

Mention should be made of a deeply-felt tribute to Frederick Delius by Bernard van Dieren, a sensitive chapter on Bohuslav Martinu by Paul Nettle, and Nicolas Slonimsky's introduction in

which there is the type of fresh information noticeably lacking in other articles and in which the "isms" would be more pedantic were it not for a certain charm in their handling.

*Arthur Berger*

## ROUND THE WORLD WITH RADIO

**D**IRECT from Geneva, graveyard of so many international hopes, there now arrives a surprising world survey of broadcasting, called *Radio Today*. Appropriately the author is a refugee from the Third Reich, Dr. Arno Huth (well known to the readers of MODERN MUSIC as its European correspondent); the publisher is the Graduate Institute of International Studies; the "angel" rescuing the Geneva Studies from their otherwise inevitable doom is the ubiquitous Rockefeller Foundation. No brilliant piece of research or profound revelation of cause and effect, the book is, however, an excellent pocket Almanac of Radio, the most concise and best arranged now available. Even in war-time the compilation of such global material seems to require the detachment of a European study center.

In the world today there are, Dr. Huth tells us, at least 2836 stations — long, medium and short-wave. They address about 400,000,000 people, some of them for fifteen or more hours out of every twenty-four. What ravenous appetite do they feed? Well, for more than half the time the air is filled with music, the mainstay of radio diet. During their recent war with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the broadcasters attempted to exploit what was set forth as a decline in the ratio of music to other features on their programs. This line of argument will lead to no profitable conclusion, as a study of Huth's figures indicates. In Japan for

instance where state control of radio is total, and private ownership and operation are *unknown*, music makes up only one-tenth of the programs ("lectures and talks" about one-fourth). But in Latin America, where United States broadcasters have invested much money and effort in the hope of big future business, music is on the air more than 78 percent of the time.

There are eye-openers in the barest statistical tables of this book. The United States leads of course in the number of stations — 902. (Of these, incidentally, at least a third are owned by newspapers, a fact not to be overlooked in the current struggle between the American Musicians' Union and the National Association of Broadcasters). Americans also own nearly 30,000,000 radio sets — about twice as many as the German and three times the number of Russian receivers. But in the distribution of those sets, that is, measuring the density per 1000 inhabitants, Sweden is tops, Denmark comes next, the U.S.A. third, Britain fifth, Germany seventh, Russia twenty-first. Uruguay, a small but culturally advanced nation ranks ahead of Russia and not much after France; Brazil for all its vastness makes no grade at all. Africa and Asia, despite initial French, British and Japanese infiltration are still largely undeveloped radio hinterlands.

As to short-wave broadcasting one learns that Russia, not Germany or Italy, was the pioneer with international propaganda, and that even after 1935 the

British Broadcasting Corporation, though it possessed a powerful short-wave center, "persisted in broadcasting only in English." Today of course the B.B.C. is on the air twenty-four hours, frantically speaking in every tongue including the long neglected Chinese and Indian dialects.

What is not clearly elucidated is the situation in which this global radio war now finds the United States. For we have been, of all countries, the most laggard in entering the field, and our lateness is a direct consequence of that "free" system which so excites Dr. Huth's imagination. Intense, varied, even rich if one chooses to apply that word to its quantitative development, American broadcasting has been in effect provincial, almost isolationist. This latter term is not meant to describe its "ideology," for both by commercial choice and Federal ruling the stations have been politically "neutralized." But since radio broadcasting in this country is exclusively directed by corporations operating for profit, they have addressed their vast mechanisms and programs to the local population, and chiefly in the most densely crowded areas. Only within the last few years, as the Latin American market seemed to beckon, have the networks established themselves below the Rio Grande. This spring, after war was declared, still following where business called, overseas time was sold to beer and soap firms for short-wave programs sent to our troops all the way from Alaska to Iceland. Today, under the exigencies of war, the government has been forced to step in and, through the agency of the Office of War Information, take complete control of all short-wave stations. At this danger point, the system of "free" broadcasting, with all its privileges of unrestricted private com-

petition, had demonstrated inadequacy against the sharp weapon of Axis propaganda. Now indeed one may speculate whether even the tolerant American state will permit such an ever potent instrument of war to fall back again into the casual control of pre-Pearl Harbor days.

Dr. Huth's wide-eyed admiration for our system is of course one more manifestation of the great American dream cherished by millions of harassed Europeans. "What a contrast is broadcasting in America" he cries, after closing the chapter on the troubled Continent. Here the broadcasters have "vast spaces before them": at their disposal are "huge financial possibilities." Broadcasting is "the entertainment of the whole nation, the source of knowledge and information for the masses." "Advertisement" he continues rhapsodically "is often limited to a few introductory phrases, merely quoting the name of the advertiser."!! It is an idyllic picture in chromo tints of *Having Wonderful Time, Wish I Were There*. Yet who is to write it off as all fancy illusion? Living in Geneva where he tunes in on all the big pressure boys of Europe, where in fact he can hardly escape their insistent clamor, the mild inanities of a Jack Benny program — which Switzerland may now catch as it is re-broadcast to our forces in Ireland and Africa — must sound like happy strains from Shangri La. Personally I wish the book had included a comparative study of world news gathering. Here is a sounder claim for the superiority of American broadcasting, for that special system of Federal regulation and private operation which has developed more mobility and enterprise in our radio than the "freer" press and less controlled movie industry have recently displayed.

*Minna Lederman*