

to be at work. It might be said that there has been an attempt to weld together some of the rhythmic versatility of Stravinsky, the contrapuntal procedures of Hindemith and the expressionism of Berg. Of these the last is by far the strongest and probably represents most completely the composer's own musical thought. This seems to me to be true even when the pages look most like Stravinsky and when the players are most busily engaged in making their proper contrapuntal entrances. Dahl's work is shortly to be heard in the East under the sponsorship of the National Composers' Clinic.

*Lawrence Morton*

## WHERE NATIONS STILL MEET

*Geneva*

**S**WITZERLAND continues to be an outpost of cultural activity in the midst of ever-encroaching war. It practices a kind of musical lease-lend. Composers and musicians from many other lands appear in its concert halls; and if they themselves are not present their music is heard, while works of Swiss composers as well as those of foreigners are broadcast to the world by Helvetian radio stations. Even in the smallest cities – the very names unfamiliar to most readers, like La Chaux-de-Fonds, Soleure, Lenzburg, Baden and Frauenfeld – there are a remarkable number of orchestral, choral and chamber music concerts. The sympathetic audience is a lodestone for internationally known virtuosi. Especially striking has been the interest of this local public in contemporary music.

In Switzerland there has been close collaboration between those interested in modern music and the leaders of university circles. Students' associations in the two Zurich universities support Pro-Musica; the University of Geneva has assisted the Groupe Culturel de la Chambre Syndicale des Artistes-Musiciens in organizing the "Tuesday Forums" at the Maison Internationale des Etudiants. The first was intended to prepare for the hearing of Arthur Honegger's new symphony; Ernest Ansermet expounded the composer's ideas and tendencies. Then followed a lecture by Marcel Raymond, eminent professor of literature, on C. F. Ramuz and his spiritual relationship to Igor Stravinsky, whose *L'Histoire du soldat* was also scheduled for the series. The success of the lecture-recitals, which attract crowds of young people, will undoubtedly develop the circle as a center of modern music, and expand the students' interest in the important works of today.

Premieres are plentiful. In Winterthur, Herman Scherchen, who for twenty years has presided over the destinies of the famous Collegium Musicum, gave the *Tanzdrama* of Henrich Kaminsky. In this work, Kaminsky, without abandoning his pure and chosen language, left his usual mystical regions for a more real world. Scherchen also repeated the *Third Concerto* of Prokofiev. In Zurich, Kaminsky himself, conducted his *Magnificat* for soprano,

The symphonic organizations have been generous with new music, especially the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Ansermet. The most important was the *Seven Variations on a Popular Hungarian Theme*, a recent work by Zoltan Kodaly. It is a suite made up of sonorous images drawn from folklore, noteworthy for their color and rhythm. But even though the score bears the stamp of his personality in its harmonic writing and its poetic mood, it is not up to his best work, it is too long-winded.

Folklore has also been the source of the *Portuguese Rhapsody* for piano and orchestra by Ernest Halffter, the Spanish musician discovered and developed by Manuel de Falla. Now settled in Lisbon, he has been inspired by the popular music which surrounds him; this picturesque fantasy is the reflection. Halffter may not be a very strong personality, he has been affected by foreign influences, Ravel especially, but he does possess an uncommon virtuosity and his music, dancing and capricious, is full of spirit. It was warmly applauded; so was Ansermet who brought it back from a voyage to Portugal.

The revival of the Opéra de Genève has been another cause for gratification. A change in management brought about an artistic re-orientation for which we had ceased to hope. The theatre began to give performances worthy of an international city and produced the French version of the opera, *Blanche-Neige*. A short time before his death, Felix Weingartner, following a suggestion of the Basle critic and librettist, Otto Maag, adapted fragments from forgotten operas by Schubert to fairy tales by the Brother Grimm. He did this with great delicacy, avoiding traces of the Dreimäderlhaus, and so enriched opera repertory with a popular work designed to please both a large and a small audience, even though its lengthiness and romantic orchestration make it sometimes heavy.

The Swiss radio devotes a remarkable amount of time to contemporary music. Chiefly favored, of course, are native works, especially by Radio Lausanne, although recently that station gave us a cross-section of

modern French, German, Russian, Hungarian and Spanish, as well as Swiss piano music. Radio Berne celebrated Zoltan Kodaly's sixtieth birthday with a series of special programs one of which the composer himself conducted, and Radio-Genève, always interested in French music, devoted a broadcast to Francis Poulenc's concerto for organ and orchestra, Henri Sauguet's piano concerto, and Darius Milhaud's sonata for violin and piano.

*Arno Huth*

## RED STAR OVER THE SOUTHWEST

*Houston*

SOMETHING of a milestone in the musical history of the Southwest was passed on November 1, when the Houston Society for Contemporary Music – Texas branch of the League of Composers – gave the first all-Soviet concert to be heard in this part of the country. For a long time the South and Southwest have shied off from music labeled modern. The Russian program introduced its listeners to the milder forms of polyphonic texture and modern harmonic intricacies. Works of explosive revolutionary character, of startling innovations were wisely avoided.

A group of contemporary Russian piano works lent an important accent to the evening. They were interpreted by Julius Hijman, Holland-born pianist-composer, whose incisive and clear style well set off the mechanistic mood, the metallic quality of a Khatchaturian *Toccata*, the *Adagio* of Mossolow's *Twelfth Piano Sonata*, and the *Sonata, Number 6* of Samuel Feinberg. Especially powerful and assured was the effect of the Mossolow piece with its startling dissonances interwoven against a sombre, reverberating bass. The Feinberg sonata, inspired by a quotation from Spengler, has a certain Gothic majesty, with heavy emphasis on the irrevocable in its sonorous bass theme.

But it was of course the Red Army songs, put across by the baritone Billy Triggs, which got the biggest hand. Here was something the whole audience could respond to. The martial zip and tempo of Dzershinsky's *From Border to Border*, from his opera *The Quiet Don*, and Aturov's *Song of the Partisans*, the blustering gaiety of Listov's *Song of the Tachanka* and Lev Knipper's nostalgic *Cavalry of the Steppes*, demonstrate clearly enough why this "proletarian music" is popular. Songs like these must affect the people of Russia the way a Sousa march does the average American.