

although he frequently hides the merits of this analysis behind a thick screen of words. He also does not hesitate to deal with composers whose music he obviously does not know well or extensively – most notably, perhaps, the British. And how can anyone acquainted with Debussy's *La Mer* speak of it as a work in four movements!

Editorially the book is not up to Norton standards. There are other

mistakes of pure fact. The numerous titles are subject to no rule of consistency in the presence or absence of italics or quotation marks. Some are given in their original languages, others translated, sometimes oddly, into English, and still others are incomplete or inaccurate in any language. This could perhaps be forgiven if only the book were intelligible a larger share of the time.

Cecil M. Smith

POCKET-SIZE HISTORY

THE shocking thing about *You and Music* by Christian Darnton (Penguin Books) is not that it is a bad book, but that it is a pocket-book and can be bought for a quarter. If it cost ten dollars and weighed ten pounds, its potential for harm might be less. As it is, some innocent "music lover" may pick it up with a package of cigarettes at the corner.

In organizing the book, Darnton has achieved a masterpiece of disorder. "To write about music intelligibly and intelligently is difficult," he observes in his preface; but having faced the problem, he fails to come to grips with it. Writing "primarily for those who like music sufficiently to go to listen to it occasionally," he begins by "first considering not what music is, but what it is not." This topsy-turvy notion of how to make things clear affects the whole book; everything is backwards. Our music lover reaches Chapter V – "Occasions for Music" – after plodding through a fifty-page digest of Forsyth's *Orchestration*. Chapter VII – "The Genesis of Music" – whisks him in reverse

through music's history and deposits him with Léonin and Pérotin in the roles of Adam and Eve. Their "two lovely songs," writes Professor Darnton, "must suffice for the earliest known Art-music," glibly and categorically misstating the facts.

As a composer at work on his third symphony, Darnton is a member in good standing of his profession. But this is an amateur's book. One feels that the faults in scholarship are worn with some of the pride that an English gentleman takes in not being too impeccably dressed; that the careless blending of fact and personal prejudice is the expression of a kind of sporting attitude rather than the result of a deliberate desire to mislead. In writing this kind of a handbook, Darnton has been undoubtedly misguided; but in presenting it to a large public, the publishers are guilty of irresponsibility and negligence.

The same publishers have, however, discharged their public duty with high competence by bringing out a compendium in the same format, *British Music of Our Time*, edited

by A. L. Bacharach (Pelican Books). Here the sturdy English literary tradition animates and unifies a convincing presentation of Britain's musical renaissance, in a series of eighteen studies by eleven contributors. Bacharach's careful editing has made the book an excellent source for reference. Without resorting to any elaborate mechanism, he has seen to it that each subject is thoroughly covered, that titles are correct and consistent, that dates are unobtrusive, but present when necessary.

There is naturally some unevenness in these different essays. Colin Mason is perhaps more vigorous in his moral censure of the naughty twenties than he is in elucidating the character of William Walton. Robin Hull is almost too conscientious in considering his reader to be a man with a phonograph and a pile of records on one side of him, a piano on the other. Ralph Hill struggles with the personality of Delius then decides, of his music, "You either like it or you don't." But throughout this is a readable and illuminating book. English writers have a special gift for the classical, rounded sentence, and at times for the devastatingly simple one – "As it is, the best pages are those in which the singers are silent." (J. A. Westrup of Lord Berners's opera, *Le Carosse du Saint-Sacrament*.) Especially successful is the opening essay, "The Roots and the Soil: Nineteenth Century Ori-

gins." In it Scott Goddard, working as carefully with words as a restorer of paintings with chemicals and spatula, uncovers a late Victorian panorama. Under the film of prejudice and neglect he discovers the background, revivifies and restores a third dimension to the foreground figures. Grove, Parry, Stanford and their contemporaries stand out again, not titanic but solid, human, progressive and accomplished.

This book is again a reminder that the very force of the English literary tradition has been one of the most hampering restraints on English composers, that the rebirth-pains of English music have been mainly a struggle to overcome the instinct of every English artist – an instinct deeply rooted in the tremendous literary fertility of nineteenth century England – to create a work of art in the form of a novel, an essay or a poem. How often in these studies the literary influence, interest, even impulse is recorded – Holst's connection with William Morris, Peter Warlock's deep feeling for the Elizabethans, Bax's for the poetry of Yeats. For the younger men the struggle with a dual inspiration can no longer be so acute. The publication of this book and the volume of work which it records imply that already the young composer has a new musical tradition in which to find his bearings, from which to take off.

Frani Muser