

stirred up about movements two and three, both full of the usual run-of-the-mill ideas, but the third was exciting, its climax delivered smashingly under a frenetic top pedal point.

III

Though this year's festival did not lean too acutely to the left, one piece was decidedly on that side of the fence. It came surprisingly from last year's Prix de Rome recipient – William Denny. His *Sinfonietta for String Orchestra* has some first-class writing and some first-class faults. Its contrapuntal strength is weakened by redundancies. Composing for large masses of strings requires plenty of counterpoint to ride over the lack of a contrasting main color. Counterpoint there was and fair coloring; but in the end kinetic eighth-notes can grow boring. Denny needs to tighten his musical bridge work.

Hanson also introduced Bernhard Kaun, a name which I cannot recall ever seeing on any major organization's programs. Kaun's *Sinfonia Concertante* for horn and orchestra is a meaty piece for the neglected solo hornists. The listener, I think, feels a dark brown, garnet quality, as if the score were conceived with stopped-horn-tone technic continuously in mind. The piece is too rhapsodic; it needs an organic outward projection of material, instead of the introspective treatment and the, at times, reiterated-retrospective ideas built on top of each other; climaxes instead of the coagulating Mahler-Bruckneritis from which Kaun seemed to be suffering.

The many more items of the festival were chiefly on the minor side of the ledger. However as a suggestion let me call the attention of solo pianists to the "home-run-over-the-fence" part of Herbert Inch's *Piano Concerto*, and of ballet companies in search of authentic Americana to Burrill Phillips' *Three Satiric Fragments* (and incidentally his two-year old *Play Ball*). And finally, a word of praise for the magnificent performances given all the compositions, and the virtuoso conducting of Hanson.

Arthur Cohn

HOLLYWOOD MUSIC WITHOUT MOVIES

THE concentration of important musical figures in America is at the moment very heavy in and around Hollywood. Stravinsky, Schönberg, Toch, Gruenberg, Antheil, Zador, Achron, Castelnuovo-Tedesco and others are all living in Southern California which probably has the smallest audience for new music to be found anywhere. The Los Angeles Phil-

harmonic plays downtown and very few of its audience are "picture people." The W. P. A. Symphony runs a series in connection with an organization called "The Society of Native American Composers." Until now the output has been very depressing, the usual program featuring items like the *Symphony* by Charles Wakefield Cadman about which the less said the better.

The brighter side of the picture is the college and church musical activity. Arthur Leslie Jacobs at the Congregational runs a Bach Festival in the fall and a modern music festival in the spring. Due to a lack of finances most of the works played are arrangements such as last spring's production of Poulenc's *Concerto Champêtre* via piano and novachord instead of orchestra. Rabbi Sonderling of the Fairfax Temple has been commissioning compositions for the Jewish Service: so far Schönberg has written a *Kol Nidre*, Toch a *Passover Service* and Korngold a *Passover Hymn*. Toch's *Service* has been repeated by the Los Angeles City College Chorus and Orchestra under the title of *Cantata of the Bitter Herbs*. It is a sincere piece in high-romantic style – a concession to the exigencies of performances – and a great contrast to Schönberg's *Kol Nidre* which is twelve-tonal and sounds like any one of his newer mathematically triumphant works. Werner Janssen organized a small orchestra and for his last concert commissioned a piece by Leigh Harline, Walt Disney's musical director. The result was *Civic Center*, a very brash and very funny suite that uses all the orchestral tricks discovered by popular music and adds a fresh note of its own.

The Hollywood Theatre Alliance has organized a new Music Council which gave two concerts during the winter. The first, after a performance of Couperin's *Apotheosis of Lully* offered three *Symphonies* by Milhaud – *Sérénade*, *Pastorale* and *Printemps*. It is strange to hear early Milhaud again; the shock has gone out of the polytonality and one realizes more fully the essential charm of his melodic invention. The inability to completely develop the material is more than compensated for by the amazing fertility of invention. Today his individuality of style seems more pronounced because of its many subsequent second-rate imitators. Milhaud is still one of the most underrated composers of our time. Shostakovitch's *Two Pieces for String Octet* were performed without conductor, which gave still more the air of tour-de-force to an already brilliant composition. The concert's "first performance" was a *Suite for String Quartet* by Sol Kaplan – a good student work, with a prelude that never modulated from

its opening key, a blues with ostinato accompaniment, a nicely expressive adagio, a tarantella that seemed out of place and a fugue which had the correct number of strettis and cadences. Mr. Kaplan's assets are good melodies, an understanding of the capacities of the instruments he is using, and a sense of form. The program closed with Gruenberg's *Daniel Jazz*. The second concert included the Villa-Lobos *Bachianas Brasileiras* for eight cellos (played earlier this season in New York) and went on to the first performance of Amadeo de Fillippi's *Concerto for Chamber Orchestra*, a bright and nervous piece which hasn't much to say but says it very well. The first and last movements go along at a tremendous pace and make you wish that Fillippi would sometimes slow down for the audience to grasp the line of the work. The closing number was the first performance of my oratorio *Susanna and the Elders* set to a text by John Latouche. The work, meant as an entertainment piece for chorus and orchestra, utilizes the style of revivalist meetings. Alfred Newman gave it an excellent performance.

Jerome Moross

JUBILEE WIND-UP

THE one piece to lift its head above the rank and file of new works heard recently in Chicago came to Orchestra Hall by way of England. Its distinction lies partly in workmanship, principally in daring and amusing insolence, and not at all in originality. The full title is *Scapino, A Comedy Overture for Full Orchestra, after an Etching from Jacques Callot's "Balli Sfessania," 1622*. The composer is William Walton, who is now serving with the British forces. From the appearance of the pencil manuscript sent "To Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, in commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of its foundation," he completed the work under very difficult circumstances during 1940.

The music itself is in no discernible way influenced by garish night bombings. It is extraordinarily fresh, gay, pithy, superficially clever, and makes its appeal almost immediately. As a consequence Stock played it six times during the last two weeks of the season and it began to look as if it would join the category of von Reznicek's *Donna Diana*, though the music does not nearly fit its mold so snugly. Walton's orchestra is cheap in effect, styleless in its surface hardness, puerile in its cock-a-doodle-doo percussive impressionism. There is, too, an obvious insistence on saying