

The work of the two remaining composers, G. Herbert Elwell and Walter Piston, revealed less pronounced individuality, but excellent musicianship. Elwell's group of piano pieces is not among his most significant work, and should not be considered fully representative, but it does show him possessed of a fastidious and reticent quality that is admirable, as well as of a fine sense of color and of form. Piston's piano sonata, romantic and grandiose in mood, has excellent technical mastery, especially in the closing fugue.

On the basis of this concert one would not be justified in announcing the birth of a new American school. As we have said above, its significance is rather that an encouraging number of interesting individualities have begun to emerge, owning the American background as common starting point. To be sure, they have there undergone different formative influences, and have not all responded to or reacted against the same elements. They consequently reflect the diversified character of our national life in a far more healthy manner than would a more unified group based upon elaborate theories before the fact.

Roger Sessions

LAST SPRING IN PARIS

IF the Paris winter season afforded none of the sensational revelations the press awaits each year, the succeeding months were distinguished by the number, diversity and excellence of the concerts. First honors went to Walther Straram for his series of twelve evenings with many premieres, neglected works of the past and seldom performed recent ones. It was refreshing to hear the *Horace Victorieux* and *Pacific 231* of Honegger; the Roumanian Mihalovici's *Introduction et Mouvement Symphonique*, whose vehement measures seemed to express the heavy rhythms of natural forces; *Au Parc Monceau*, brilliant example of Ferroud's work and lastly, excerpts from *L'Arche de Noé*, in which Rieti gives us a very delicate version of the biblical tale. It is the gentle and ceaseless patter of the rain that the young Italian has chosen to translate, avoiding tempestuous drama.

The concerts of La Revue Musicale, which have left the Vieux Colombier, continued their activity in the interests of modern music. Following festivals of Debussy, Strawinsky and Ravel, the first Parisian performance of Schoenberg's *Quintet for Wind Instruments*, innocent of all gradations, flowed by, leaving no after-impression. I think I am not mistaken in saying the majority of the audience found the *Quintet* long and boring. Compositions by Poulenc, heard for the first time, included a suite for piano, *Napoli*, a *Trio* for piano, bassoon and oboe, written in a limpid style, and the caustic *Chansons Gaillardes*. The *Cinq Poèmes* (Gérard de Nerval) and the *Deux Romances* Desbordes-Valmore, both recent works of Auric, were also heard.

Faithful to the city of his debut, Koussevitzky in his four concerts recaptured the success of his earlier days with the *Daphnis et Chloé* of Ravel, *I Pini di Roma* of Respighi, Hindemith's *Concerto for Orchestra*, and Albert Roussel's *Première Suite de Padmâvati*. The first performance of Oboukhow's *La Préface du Livre de Vie*, a complex work of obscure mysticism more curious than musical, brought forth a slight demonstration on the part of the audience. They seemed especially disturbed by the groups of chords played with the elbows on the piano (the fundamental chord of Oboukhow consists of the twelve chromatic sounds) and the singer's whistling through the fingers.

The American composer, Antheil, also created some scandal at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées by his *Symphonie* and his *Ballet Mécanique*. The latter, scored for several player-pianos, three xylophones and percussion, is enriched by electric bells and a special noise producing instrument, and is amplified by two loud speakers. The *Ballet Mécanique* is clearly derived from Strawinsky's *Les Noces*; it makes an interesting study in rhythm but suffers from sonorous monotony.

Les Chansons Madécasses of Ravel, still clinging to the method which the creator of *La Valse* has so zealously elaborated, revealed a more abstract manner in which the voice appears to follow the delicate strains of the flute, cello and the piano.

The problem of music for the cinema has already been made the object of numerous investigations. For *Entr'acte*, which

appeared in his ballet *Relâche*, Erik Satie had purposely employed the repetition of several identical measures to give a rhythmic accompaniment to the picture, hoping thus to create an atmosphere of musical indifference. Entirely different ideas animated the German composer, W. Zeller, in writing for Lotte Reiniger's remarkable film *Le Prince Ahmad*, worked out wholly as a shadow picture and presented at the Comédie des Champs Elysées. Here is a solidly written score somewhat reminiscent of Straus, following its own development and based on the leit-motif.

The Russian ballet, as has been frequently remarked, is no longer what it was when first introduced in Paris. Though the programs still intrigue us, their execution is far from satisfactory. Among the novelties was *Jack in the Box*, a little ballet which remained for Count Etienne de Beaumont to rediscover in the manuscripts of Eric Satie. With M. Lambert's *Romeo and Juliet* we returned to the heroic epoch of the great public rows. Certainly it was not M. Lambert's pleasant music, inspired by *Pulcinella*, that caused the uproar, but the indignation of the "super-realists" endeavoring to make the stage designers feel that they were traitors to their group by working for so academic an institution as the Russian ballet! Georges Auric's *La Pastorale*, concerned with the adventures of a telegraph operator and a pretty young girl, is valuable chiefly for its simplicity, candor and orchestration.

A chorus with the popular refrain, *Barabau perchè sei morto?* is the starting point of Rieti's latest ballet, *Barabau*. The group of black garbed choristers against a landscape designed by the bright brush of Utrillo, takes the place of the passive chorus familiar to the Greek Theater. The remarkable vocal passages and the limpid orchestration—a spiritual language innocent of pretensions—are free of studied elegance. One may say that if *Barabau* was not the great event of the season, it nevertheless capped it with a sonorous laugh which augurs well for the future.

Arthur Hoeree