

Distribution of music through radio, sound-film and phonograph has immeasurably increased not only the number of listeners but also the number of people spurred on to make music for themselves. New handlings of both folk and popular music have resulted; but new composition of fine art music lags. I would be the last to oppose or deprecate the *recherché* in music. But I would like to see a few of our best composers turn to some other field than that of the small, select concert audience. Music occupies about sixty per cent of radio time alone. American composers of fine art music scarcely figure in this. Is this because European masters freeze them out? Not entirely. It is also because they do not yet write the music America wants to hear.

Charles Seeger

BOSTON PREMIERES

LATE, cold New England spring has been redeemed, east of the Connecticut, by a torrent of new music bearing a handful of premieres upon its polyphonic flood. Dr. Koussevitzky has produced Hindemith's new *Violin Concerto* and Prokofieff's *Cello Concerto* for the first times in America, given the first performances of Edward Burlingame Hill's new *Concertino for String Orchestra*, repeated Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, and brought Koutzen's *Concerto for Five Solo Instruments and String Orchestra* and Szymanowski's *Symphonie Concertante for Piano and Orchestra* to Boston for "first times." Stravinsky, conducting his sixth work with the Boston Symphony this season, reintroduced *Oedipus Rex* to a justly admiring public.

Bernard Zighera introduced Prokofieff's *Sinfonietta* (Opus 5 and Opus 48) at a concert of his Chamber Orchestra and discovered a work much in the style of the *Classical Symphony* but without its inspiration and dexterity. The *Cello Concerto* has been reviewed from New York, and its vapid lengths need not detain me here. Similarly, Boris Koutzen's *Concerto* may be dismissed as an unsuccessful attempt which never draws animate breath; Szymanowski's *Symphony*, rich in fine musical material, becomes an exercise in *pasticcio* of styles and sonorities. Hill's new *Concertino* is a slight score, requiring hardly more than a dozen minutes for its three brief movements, yet it is alert, eager music, full of vigor and that elusive quality we know as charm. As always, the composer's workmanship is impeccable, his scoring expert, his material suitable to the point of distinction. This is music that is scholarly without being cerebral; it is keenly

alive – *musique du monde*, to paraphrase an epithet.

The music of Paul Hindemith has appeared with such consistent frequency upon Koussevitzky's programs that a great popular success for *Mathis der Maler*, on its third appearance at the symphony concerts, was not unexpected. The warm reception accorded the premiere of the *Violin Concerto*, expertly set forth by Richard Burgin and Koussevitzky's orchestra, seemed to indicate that Hindemith's music has at last caught the public fancy and projected itself into the general consciousness. Certainly this new score, completed in 1939, is a worthy successor to *Mathis, Nobilissima Visione* and the *Symphonic Dances*. It represents another high point in that aspect of Hindemith's art which, for want of a better term, I must call mystic. There has always been a duality in Hindemith's work. Until very recently whenever a stray work of his turned up on a program, the annotators would dust off their axiomatic reference to a viola virtuoso who composed his music to the rhythm of railway trains that accompanied him on his provincial tours. But familiarity with his work has shown that there is another and quite different Hindemith – the Hindemith of the *Marienleben*, the *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, the ballet *Nobilissima Visione* and the new *Concerto*, to name only a few works in a long development. The composer of these works is a man of spiritual insight, a man who has been able to mirror the mystical inner life of mankind in a significant music of great originality. Certain works of Hindemith only exemplify his inventive facility. They are all constructed by a master hand; that not all are masterpieces is but to be expected.

The *Concerto* is in three movements, and skillfully opposes orchestra and is never absorbed into the orchestra – as so frequently happens in works and soloist in the traditional manner. The violin is always the protagonist, employing the contemporary *concertant* style. To say that the work is complex without becoming complicated, that it is melodic but not tuneful, that its harmony is intricate and not involved is about as close as one can come in so brief a space to analyzing the mystical style of Paul Hindemith.

George Henry Lovett Smith

AMERICANS AT ROCHESTER

THE tenth annual Festival of American Music given by the Eastman School of Music opened with a retrospective evening. Hanson's *Fanfare* led into a pedantic eighteenth century *Sinfonia* by Johann Friedrich Peter. Followed Bernard Rogers' seventeen-year old *Soliloquy*, still a