

ture. The same procedure was followed in one of the love scenes where by the way, Eisler slipped quite easily into the symphonic style of Wagner-Strauss. There are two other passages which are particularly interesting: the church scene at the beginning of the picture, with its accompanying passacaglia, and the torrential music for the episode of the dead bird. The end-title, a kind of cadenza for violins, was less happy in its conception. But so was the end of the picture.

III

Valley of the Tennessee, *Salute to France*, and *Steeltown* are OWI shorts with scores respectively, by Norman Lloyd, Kurt Weill and William Schuman. The first is by far the best of the

three pictures, one to make you proud of America's achievement. The Lloyd score is admirable in intention but not successful in accomplishment. I liked the attempt to fuse the folk and jazz with a "serious" style, but I could not help wondering how each of them found their way into the scenes where Lloyd put them. Here again, as in so many documentaries, musical irrelevance occurs, either as an error of judgment or as outright perversity — one never knows which. Schuman's score is the best of the three, musically, but the film is so chopped up that no score could patch what the writers left undone. *Salute to France* is an heroic little film for which Weill's score is completely inadequate, in spirit as well as in skill.

OVER THE AIR

BY CHARLES MILLS

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG'S *Theme and Variations for Orchestra*, Opus 43b was given its premiere by Dr. Koussevitsky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra over the Blue Network. It is thoroughly romantic in character and almost a literal continuation, spiritually if not technically, of the Wagner, Bruckner and Mahler tradition. Its sonority is especially grateful for radio purposes. It has some of the most distinguished sounds and color combinations that I've heard in this composer's works and yet they hardly serve to veil the strongly reminiscent, and almost nationalistic German accent in rhythm and cadence. Perhaps the piece is a legitimate kind of homage to the best ideals of the Wagner-Brahms period, or

it may express a very sincere nostalgia for the "good old days" of romanticism.

David Diamond's *Second Symphony* was also given a beautiful performance by Dr. Koussevitsky over the Blue. This well scored and broadly colored concert piece was surprisingly effective despite its four imposing movements comparable to Shostakovitch in dimension, even in certain orchestral attitudes and protracted gestures. Fortunately it has the continuity needed to sustain such large structural outlines if they are to be other than pretentious. This is the first Diamond score, in my opinion, which has been as gratifying in content as in style and manner. There is conclusive evidence of a genuine and deeply felt lyric experience, essentially religious in spirit.

N. B. C.'s Inter-American University of the Air is the most important musical series offered by that network. One of its programs, arranged by the Music Critics' Circle of New York, presented three large works by young Americans. Leonard Bernstein's *Jeremiah Symphony Number 1* is a monument to talent in spite of many obvious immaturities in form and a more than usual lack of cohesiveness between the three large movements. Only a natural musician could manage the well scored and finely punctuated first movement in so imaginative a manner. It is more jagged in design than climactic in purpose but somehow manages to come off as a rhapsodic yet well organized pattern of inventions and subtle, unexpected orchestral maneuvers. There is real exuberance and zest in the wild jerky material of the second movement, much of the best of it derived from Copland, and some real excitement; but the treatment throughout is somewhat uncontrolled and unconvincing. It is in the third, a lamentation for voice and orchestra, that Bernstein reaches a high level of beauty and sings with authority and inward conviction.

Norman Dello Joio's *Magnificat*, also heard here, is music of the New Testament. It is an attempt to express that portion of the Blessed Virgin's canticle to God which sings: "and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." This is the best work of Dello Joio's that I've yet heard. It is an extravagant piece, with too many notes and too much motion, but its festive spirit is joyous and brilliant and it shows a genuine love for large and massive craftsmanship. One of the finest sections is for pianoforte, lean, delicate, tranquil.

William Schuman's *Symphony Number 5 for Strings* was the least rewarding of these works. The opening movement had a rhythmic monotony, which can be very effective if either melody or harmony is skillfully varied to sustain interest. But this was not the case here. However, in the slow movement Schuman has composed some of his very best music. This expressive and convincing section grows slowly but nobly into a fine climax and would be almost completely satisfying tonally if it achieved a more natural cadence than the disappointing triad that closes the piece. The last movement borrows the well-worn Tchaikovsky *Fourth Symphony* idea of a completely pizzicato formal section.

The current series, Music of the New World, an N.B.C. University of the Air program, is music of American cities. Especially delightful was the broadcast devoted to Mexico City. An *Ave Maria* from *Liber Usualis* was offered as an example of the Gregorian chant brought over by the Franciscans, which so greatly influenced the later church music of the Spanish colony. This beautiful music would be welcome on any program. No one can achieve more melodic grandeur than is contained in these simple unison lines, within whose octaves or even fifths incredibly lofty and beautiful things happen. *Alabado*, a simple hymn of praise, composed for two-part women's choir with organ accompaniment, was offered as representative of the cathedral music that developed in Mexico City. Such works paved the way for the more complex music of early church composers and organists, like Zumaya, whose four part choral work, *Como Es Principe Jurado*, in praise of St. Peter, shows inspired craftsmanship. A charm-

ing and freshly orchestrated piece, *Vals Poetico*, by Villanueva, a nineteenth century Mexican of pure Indian blood, showed how naturally native Americans responded to the romantic and sentimental influences of the imported Spanish culture of that period.

