

any rate she came into her own with éclat only in such show pieces as the grand pas de deux of *Black Swan*.

The crying need of all the companies appears to be more and better male dancers. A few of the well-tried ones, Eglevsky and Laing, have been much overworked — others are either too young or too old, or too unfinished. There has been a great decline in noble bearing, and arm gestures grow steadily less exact and less convincing.

III

As we go to press the International Ballet has just opened with a gala night almost Parisian in reverberation. Here as once over there the jewelers, perfumers and haute couture were out in full force. But Diaghilev who also encouraged his audience to go on parade never turned the stage over to the dress-makers. Our International's debut was

smothered in heavy drifts of blue and lavender tulle, and there was an irrepressible tendency at the premiere to burst into Halloween masquerade.

For the high spot of the evening, *Colloque Sentimentale*, Paul Bowles has written a smoothly flowing piece with harp glissandos and a surging unbroken line. The music is properly in love with the Verlaine poem which is the ballet's subject. Perhaps the liveliness of Dali's backdrop with its own insistent rhythm was a little unanticipated, yet the whole effect did come off. But where were the two dancers bound, who shyly slipped on between the orchestra and the so active scene behind them?

The International is to run for eight weeks in New York before going on tour and it promises us nine new works. So there will be much to see and time for second thought before the next issue.

ON THE HOLLYWOOD FRONT

By LAWRENCE MORTON

TWO interesting new movie scores, at least one of them representing an important advance in this medium, were recently heard at a demonstration of film music held on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles, as part of the Musicians' Congress. They were Leigh Harline's score for the Disney cartoon, *Baggage Busters*, and the long-awaited *White Floats* which Hanns Eisler has been preparing for the Rockefeller Foundation. Fifteen hundred people came to hear the film composers themselves tell what they are doing and how they meet their problems. Participating, besides Eisler and Har-

line, were Louis Applebaum, Adolph Deutsch, Gail Kubik, Alfred Newman, David Raksin on behalf of Serge Prokofiev, and Roy Webb. A dozen sequences were screened. They dealt with the problems of music for montage, for the supernatural, for pursuit, for violence, for the cartoon and the documentary, and for the musical film. In each case the composer or a spokesman made the analysis.

Harline's score, *Baggage Busters*, was of special interest because of the economy of means with which highly amusing ends were realized. The music is for six wind players and four percus-

sionists, and among them the following instruments were available: flute, piccolo, oboe, all clarinets (including the contra-bass), all saxophones (including the C-soprano), bassoon, piano, novachord, celeste, and a full battery of drums and traps. The 348 bars of music were recorded in thirty sections, some of them only two bars in length. Necessarily, the score is fragmentary, but many of the miniature pieces have well organized structures within the general framework imposed by the rapid action on the screen.

Eisler's *White Floats*, which incidentally received the most applause, attempts to demonstrate the adaptability of the twelve-tone system to film composition. The result is a most interesting piece of film music, which is scheduled shortly for publication by the Oxford Press.

White Floats is an Arctic scenic, wherein ice and snow are the protagonists. For its score, Eisler composed on a twelve-tone series of C, C#, D, D#, B, G, Gb, F, A, G#, Bb, E. The film fell naturally into five main sections and for each of them the composer wrote an extended piece in more or less classical form: a scherzo with trio, an étude, an invention, a chorale with variations and a sonata movement. This procedure is, of course, quite common in composition for the stage, from Purcell and Mozart to Berg and Shostakovich. Within each piece, the action of the picture is followed in minutest detail. Every falling snowflake, every breath of cold has its musical counterpart.

It is only fair to say that Eisler is not overly concerned either with the formal patterns in which he casts his

music or with his method of composition in the Schönbergian manner. They are merely vehicles for carrying along his musical thought, means of organization. He is genuinely concerned with the sounds he makes, and these he calculates most carefully, not only as music but as cinema-music. Further, he works here as a composer of chamber music, and in the manner of the atonalists he employs a chamber orchestra of one each of woodwinds and brass, a novachord, an electric piano, a solo string quartet and a double-bass. As descriptive music, the score for *White Floats* is eminently successful, and as Alfred Frankenstein has pointed out, the opponents of the twelve-tone system were not slow to draw the obvious moral about its appropriateness to a film dealing with a dead Arctic world.

Eisler believes that his method is equally adaptable to commercial films, but RKO's *None But the Lonely Heart* was hardly the occasion for attempting to demonstrate it, for reasons which anyone acquainted with Hollywood will readily understand. This strange and eerie picture is certainly not typical of the Hollywood product, but I am not prepared to say that its departure from the norm is necessarily a virtue. There can be no doubt about the quality of Eisler's score, whatever its methodology. Its main-title, in the style of an overture, is a pleasing variation from the traditional obeisances before the names of the producer, the director and their many associates. Instead of giving us a symphonic treatment of the Tchaikovsky melody which furnished the title for the picture, Eisler has been most inventive in using its main motives as counterpoints within the musical struc-

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 Shostakovich 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.