

positions of 1933 it is a reminder of years past.

The final program contained the Respighi concerto, a vigorous, forthright and melodious *Triptyque* for string orchestra by Alexander Tansman, arrangements of old French music by Roy Harris and Mabel Wood Hill, and a *Septet* for viola, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, and harp, by the English composer, Cyril B. Rootham. This work fits the standard British formula for chamber music—a rather abstract first movement, a nostalgic modal folk song piped romantically by the oboe in the slow movement, and jig rhythms for a finale.

Alfred V. Frankenstein

NABOKOFF'S ORATORIO, JOB

A performance of contemporaneous music well worth recording was that given by Albert Stoessel, at the Worcester Festival, of Nicholas Nabokoff's Oratorio, *Job*—Nabokoff, the young Russian composer (now living in France), whose works are arousing increasing attention and whose *Coeur de Don Quichotte* was performed last season at one of the concerts of the League of Composers. Written in 1933 at the request of the perspicacious Madame de Polignac, *Job* has now been revised so that the version heard comprises soli, mixed chorus and large orchestra. It is, of course, based on biblical text which has been arranged and divided into three parts, a prolog and an epilog. The part of Job is sung by a baritone; there is a tenor part for the scribe and the three friends of Job are sung, respectively, by tenor, baritone and bass. The voice of God is sung by the chorus which appears also at two other times: once as the messengers who announce to Job his misfortunes and, a second time, at the end of the discourse of the three friends, when the chorus condemns Job.

For the program-notes, Nabokoff has written: "In its musical style, I have tried to base myself on the early monodias of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (one presumes that he means Russian) and give at the same time this Oratorio a dramatic character which would place the figure of Job in the spotlight as a great classic and tragic figure." The present writer, how-

ever, felt little that was archaic; and the distinctively Russian element, though no doubt subtly pervading, was decidedly unobtrusive. On the contrary: that which pleased was the fact that the composer, his protestations notwithstanding, was apparently *not* preoccupied by questions of style. He was impelled, rather, by the message he had to convey; something which he had obviously felt and which, like a true artist, he wanted others to feel with him. There appears, indeed, to be something of a mixture of styles; but by his earnestness and his integrity Nabokoff has welded them into a whole which is both personal and convincing. Like de Falla, he has a praiseworthy detachment from prevailing tendencies, an approach which is direct, and these things give his speech validity.

Job is well-planned and well-conceived; it has an admirable clarity of outline. The prevailing spirit is reverent yet lively; Nabokoff has approached the age-old text fearlessly and the emotions which he has so obviously felt before it have not beclouded his intellect nor prevented the casting of his ideas into musical molds which are sturdy and self-sufficient. Naturally, there are things in it with which one could find fault: a choral writing which, as such, is, to say the least, uninteresting; a tendency to fall at times into musical patterns which are facile. But *Job* has the mastery which is born of honesty and directness. The opening chords, like a fanfare, are immediately arresting; the opening chorus has something of the quality of the whirlwind itself which has brought destruction on Job's children and their belongings. Nabokoff has not fallen down on words like: "Canst thou bind the sweet band of Pleiades and of Orion, canst guide Arcturus with his sons?" . . . The final section, the discourse of God, has majesty and grandeur. *Job* is both effective and moving; it is a work which should appeal to a wider public. One must be thankful for the Worcester production and one can hope that it will be heard often.

Frederick Jacobi

LITERATURE, MUSIC AND THE BALLET IN PARIS

TODAY in Paris Ida Rubinstein has assumed the role formerly played by Diaghilev, great stimulator, lover and pa-