

about anything; and openness that made me very happy. And I'm sure such a spirit is the most valuable thing any art school can offer its pupils.

The new musical shows all happen to be very pleasant entertainment indeed, and they each have a star altogether marvelous. They also happen not to have anything as extraordinary as that in the way of dancing, though everywhere the dancers are so pretty and work so hard, you can't help but like them. Their routines have novelty enough, too; either in the traditional style at *Panama Hattie* or in the arty style at *Cabin in the Sky*. *It Happens on Ice* has the prize novelty of course, as it offers all the proper styles

of dancing, and all of them on skates, all very well done. Miss Stenuf even has a touching solo as Swan Princess. And Skippy Baxter has more than that because he has the real illumination of a dancer. Someday I hope a choreographer will make a ballet with the terrific contrasts in dynamics that are possible in skating, contrasts you now find used in the comic numbers. Skippy Baxter is the star to bring such a terrific ballet to life.

At *It Happens on Ice* and at *Cabin in the Sky* I also enjoyed Vernon Duke's adroit tunes and well-groomed orchestration; they add a great deal of toniness to the procedure.

OVER THE AIR

By CHARLES MILLS

IN an election fall and at a time of international stress, we may expect radio schedules to be interrupted or cut out completely, so it is gratifying to record that time was reserved for some interesting music. WJZ broadcast portions of the Brazilian concerts from the Museum of Modern Art. Included was enough of Villa-Lobos' entertaining *Choros No. 7* for chamber orchestra to give the radio public a sample of his instrumental imagination. The cello writing came over especially well. And there were some beautiful moments for woodwinds; the clarinet figuration was delicate and there was a particularly nice line for the high, lyric bassoon. WQXR also sent some of the Villa-Lobos music; the *Bachiana Brasileira No. 1* is a pleasing if not completely satisfying work, with rhythms of a popular dance character, harmonic tex-

tures that seem a trifle too mellifluous, warm and sultry, and melodies with sequential interval leaps of sixths, derived, as we are honestly informed, from Bach. The lines are not without flow and grace however, although this writer found the scoring of eight soli celli rather too bottom-heavy for lasting comfort. *Rudepôema*, a piano work by the same composer, is a striking hodge-podge of multi-colored materials, sonorities brilliant and sonorities muddy, clear-cut lines and melodic miasma. There are some curiously prosaic cadenza-like passages, but there is also a display of primitive power and brilliance, more interesting than entertaining.

Two pieces by Henry Cowell, *Meeting House* and *Hornpipe*, were heard in a program of symphonic band music over WNYC. Certainly they are not fairly

representative of his best work, although they managed to come off. Their idiom doesn't seem to give Cowell the scope for his more imaginative and inventive powers. They have folkish, hillbilly qualities but are without evidence of the distinctive, more successful expressions found in the national music of men like Harris, Copland or Ives.

WNYC also broadcast four American symphonic works from the American Festival Concert at the World's Fair. Howard Hanson's *Romantic Symphony* still manages to stand up under the wear and tear of repeated performances. The *Symphony in G-minor* by William Grant Still is less successful, but shows a definite lyric gift in spite of formal flaws and weak spots in orchestration. Morton Gould's *American Symphonietta* is unpretentious and light, but shows a degree of distinction and sensitivity in some of the orchestration; the form, though not subtle, is certainly clear. Deems Taylor's very long tone-picture, *Circus Day*, is still good for lots of applause. WQXR continues as always to be a blessing for New Yorkers interested in modern music. This month it sent over the air, through recordings, many important works by Stravinsky, Hindemith, Krenek, Chavez, Harris, Porter, Ives and Bloch.

A portion of the New Friends of Music concert was also heard over WJZ. Mark Brunswick's *Sonata for Viola Solo*, which was broadcast in its entirety, sounded like an interesting and serious attempt to create a completely balanced musical structure for unaccompanied viola. This is surely one of the most difficult instrumental problems in music. It can be interesting only to those listeners who seek in music something beyond the merely grateful and pleasant. This severe

Sonata is full of interesting double string writing, sharp, dissonant chords and clever, if somewhat monotonous, rhythmic designs. The second movement is especially compact and concise, in many respects probably the most successful of the four movements. As a whole, the work has drive and flair. Its logic seems a bit strained, but repeated hearings might modify that first reaction.

Unfortunately Ernest Bloch's masterful *Quintet for Piano and Strings* was interrupted before the end of the last movement. This is an all too frequent type of radio incident. In time, let us hope, important musical programs will win the respect that radio authorities now give, for instance, to baseball games which are allowed to carry over for extra time. After all, a musical composition just doesn't make sense unless it's completely heard from the first note to the last. Another important point that deserves the attention of the powers that be, is the difficulty, even under favorable conditions, of making an adequate adaptation for radio of a work not especially designed for broadcasting. Radio technicians — composers too — should give this problem more serious consideration.

Last, and least, WGN (through WOR) presented the *Rio Grande Cantata* of Constant Lambert. This is a loud, sure-fire piece that stands up well under one hearing. It has lots of clever tricks and in rare spots some very ingenious piano writing, brittle and quite effective. However, as a whole, this symphonic-jazz composition is too artificial and too fragmentary to create enduring interest. Lambert is certainly capable of something more distinguished. Anyway, there seems to be only one really convincing style of jazz writing, namely, the American.