

and orchestra, shows a growing distinction. He is now deep in modality (but refuses to modulate!).

Space limits compel me merely to summarize the remaining works: Grant Fletcher's *Rhapsody for Flute and Strings*; Scribner Cobb's *Suite for Two Flutes and Strings* (circa 1780); Harold Wansborough's *At Dawn*; Leland Proctor's *Pocantico* (a warm, personal work); Jack End's tranquil *Song for Sleepy Children*; Irving Lowen's *Variations on a Peruvian Theme*.

The long list was played with devotion and ready skill by Hanson and the orchestra. Obviously these sessions form a model which, if freely imitated in other places, would be to the ultimate benefit of our music. Only in some such fashion is it possible to test new music and thus arrive at a just estimate of its worth. It is interesting to point out that sixty scores were considered, from which total it was possible to perform exactly one quarter.

Bernard Rogers

MODERN CHAMBER MUSIC IN PHILADELPHIA

NEWLY inaugurated here this season was the early Fall Chamber Music Series, with a concert of contemporary works. Thematic material moving inevitably through dissonant counterpoint, certain highly vitalized flashes of sound and a persuasive dryness, all set off by a high distinction of craftsmanship, assured us that we were listening to the familiar Walter Piston. His *Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano* had verve and inventiveness, and a more personal touch than earlier works. Although nothing was ventured beyond the usual trio sonorities, the extreme directness of structure and the polish of his linear texture were enough to set the composition off from the run of contemporary pieces in that medium, so often overwrought, strained and pseudo-orchestral. The Hindemith *Sonata for Piano, Four Hands* was also played. This and the Piston work have become favorites in Philadelphia through repeated performances.

The same group was also responsible for the Philadelphia premiere of Aaron Copland's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. It is not easy to forget this noble music, whose gaiety seems to be on the surface only for way down in the notes there is a thin thread of tragedy, suppressed but strong. The opening violin line is reluctant to make its statement squarely and only after hovering hesitation does it gain pace. The effect of one triad

harmony pulling against another tightens the band of harmonic tension in such a way that its numerous releases into pure and clear places is splashed with vividness. The Lento is not hesitant, but sensitive and searching. As it opens, the last movement does not seem supple enough and the theme cries for severe virtuoso treatment; but at the double bar one realizes that all the bite and strength might otherwise have been lost and the bitterness in the melodic leaps would have developed into despondency. The work took hold at once.

The Art Alliance gave a program of music by Isadore Freed – *Triptych for Violin, Viola, Cello and Piano; Postscripts for Women's Chorus; and Rhapsody for Viola and Piano*. Mr. Freed is an experienced composer and has a well grounded technic. It is all the more surprising that his writing has unnecessary complexity. Many of the strained harmonies could be simplified or eliminated for greater clarity without destroying the original concept. An overabundance of notes gives a post-Fauré effect of ornamentation and shows a lack of appreciation for the value of rests. From this fault however he seems free in *Postscripts*, a humorous and effective work.

Eugene Ormandy with the Philadelphia Orchestra did the familiar Griffes *White Peacock*, the Shostakovitch *Fifth Symphony*, and two works new to Philadelphia, Miaskowsky's *Symphony Number Twenty-one* and Zoltan Kodaly's *Concerto for Orchestra*. Much time and care can be spent in manipulating spicy harmonies and orchestral colors around meager thematic material. A casual listener is easily taken in by the attractive spots in Kodaly, particularly at the close of sections where he so often rounds them off with an engaging figure that would have made a better thematic basis than the theme itself. The Miaskowsky work is one of the best to come out of the Russian school of fantasy and beautiful musical images.

Early summer brought with it a concert of young composers who work with me at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music. Outstanding were *Three Songs for Soprano* (poems by Langston Hughes) by Ben Quashen and *Concertino for Two Pianos* by Georgiana Romig. *Summer Night* was tediously restless with a fluctuating but quiet melodic line that held its shape, and the light, carefree *Harlem Night* had an undisturbed pulse and a swirling tune. The tomtom song, *Dance Africaine*, in its ostinato mood rushed along with adroit cleverness. The first movement of the large Romig work was a happy mixture of organum

and chromatic harmony with fresh and original melodic invention supported by rhythmic buoyancy. There was something solid and genuine about the sure-footed score.

Vincent Persichetti

FINE ARTS IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

THE Seventh Annual Fine Arts Conference, held in Colorado Springs this summer, was an encouraging manifestation of cultural growth in this region. It began with a concert of music written by people at present residing in Colorado. This included two pieces by Cecil Effinger, now a warrant officer stationed at Fort Logan. First, his *Prelude and Fugue for Piano*. The *Prelude* is a well made movement, and the *Fugue* begins with a beautiful and fluid exposition, which unfortunately becomes bombastic and tends to disintegrate before an arbitrary cadence. His *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, Opus 27 is rather sparse, full of delicate inlay, with large canonic sections, but to no apparent purpose. The forms are all appropriated from the obsolete sonata school, while the idiom stems from the neo-classical writing of the 'twenties. In spite of a few bright spots, it was not a gratifying work.

Simon Sandler, a product of the New England Conservatory, presented a *Chorale with Variations*, scored for one clarinet, two trumpets, and three saxophones. It is a set of brilliant, clean little pieces, attractive and well scored. The resonance of this chamber group and the smart, tailored quality of the music itself, combine to make a considerable popular success. Ernst Bacon, who was on the summer faculty of the University of Denver, presented five of his songs which for the more conservative listeners came as relief after the sharper idioms of the younger men, but for the majority of the audience were a surprise. It is always something of a shock to realize how literally Bacon has imitated Schumann, Mendelssohn and Brahms.

The concert (which opened with my own *Violin Sonata*) closed with two new works by Roy Harris. His *Lamentation*, scored for soprano, viola and piano, is a sustained, tragic movement, well organized and beautiful. There are no words, and the vocal part is given an instrumental treatment. Mrs. Harris and Gui Mombaerts performed a *Fantasy for Two Pianos*, based on the new Harris piano concerto broadcast in September by Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. This is a compact work, brilliant, intense, gay. Its one movement, divided into five sections, alternately fast and