

"Experiences" or "The unavailing memory of" or "Root of an unfocus") which unfocused Cunningham as much as anybody. His search for the non-representational and abstract lent considerable monotony to his performance, as did John Cage's intermittent noises. But there were variety and suspense, and frequently a force and justness of ex-

pression truly exciting.

The music ranged from part of Satie's *Socrate*, and from Livingston Gearhart's organized thumps (for the second part of "Experiences") to the varied, tricky, often apt and, to me, generally uninspired things which John Cage does to piano-strings and percussion. It is not my particular cup of cyanide.

OVER THE AIR

By CHARLES MILLS

ARTHUR LOURIÉ's symphonic suite, *The Feast During the Plague*, was performed by Dr. Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Orchestra over the Blue Network. This is a magnificent lyric achievement, original, convincing in form and content, of a deep and inward poetry. It is a rare thing to find a work of great musical wisdom which also has such distinctive sonorities, and such a long, soaring, melodic flight. The writing for orchestra, chorus and soprano is in every way expert. Fantastic skill is employed in certain sections to create the illusion of great intensity of motion, where actually a subtle quiet exists in all the instrumental parts. Such exciting effects, especially successful over the radio, are not mere colorisms, but very real thematic necessities in this highly tragic work.

C.B.S. offered the radio premiere of Nicolai Berezowsky's *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*, beautifully played by Edna Phillips and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. Although the solo part for harp is set in high relief, all the obvious and over-worked clichés are happily absent in its

aristocratic treatment. Its glamor and elegance should appeal to harpists and conductors alike. And besides these attractions it has a lovely unreality.

Another offering of the Philadelphia Orchestra over C.B.S. was Bohuslav Martinu's *Second Symphony*. It is in many ways disappointing, though well-made and brilliantly impressionistic. The organic structure is too weak for a symphony, even a pastoral one, the tonality, harmony, and indentation of design too indecisive for a suite. It is really a rhapsodic improvisation in three movements, composed about twenty years too late.

Hector Villa-Lobos conducted two broadcasts of his own works on C.B.S.'s Invitation to Music programs. *Discovery of Brazil*, a suite for orchestra, had all his usual grandiose backgrounds, pedals, paddings and fancy, freak treatments of instruments, in an enormous riot of color and violent imagery. *New York Skyline*, a much lighter piece, styled a "musical graph," was probably composed in five or ten minutes and is no doubt a minor offshoot of opus 2000 or thereabouts. The influence of *Le*

Sacre is all too obvious on the entire score of *Amazonas*, a bloated curiosity of experimental technic. It was a relief to hear Jennie Tourel sing three comparatively simple songs that show this composer can write a melody.

The C.B.S. broadcast of Anis Fuleihan's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* proved much too long. None of the three movements of this full and tepid score shows sobriety or dignity of any kind. This might not be an unforgivable fault if there were, instead, a display of genuine originality or strong formal logic, but the work indulges in sheer effect for its own sake. The first theme with its repetitive treatment is a miniature of Shostakovich's *Seventh Symphony* opening, very poorly managed in motion and structure, and all is rehashed after a lame impressionistic middle.

III

The N.B.C. Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy gave stunning performances of Samuel Barber's *Second Essay* and Tikhon Khrennikov's *First Symphony*. A virtue both these composers possess is an ingenious ability to exploit stale materials in an attractive layout of eloquent sounds. Of course the initial seduction eventually wears off. The Khrennikov seemed best when most dramatic, and shows at moments great emotional sincerity and power, not as yet well controlled. Barber, on the other hand, is least boring when he writes simply and quietly, avoiding the inevitable bombast that accompanies his efforts at fortissimo scoring.

A pleasant contrast to these was a radio premiere over WQXR of Ernest Waxman's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*. There is a fresh, academic dry-

ness in the first movement. Present also, is a certain morose expressivity, more plebeian than aristocratic, more healthy than disturbing. A sardonic finale has individual character, the phrases strongly etched, the structure profiled in asymmetrical formations against a more or less four-square line.

