

Flüe, a new work of sweeping power, was scheduled for performance at the end of September, under the auspices of the National Swiss Exposition at Zurich. But mobilization there also affected many musicians who had rehearsed the piece, so that postponement was inevitable. It may however be given during the winter at Neuchatel and also at Vevey-Montreux where a large chorus is now preparing it. Another work composed by Honegger this year, *La Danse des Morts*, for soli, choruses, orchestra and organ, (text by Paul Claudel) has its premiere set for next March, in Basle.

Milhaud (also forty-seven years old) is not mobilized because of his health, and now lives in his native village of Aix-en-Provence. The new opera, *Medée* (text by Madeleine Milhaud) had an apparently successful premiere in the Royal Flemish Opera House of Antwerp. I do not at this time know what is the status of Auric, Delannoy, Françaix, Poulenc or Sauguet, all of whom are between thirty and forty and therefore probably subject to military call. Georges Dandelot, who is forty, was severely wounded in the last war and so is not likely to take part in this one. Ibert (at forty-nine) remains in Italy as director of the Villa Medici. Koechlin, the Alsatian, is now seventy-two.

Since the annexation of Czecho-Slovakia, Bohuslav Martinu has stayed on in Paris. Markevitch (not yet thirty) lives most of the year in Vevey; he will conduct a complete performance of Bach's *Musikalisches Opfer* at Lausanne this season. Switzerland also is host to Paul Hindemith — who now lives in the little village of Valois. He is to be soloist in a concert of the Basle Chamber Orchestra, already scheduled for March 2nd.

Arno Huth

SWITZERLAND CARRIES ON

Geneva, November 1st

WITH so much being overthrown or destroyed elsewhere in Europe, it is only the neutral states that can to any important extent maintain cultural activities. In Switzerland today the necessity of carrying on musical life has been realized in the largest way by all the producing societies and institutes. Despite the gaps which mobilization has created in the performing staffs, and in the musical public, despite the difficulties of engaging foreign artists and obtaining scores, all have embarked with courage on a really extraordinary season. No less than eight symphony and chamber orchestras, and fifteen choral societies are participating. In Zurich, Berne, Basle, Geneva and Lausanne, in Winterthur, St. Gallen, Solothurn, Neuchatel and La-Chaux-de-Fonds, great orchestral cycles will

be held as usual. The conductors will include, among others, Hans Münch, Paul Sacher, Ansermet, Schoeck, Scherchen; also, as guests, Furtwängler, Walter, Charles Münch. Besides the Swiss soloists there will be Singher, Schey, Petri, Casadesus, Serkin, Thibaud, Busch, Milstein, Casals, and also Hindemith, Cortot, Brailowsky, Rubinstein, Landowska, Huberman, Szigeti, Feuermann, Segovia.

The programs scheduled show extraordinary enterprise. In Basle particularly, Ansermet and the young Sacher are concentrating their efforts on bringing novelty to the concert repertory. The Orchestre de la Suisse Romande offers many seldom heard works by Corelli, Lully, Schumann and Debussy, and with them, works by Swiss contemporaries from Bloch and Dalcroze to Frank Martin and Willy Burkhard. The Basle Chamber Orchestra, in co-operation with the chamber chorus, will give old and new music, the latter including the *Divertimento* for string orchestra (1939) by Bela Bartok, a *Sinfonisches Stück*, Opus 86, (also 1939), by Ernest Krenek, Bohuslav Martinu's *Doppelkonzert*, (1938), Benjamin Britten's *Les Illuminations*, 1939, a cantata (1938-39) by Burkhard, and Honegger's latest works, *La Danse des Morts* and the festival piece, *Nikolas von der Flüe*. In Zurich, several premieres of Swiss works have been announced – *Le Vin herbé* for twelve singers, seven strings and piano, by Frank Martin on a text from Bedier's novel, *Tristan et Yseut*, Robert Oboussier's *Antigone* on a text by Sophocles. The chamber concerts conducted by Alexander Schaichet will present Robert Blum's oratorio, *Der Sturz der Phaeton*, Luc Balmer's *Symphonic Suite* for string orchestra, Emil Frey's *Capriccio* for piano and chamber orchestra on Russian folksongs. The College of Music at Winterthur promises a new orchestral work by Burkhard and Anton Von Webern's *Passacaglia* for orchestra. The Lausanne society, La Clarinette, also announces extraordinary programs. An evening devoted to Bach's *Musikalisches Opfer*, (Markevitch conducting) an evening of a-capella works – masses by Satie and Poulenc, songs by Hindemith and Honegger; and finally a two-violin concert principally of music by Prokofieff and Martinu.

Now even the opera houses, having overcome their first timidity, are again throwing their doors open. Besides the twenty-six full productions scheduled for Zurich there is to be a cycle of one-acters and two ballets; Hindemith's *Cardillac* is included; also two new Swiss operas. The Basle Theatre will give two folk-operas, *Geisterschloss* by Moniuscko (Polish) and *Der Kuss* by Smetana. Later Ralph Benatzky's *Domenica*

will be heard. In Geneva the Grand Theatre has been hard hit, for although it has a permanent ensemble it must engage French or Belgian soloists and cannot depend on getting them this season. Many pieces of the French repertory have therefore been withdrawn; and the projected Spanish and Russian works are now cancelled. Nevertheless there will be at least thirty productions. All in all a big season.

Arno Huth

AMERICAN FESTIVAL IN BOSTON

WHILE ASCAP was conducting festivities in Carnegie Hall, the Boston Symphony Orchestra undertook two special pre-season Boston concerts "in honor of the American composer." The public was admitted free, but barely one third of some fifteen thousand applicants could be allotted seats. Dr. Koussevitzky conducted a fairly representative group of works that formed a rough cross-section of American music, though many important composers were omitted.

The first concert began with Arthur Foote's *E-major Suite for String Orchestra* — a work which sounds increasingly fresh and contemporary with the years, both for the precision of its technic and the breadth and boldness of its thought. Movements from Taylor's *Through the Looking Glass* and Hadley's stuffy *Third Symphony* preceded an extraordinarily well contrived performance of Carpenter's *Skyscrapers* with the voice parts admirably sung by Dorothy Maynor and Leonard Franklin, colored soprano and tenor. Certainly no score better pictures the mid-twenty metropolis. The jazz sections have already acquired a nostalgic charm that lends a warmth to this etching of the tawdry opulence of a wide-eyed decade. Howard Hanson's *Romantic Symphony* (Number 2) concluded the program. In spite of a performance which wrung every drop from the symphony's self-styled "romantic" texture, Dr. Hanson's musical posturing seldom more than brushed the frontier of sincerity. Perhaps the music tries too hard to make its points, perhaps it overflows the boundaries of its possible expansions.

The second program began with the one brand new work of the two concerts — an *American Festival Overture* (1939) written for the occasion by William Schuman. It proved to be an exuberant score, ingeniously orchestrated, and ably constructed. It is based on a three-note figure which the composer identifies as the "call to play" — "Wee-Awk-Eee" — by which the gang was assembled for some festive occasion in the streets of New