Another series of "Music of the New World" gave us "Canadian Music in Wartime." This was disappointing, and I hope entirely unrepresentative. The opening program was devoted to a forty-five minute *Symphony in G minor* by Dr. Arnold Walter; it was a complete bore. Morris Blackburn's *Canadian Forests*, a tone poem for full orchestra, is a waste of valuable paper.

A horse of quite another color is the Blue Network's Contemporary Composers' Series presented by Paul Whiteman, director of music for the Blue. Both the serious and popular fields are represented. A Creative Music Fund has been especially arranged by Blue to assist composers; the commissions are paid from it, a healthy step in a practical direction for which they deserve real credit. I was unable to hear *Scherzo à la Russe* by Stravinsky, about which I learned only that it was a short, five minute piece. Roy Harris conducted his own *Piano Concerto in One Movement*, a fifteen-minute work which proved beautifully effective for radio, the solo part cleanly and brilliantly projected by his wife Johana. This is one of Harris' most successful compositions — perhaps he should more often try his hand at light and unimposing forms. Less effective by far was his setting of *Rock of Ages*, a free fantasy for voices and instruments, which in certain awkward harmonic colors makes a blurred effect.

Aaron Copland was represented on the

series by his *Letter From Home*, which is a cute little number, nostalgic and sentimental in an intelligent manner. It is difficult to gauge the nicest attitude for a short score of this kind, and a pleasure to hear it done in an effortless way. There is some fine writing for high clarinet, low bassoon and melodic trumpet, all very fresh and very effective over the radio.

Jacques Ibert's *Concertino di Camera* for saxophone and orchestra was beautifully performed in this series. This is a neat score, with a little too much virtuososo treatment in the first and last movements, but a compensatingly attractive slow part saves the piece from being merely showy. Mr. Whiteman, before giving us Domenico Savino's *Overture to Spring*, a piece of delicate jazz tripe, announced that "it's right in the groove, just the thing we've been looking for!" Victor Young's *Stella by Starlight* had the taste of flat beer but things can always be worse and Peter De Rose's *Autumn Serenade* hit rock bottom, in a pathetically embarrassing mixture of third-rate Gershwin, Grofé, Tin Pan Alley and Harlem. Nothing daunted, however, I lifted the rock and discovered underneath Theodore Weingand's *Variations on a Hot Lick*. This is to music what a toothpaste ad is to a painting, without even the virtue of intended function.

C.B.S. has offered some interesting programs featuring the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, one of which presented Zoltan Kodaly's *Concerto for Orchestra*. This is a very brilliant piece, brightly colored both orchestrally and harmonically. Although it is a concerto in the older sense of the word, it has much of the formal

style and design, and all of the flavor and character of a Hungarian rhapsody. As music it is on a slightly higher level than comparable pieces by Georges Enesco, but not so distinctive in treatment or strong in personality as Bartok's suites and dances. Its fanciful orchestration makes it especially interesting for radio, but it surely deserves

a place in the concert hall roll-call of orchestral show pieces. Another of these programs offered a beautiful performance of Charles T. Griffes' *White Peacock*, which has now become a permanent part of our American repertory, reflecting the rays of European impressionism, but convincing in its own way, a work distinguished for sincerity.

THE TORRID ZONE

By MERCURE

INDICATIONS of the intensity of suffering endured by jazz-fans during the two-year record-drought are to be seen in the frantic response to Victor's announced list of one hundred and sixteen past favorites to be reissued — over three million orders. Some shops fear this is inflation, created by a relatively small group who go from shop to shop asking for the same titles. Others find in it a sure indication of the growing interest in jazz. The situation was of course due in part to the impasse between Petrillo and Victor and Columbia. The two companies marked time by drawing on their back catalogues since they are so much in demand — and the fans bought because there was nothing else to choose from. The one advantage of the trying situation was the new availability of items, especially famous jazz albums of the past four years, that have been fetching pretty fancy prices. (In one day the price of Coleman Hawkins' Bluebird recording of *Body and Soul* dropped from eight dollars to thirty-seven cents.) Columbia plays the Santa Claus act right now by reissuing albums of Bessie Smith, Louis

Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Fletcher Henderson, Ellington, and other classics that fans have been desperately hunting or buying at auction in the past year or so.

Decca, however, is recording, but alas it is Dorothy Lamour and Snow White who head their lists.

For any recordings of interest right now we must look to the small companies — Blue Note, Capitol, Commodore, Hit, to name a few that come immediately to mind. Commodore continues to focus on the solid old Chicago set-up of Condon, Kaminsky, Peewee Russell and the rest, of whom more anon, while Blue Note turns out more exciting items that feature the work of James P. Johnson, Ed Hall and other pioneers who still play with gusto. Listen to Hall's *Rompin in 44* or *Blue Interval* for a typical Blue Note date. The quintet of clarinet, vibes, piano, guitar and drums is transparent and fluid, offers a weaving of contrasting sonorities that is both charming and contemporary. Yet Hall is a New Orleans man, born in 1901.

Right on the beam and of terrific