

contour. Two more of his songs, *This is the Shape of the Leaf* and *There shall be More Joy* were sung by Catharine Latta at the Times Hall concert of the Chamber Music Guild. Miss Latta also gave us Charles Ives' adventurous and moving *Where The Eagle*, Marc Blitzstein's *Jimmie's Got a Gail*, Theodore Chanler's *These, My Ophelia*, Paul Bowles' delightful *Letter to Freddy* and a piece by Holst.

Lou Harrison

PHILADELPHIA'S LIVELY MID-SEASON

IGOR STRAVINSKY was presented in a lecture-recital by the Philadelphia Art Alliance. His subject, "Composing, Performing, Listening" was treated in the manner of a philosophical essay and was as carefully worked out as any sonata. It was my privilege to assist Stravinsky in presenting the music on the program. We played his *Sonata for Two Pianos* and arrangements for two pianos of *Scherzo à la Russe* and the *Circus Polka*. Much of the sonata, discussed in some detail in MODERN MUSIC'S last issue, is constructed in easy flowing, vocal counterpoint, each piano taking two voices. The insistently rhythmic *Scherzo* was composed last year as an orchestral piece for Paul Whiteman's Blue Network series. The already well known *Circus Polka* is as good-humored as any elephant around.

The Twentieth Century Group gave a concert of refreshingly varied styles of chamber music. Debussy's excellent *Deux Chansons de Charles d'Orléans* for unaccompanied mixed voices was heard here six years ago and found a welcome return. *Chorale and Variations*, a short piano piece by Helen Weiss, is a happy combination of contrapuntal and harmonic writing. In a few variations she manages to cover the possibilities of the theme and move to a well rounded close. Leonard Bernstein's strident *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* is built on derivative but catchy tunes and is put together with such unchecked drive that everyone is caught in the excitement. Benjamin Britten's *First String Quartet* is by far the best work I have heard from this composer. It has youthful exuberance and punch and the themes are daring and energetic. It is surprising to find such an abundance of unison string writing used successfully. At times the parallel lines get tight and take too long to ease off. This want of contrapuntal freedom is particularly felt in the uneven first movement. Ernest Bloch's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* listed as a Philadelphia premiere was written over twenty years ago. Violinists give up a major

knock-out by neglecting the work. The proportions are like those of the *Piano Quintet*. The three movements are interwoven thematically. When the material is completely exhausted the work quiets down to a typical Bloch close.

Three works new to this city were presented by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra; Berezowsky's *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*, Martinu's *Second Symphony* and Paul Creston's *Pastorale and Tarantella*. Berezowsky has approached the difficult task of solo harp writing through musical ideas rather than the devious technical possibilities of that instrument. Thus the absence of annoyingly pointless arpeggios and glissandos helped give the necessarily delicate concerto real musical worth. Traditional modal melodies form the basis of the music and a steady rhythm so appropriate in certain modal atmospheres is used with excellent taste. The continuous quarter-note pulse of the first movement would have been even more effective had there been less rhythmic sequence in the supposedly free cadenza over a long organ point in the lower instruments. In the lyric slow movement the single-note harp melodies held their shape against a balancing violin line. The scoring of the entire concerto is daring as it pits its strength against the solo harp. Shrill woodwinds against muted trombones and generous percussion are typical in the finale which contains some of Berezowsky's best writing. The recent *Second Symphony* of Bohuslav Martinu was given a thorough and sympathetic reading and proved once more the composer's unusual skill with the orchestra. However one feels that an efficient and professional hand is hurrying the work over holes here and there. The rhythmic excitement of the six-eight opening got so syncopated that it began to sound like straight three-four and the bustle went flat. Truly inspired music can be found in the slow movement's development. In the last half of the symphony we find the usual Martinu - vivid themes that keep running in massive blocks and continuous patterns past the finish line. The Creston piece has strong, arresting themes with isolated sections that would make better cue music for some other occasion.

Vincent Persichetti

WESTERN EVENINGS WITH IVES

CONTINUING its season-long tribute to Charles Ives, Evenings on the Roof presented his *Third Sonata* for violin and piano, painstakingly deciphered and marvelously played by Sol Babitz and Ingolf