, along with Leo Sowerby's "*Classic*" *Concerto* for organ and strings (E. Power Biggs at the console of Columbia University's St. Paul's Chapel), were interesting and exciting to hear. Watching a timpanist pound away just back of the Bible lectern is itself a high heretical pleasure. The strings, of course, sound marvelously in a stone or brick edifice and are surprisingly beautiful with the organ. Sowerby's piece is a quite sustained polyphonic achievement in middle-dissonant style. It never stops, however; one feels that the big build-ups might pause for just one breath before the big moment comes.

Still in the bosom of the church was an evening of music by contemporaries, composed especially for the Jewish service, at the Park Avenue Synagogue. Alexander Tansman, William Grant Still, Arthur Berger, Nicolai Berezowsky, Roy Harris and Isidor Geller contributed works. I liked best an extremely decorative (in the arabesque sense) *Reader's Kaddish* by Ernst Lévy, with rushing intensities in polyphony, and an accomplished vocal solo, *May the Words* by Paul Pisk, in the early Schönberg manner, fully turned in form and of clean workmanship. But I was shocked by Kurt Weill's impudence in setting the *Kiddush* (the Sanctification) as a low-down second act finale for a musical.

Maro Ajemian, with Alan Hovhaness at the second piano, performed in Town Hall the brightly successful introduction to New York of the latter's *Mihr*. This is another of his intoxicating works in the Middle-Eastern style, well-shaped and beautifully ornamented. *Four Sonatas* for

prepared piano by John Cage were also heard. Because of their extremely refined and delicate scale of volume, these pieces did not register with the full impact they give in a small room. Here Cage begins to slip in occasional uses of unprepared tones and shows interest in tonal organization. Several of the pieces have a folkish quality, and one simply glitters with swift and impetuous harplike sweeps.

Two preludes and a *Portrait* by Paul Bowles, which were written at different periods, made one realize that his works of ten years ago are quite as effective as his recent ones. Bowles is obviously the Handel kind of composer who shows his true self early in his career and avoids the "period" developments. Two more of his piano pieces, *La Cuelga* and *Carretera de Estepona*, were played by Hazel Griggs. And Carolyn and Earle Blakeslee sang the lovely *Acht Kanonen* by Hindemith, which are entirely simple and touching essays in the canon form on excellent texts in the manner of epigrams.

A recent program of the ISCM Forum Group included Ben Weber's clear and amiable *Five Bagatelles* for piano; their twelve-tone idiom is simple and their expression agreeable. Kurt List's *Variations on a Theme by Alban Berg* (the opening phrase of the *Lyric Suite*) tends in several sections to motor paralysis. Though utterly undramatic in outline, this work still has a real and communicative lyric life. It is rather like a placid pond with only slight ripples on the surface which yet reflects a surprising amount of sky. Louise Talma's *Three Invocations to the Blessed Virgin* were in a bright Ravelian style, Jeannette Siegel's *Piano Sonata* in a grim biting manner with little sonority. Vivian Fine's *Three Pieces* for violin and piano and Normand Lockwood's *Seventh String Quartet* were each eclectic, Miss Fine's selectedly so (mostly Shostakovich and Prokofiev) and Lockwood's abandonedly so.

Lou Harrison

MILHAUD'S ORPHEE AND THE BELLS

TWO dramatic works by Darius Milhaud, separated in their dates of composition by more than two decades, were presented at the University of Chicago on April 26. The earlier piece, the chamber opera *Les malheurs d'Orphée*, had been presented only once before in this country, nearly twenty years ago in a Pro Musica concert in New York. The more recent work, the ballet *The Bells*, received its world premiere on this occasion.

Les malheurs d'Orphée is one of those rare and desirable pieces of music which offers substantiation for Stravinsky's provocative claim that a composer is likely to do his best work when he prescribes a severely limiting problem for himself. With an economical and sometimes almost tele-