III

The Sixth WNYC American Music Festival got off to a good start with Vincent Persichetti's *Sonata for Two Pianos*. His writing, always distinctive, suggests primitive, neo-adolescent trends in graphic art. An excellent pianist himself, Persichetti understands the percussive nature of his instrument, and scores accordingly. A bright, sunlit objectivity sings in this fine sonata, which forsakes string concepts for hammered gongs and beaten bells. This treatment involves some loss of motion and flowing line, but gains in static intensity and in its fresh and vital color. Equally attractive in a slighter form, are the composer's *Poems for Piano*, set to words by various poets: they are versatile, imaginative, and delicate, capturing fragmentary moods exactly and in a tiny frame.

Bernard Wagenaar's *Sonatina for Cello and Piano* sounded extremely well over the air and part of the credit goes to a beautiful performance by Joseph Schuster and his accompanist. The work is not facile or light, but a great natural flow and spontaneous grace make it seem entirely effortless. The soft, pizzicato cadence is a particularly apt ending for this brilliant and distinguished miniature.

The music of Paul Bowles benefited by the beautiful oboe playing of Joseph

Marx, whose artistry is always a joy. *Scènes d'Anabase* is a work of charm and subtle fun, sophisticated but innocuous. More aristocratic and inspired, the fine slow movement in Bowles' *Sonatina for Piano* shows delicacy and objectivity in developing a lyrical idea.

One of the most entertaining programs on the festival was devoted to the music of Alexei Haieff, who was represented by two ostinati for piano, and a *Polka, Air and Ritornel* for violin and piano. A fine musical wit is expressed in these little pieces which make no obvious bid for applause, but sustain a satisfying level of interest throughout their concise and finished forms.

Donald Fuller's songs and piano pieces show genuine poetic inspiration. There is evidence too of a fine harmonic ear, a lucid mastery of tonality in a flexible neo-classic style which is traditional in gesture and design, but personal in feeling.

Leo Smit's *Piano Suite*, consisting of a Hymn, Sonata, Madrigal, Rondel and Toccata Breakdown, reveals the well-absorbed influence of Copland almost to the exclusion of any other. This is youthful music, intense, exciting and promising. Happily, a strong, thematic economy and tightness of effect counteract a tendency towards monotony.

Three Fantasies for piano show that William Bergsma has a good technical equipment and exuberant energy. They seemed better than his songs which, strong in line and craft, were rather external in appeal.

Other attractive piano works on the festival programs were by Robert Palmer, Charles Jones, Theodore Chanler, Quincy Porter, Harold Shapero and Burrill Phillips. Interesting and effective too were James Cohn's *Clarinet Sonata*, Marion Bauer's *Piano Concerto Number 1*, Norman Dello Joio's *Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano*, and of course the closing concert which featured Copland's *Dance of The Adolescent, As It Fell Upon a Day, Three Pieces From From Our Town* and a beautiful performance by Isaac Stern of the *Sonata for Violin and Piano*.

WNYC also offered a broadcast of the centenary celebration of the Congregation Emanu-El, a lengthy but interesting program entitled *A Hundred Years of American Music*. The most important and successful composition heard here was Elliott Carter's *Another Music*. Displaying a fine craft for voices and instruments, this brilliant score not only masters surface problems, but has a rewarding inner beauty and a realization of form as well.

THE TORRID ZONE

By COLIN McPHEE

THE stream of records is once more beginning to flow, slowly it is true, but promisingly. It is cheering to see in Decca's lists, names of Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Louis Jordan, Roy Eldridge, or under Bluebird or

Okeh labels blues singers like Memphis Minnie or St. Louis Jimmie. But for an ounce of hot you must take a pound of sweet, preferably saccharine, to make up an average monthly output of the big three, and the proportion,