

tion that all his music has. This particular *Concerto* has a special feeling; the composer seems to be exerting no conscious control over what might be termed the musical message. This induces a refreshing sense of ease and naturalness so that even when the musical material itself is of unequal value, as it sometimes is, it does not mar the effect of the whole. Fitelberg is one of the few outstanding talents that have appeared in Europe in recent years.

*Aaron Copland*

### PARIS NOTES

VIEWED in retrospect, the recent autumn season and the spring and early summer preceding it in Paris were musically somewhat disappointing. No new works of first magnitude came to light and the already established novelties fared none too well at the hands of their performers. But the continued effort in behalf of contemporary music is, in itself, a healthy symptom.

A new society for chamber music, La Sérénade, was inaugurated with an opening concert on December 1st at the Salle Chopin. This organization, in the establishment of which the Princesse Edmonde de Polignac has played an important part, cherishes among its purposes the production of new works by contemporary men. The first program included the following premieres: A *Serenade* for two violins by Leone Massimo, a *Divertissement de Chambre* for woodwind and piano, by Henri Sauguet, a *Serenade* for violin, clarinet and bassoon of Markevitch, and a *Serenade* by Vittorio Rieti, for violin solo and eleven instruments; also two previously heard works, a *Serenade* for seven instruments by Milhaud, and Mozart's *Divertissement*, number 14, for woodwinds and horns. Of the modern works the most effective were those of Milhaud and Rieti. The Markevitch *Serenade*, while rich in interest and thematic invention, suffered greatly from its length, and the Sauguet *Divertissement*, which manifested undeniable talent and musicality, nevertheless erred seriously on the side of cheapness and harmonic banality. La Sérénade has promised further first auditions by Milhaud, Poulenc, Sauguet, Markevitch and performances of Satie's *Le Piège de Méduse* and the clavecin *Concerto* of De Falla.

Unfortunately, a London visit prevented this writer from attending the October festival of modern and ancient chamber works sponsored by Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. The programs included a *Quatuor*, opus 50, by Prokofieff, a *Trio* for piano, violin and cello by Frank Bridge, a *Triptyque* for string orchestra by Tansman, *Cantari alla Madrilesca* by Malipiero (for quartet), *Trois Récits des Evangiles*, by Raymond Petit, for tenor and quartet, and Hindemith's *Concerto* for piano, brass and harps, as well as an evening of madrigals and operatic excerpts from Monteverdi and Lully—surely interesting musical fare.

A November performance of the *Cantate* of the extraordinary young composer, Igor Markevitch, by the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris and a chorus, stood not too well in comparison with its premiere under Roger Désormière at the Théâtre Pigalle, in the spring of 1930; but the forceful clarity of this excellent composition survived an inadequate reading.

The Festivale Prokofieff in November included his *Classical Symphony*, a *Piano Concerto* (played by the composer) a new work for string orchestra, the *Fourth Symphony* (composed on themes from the ballet *L'Enfant Prodigue*) and concluded with a brilliant suite from *Pas d'Acier*. The music of Prokofieff is far too well known to require comment or criticism, but in view of his eminence as a composer, one is often apt to forget that he is one of the truly great pianists of today. Devoid of the charlatantry of the usual concert artist, he plays with a detached dignity, depth of feeling and dazzling virtuosity.

Among the more or less outstanding compositions of 1931 was the production of the ballet *Bacchus et Arianne*, by Albert Roussel, which came as the final novelty of last spring at the Opéra. Although, by no means of major dimensions, this proved to be a pleasant and diverting spectacle, delightfully danced by Serge Lifar, who achieved the surprising miracle of training the corps de ballet of the Opéra to perform a modern choreography and with considerable success. The sets and costumes of Chirico, though hardly comparable to his brilliant decors for *Le Bal* (of Diaghilev fame), yet proved immeasurably superior to the familiar banalities of the operatic stage.

*Richard Hammond*