

their opera nor their symphony orchestra. The Housing Commission might well start its labors right here.) Attached to the Colón are complete schools of painting, singing and dancing. The prize-pupils sing at the opera, design or execute scenery, or perform in the ballet. The employment is continuous. It is a factory to produce and purvey all the arts and entertainments of which a theatre, in the best sense, is capable. It suffers probably from the usual academic faults of bureaucracy and ancient pensioners, but the level is kept remarkably high. And with the musical direction in the hands of Busch, Castro and Kleiber, the artistic integrity is safe and often memorable.

In Santiago there is another fine opera house, and a corps de ballet under the direction of a former star of the Ballet Joos; but the season had not begun when I left. I did catch however an evening of dance in Rio, in the Teatro Municipal. There was part of a ballet by Mignone (the other part had been cut out by the censor) and one by Sequeiros, and some folk-divertissements.

Though ballet at the Colón is as sumptuous as any I've ever seen, what interested me most were the native dances and dancers, once or twice caught with luck unexpectedly at their evolutions *sur*

*place*. Shrove Tuesday falls in lambing time, and one day, out from Arequipa, I found groups of Indians in the high pastures daubing their llamas with red, offering libations to Mother Earth, passing a goblet of *chicha* with the fraternal kiss, and singing Inca tunes. The words were sprinkled with meaningless references to Carnival or with a bob to some Catholic saint, but the true heart of the song lay with Viracocha, God of the Sun. Then the group would rise, beat on the drums and blow on the long pipes, and whirl in their many skirts as they moved off along the steppe. And every now and then, from the still creative highland races, come particular artists, singers, painters, or a diseuse like the incomparable Terecita Arce, to shame a desiccated and moribund *Hispanismo* with the rare ether of the Andes.

In Mexico the Indians have taken over. South of there, the day will come.

### III

A misprint in the last issue made nonsense of my last sentence. As I still believe in it, I should like to present it properly: "I see no excuse for hybrid ballet in New York out of which everything American has been left except the American dancers." Stet.

## ON THE HOLLYWOOD FRONT

By LAWRENCE MORTON

**O**BVIOUSLY, Fox Studios took infinite pains with the filming of *The Song of Bernadette*. A story about miracles, set in Catholic France of the mid-nineteenth century when modern science was just becoming conscious of strength and finding itself opposed to

many of the tenets and dogmas of the church, this is indeed a delicate subject for the movies. It may be questioned whether it should have been tackled at all, but it was undertaken, and it must be admitted, with tact, sensitivity, and conviction. Bernadette is, like

Parsifal, the pure and stainless fool. Yet unlike Parsifal, she functions in no world of symbols, but completely out of tune, amid poverty and illness, surrounded by a multitudinous family, petty local politicians and ordinary townfolk. The picture is thus more prevailingly realistic than mystical, with Bernadette herself an incongruous religio-romantic element.

This mixture of real, romantic and musical components presents a difficult problem to the composer. Of all possible solutions – and there are many – Alfred Newman's was to treat the whole as a romantic drama. His common solvent for these disparate elements is the symphonic style of the late nineteenth century, with overtones from the anthology of church music, and a fairly free use of dissonance to underline dramatic conflict. The whole feeling of the music, one of great warmth, is intended to invite sympathy for the strange girl who, like Shaw's Joan, was as much a problem to the church as a worry to her family. This kind of treatment is, of course, the prevailing Hollywood style, and Newman's in particular. While I have long felt that he had milked it dry many scores ago, and should have moved on to something a little fresher, his use of it here appears justifiable, at least on the grounds of appropriateness to the nineteenth century setting; and justifiable, too, as reflecting the mood of this particular picture. Unfortunately, it has been so abused in a thousand other films that its effectiveness is now greatly reduced even for the average theatre patron; for myself it has been practically nullified. Something like the *St. Francis* music of Hindemith would have been fresher; or better still,

something in the style of Milhaud, for whom this picture would have been a natural.

The vision music I thought eminently successful as theatrical sound, with its high trembling string figures, its low woodwind ejaculations and its wordless treble voices – all of it full of expectancy and hope. I liked too the introduction of a fragment of old church music into the symphonic pattern of the main-title. And, as always in Newman scores, the orchestration and performance were superb. Less successful was the music of the first reel, ominous of events that never arrived. Later, Antoine's discovery of the miracles of the healing spring of water lost its dramatic punch by having been "telegraphed" by the premature playing of the vision music. And finally, the orchestral development of Bernadette's music is accomplished much too early in the picture. Like the fulfillment of her devotion, it should have had its apotheosis at her death-bed.

### III

Neither on grounds of subject, period, or mood, could I find justification for the late romantic style that Ernst Toch used in *First Comes Courage*. This tale of self-sacrificing patriotism and commando raids in Nazified Norway cried out for a truly contemporary score.

Metro's *Madame Curie* is an idyll about love in a laboratory. In it the Curies turn out to be none other than our dear old friends, the Minivers. Garson is so lovely that one despises those wicked elements, barium and radium, for refusing to separate for her. Herbert Stothart's score, below his own unexacting standards, is about as good as the film deserves. Stothart still cues

the movies instead of scoring them. The Mickey-mouse technic of the theatre organist lives on in him. Bits like the riding-away-on-a-bicycle sound very naive in 1944. At its best, the score just escapes the category of salon music — but there is plenty of that, too.

Warner's *Northern Pursuit* is the same old story of the Canadian wilds. The Mountie goes out to get his man, in this case, a Nazi colonel of the Luftwaffe; he gets him, of course, and the girl too. Adolph Deutsch's score is naturally limited by the antique formulas of the so-called "action picture." Mystery, excitement and violence are underlined with music appropriately myster-

ious, excited, violent. But there is something that makes the scores of Deutsch increasingly interesting, and that is his increasing awareness of the materials of the modern composer. This latest number shows Deutsch trying to move out of the ranks of the men who merely refurbish the basic pattern-work of old familiar sounds. He seems to want something new and different, and when you hear sounds reminiscent of Hindemith, you may be sure that the man who wrote them is not only alert to what is going on in a world of music beyond Hollywood, but also wants Hollywood to be a part of that vastly more interesting place.

## IN THE THEATRE

By PAUL BOWLES

### AFTER THE FIRST NIGHT

THE pre-opening favorable grapevine and subsequent press raves on *Carmen Jones* led me to expect a production combining the glamor of the Met, the vocal and prosodic purity of *Four Saints*, and the acoustical and dramatic punch of a first-rate Broadway musical. This was decidedly not the case the Tuesday evening when I saw the show. Apologists for the piece claim that on the nights when Muriel Smith doesn't appear, the cast is not so cooperative. This may well be true; Miss Smith was taking that evening off, and the show was certainly uninspired.

The principal objection I have to make is that the work is an opera and needs to be performed by voices equipped to sing the music. If the singing is not

top-notch, even though everything else is fantastically good, one can scarcely expect a compelling production. And everything else was not fantastically good.

There needed to be a very apparent reason for creating the esthetic disparity which is the inevitable result when a standard work is paraphrased. Incongruities can make perfectly good sense if presented before the public with style, the great justifier. *Carmen Jones* has practically no style of its own, in the true sense of the word: a conscious manner grown out of organic necessity and which is inescapably the work's own. The piece fits all too comfortably into the category of regular Broadway entertainment: it has visual elegance, a properly speedy