

cle Remus stories. These pictures introduce American subjects to the cartoon, and Disney is so enthusiastic about them that his plans now call for a whole series of Americana. Characters already selected for picturization include Davy Crockett, Paul Bunyan, Johnny Appleseed, John Henry and Ichabod Crane. For some of these the basis of the film will be tailor-made to fit the music, as in *Fantasia*. Beyond this the studio does not yet indicate what its musical in-

tentions are. But since Thomas Benton has been engaged to style the artwork of several productions, it is reasonable to expect that Disney will be equally ambitious for correctly styled music. If this happens, it may be the means of bringing Hollywood together with some of the country's most distinguished composers who have based their whole careers on the belief that folk music is the unfailing source of inspiration for a truly national art.

## OVER THE AIR

By CHARLES MILLS

**T**HE seventh WNYC American Music Festival, the largest and most comprehensive one so far, gave us more than one hundred and fifty programs of native composition in a fiesta lasting eleven days. The station deserves great credit. Not only is this an important civic service, but the occasion offers encouragement and stimulus to composers and performers far removed from New York City.

The highpoint of the whole show for me was the closing concert, a program sponsored by the League of Composers, which presented Joan Field, violinist, and Ray Lev, pianist, playing the *First Violin Sonata* of Charles Ives. This rich and moving score is one of his most successful works. Not so strongly individual in rhythm and harmony as certain of his later pieces, it is still more gratifying because of its genuinely sincere form and the mature simplicity shown in the way tensions are released at

cadence points. The melodic lines, though most independent, bear some delightfully congenial relationships to the fairly complex chordal arrangements. Thematically the *Sonata* is imaginative and, to my mind, very American in character. I would have preferred a more interesting treatment of the violin — it is rather on the plain side — but the piano writing is quite intricate and the general instrumental color by no means dull.

Other chamber music works in extended forms included Harold Morris's *Piano Trio*, performed by the Stuyvesant Trio. This large four-movement piece has a rather severe structural plan; it begins with a pas-sacaglia and ends with a double fugue. The musical content, however, is far from austere and suggests neo-romanticism in its expressive warmth and color. Two suites by Paul Creston, one for violin and piano, the other for viola and piano, were both cleanly made and clearly conceived, surpris-

ingly better than any of his orchestral music I've heard. A *Trio Sonata* for flute, cello and piano by Marion Bauer received its first New York performance. This charming little score is light, unpretentious and well-written for the instruments.

Elliott Carter's *Pastorale* for English horn and piano, a broadly conceived work, has delicate poetic fancy and nostalgic charm. Folklike material forms its thematic basis without a provincial result; the long and somewhat difficult line is sustained with a convincing impression of effortless ease. The piece was beautifully performed by the composer, at the piano, and Josef Marx, whose fine artistry was also evident in a *Sonatina* for oboe and flute by Godfrey Turner. This was the best of a group of works by Turner whose gifts are primarily lyrical. Thick harmonies and over-colored sonorities marred the effect of the piano pieces and

songs. Music for violin and piano that proved attractive included sonatas by Walter Piston, Virgil Thomson, Joseph Wagner and a *Duo Concertante* by Boris Koutzen. Norman Dello Joio's *Prelude: to a Young Musician*, performed by the pianist, Andor Foldes, is based on the beautiful Gregorian chant, *Ite, Missa Est*, and develops a simple mood appropriate to this ancient melody.

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With the exception of Theodore Chanler's songs and Aaron Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait*, the programs for voice and those for orchestra were the most disappointing of the festival. Some of the particularly unimpressive items were George Kleinsinger's monotonous *Western Rhapsody*, Eda Rapaport's bid for sentimental sympathy, *Adagio for Strings*, and probably the worst setting the Twenty-third Psalm will ever get, for voice and piano by Paul Creston.\*

## IN THE THEATRE

By S. L. M. BARLOW

THIS particular Stylite is delighted to climb back on his column with some good news. *Annie Get Your Gun* has come to town, clothed by Lucinda Ballard, set by Mielziner, with Ethel Merman as Annie Oakley displaying her hoarse-operatic charms at their most fetching, and above all with the best score Irving Berlin ever (well, hardly ever) wrote. Not only are the tunes fresh, they have a qual-

ity not often associated with Berlin. The modulations are surprisingly deft and unexpected; several songs have a crisp folksong air about them, casual and spare, with no padding, no pulling out into the usual pattern of verse and chorus, with the chorus in that eternal ABA. If the verse is two lines long, so is the music. And it is in the verses that Berlin is most astonishing. The broadest humor and the

\* In the radio column of the last issue, the premiere of Morton Gould's *Viola Concerto* was erroneously credited to William Primrose. The work was first given last June, with the N.B.C. Orchestra, by Milton Katims.