

Among the revivals, none made a greater success than that of Charles Martin Loeffler's *A Pagan Poem*, produced under the baton of Rudolph Ringwall, associate conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra. Here is music representative of a period in American composition which has already become classic. Works such as this, the *Suite in E major* of Arthur Foote, and the symphonies of Edward Burlingame Hill, not to mention several distinguished scores of MacDowell, may well be revived, and will stand frequent hearings. For in such scores – and the list may easily be lengthened – lies the foundation of the "American repertory," which has been much sought but not yet established. Almost any one of the works on my short list is far more worthy of repetition than the uneven and unsymphonic *Seventh Symphony* of Shostakovich, which received a loving performance from Dr. Rodzinski at the beginning of the season. The Shostakovich *Quintet*, Opus 57, also introduced here by the Walden String Quartet, provided a far better organized and accomplished score.

George Henry Lovett Smith

INTER-AMERICAN REVIEWS THE CURSE OF VIRTUOSO ROUTINE

Lima

IN a city like Lima where musical life has been organized for but a few years it is not to be expected perhaps that contemporary music should appear frequently on concert programs. A public that has only just discovered the classical symphonies is now opening its avid ears to the whole world of concerti grossi, partitas, suites, symphonies, poems, of the classical and romantic masters. But beside the apparent need for chronological order in the auditory education of our public, there is another obstacle to esthetic innovations. It is a universal force that has found Lima propitious for its application: namely, the concert artist's incurable routine.

This is an evil for which no remedy has so far appeared. It continues and is borne without protest even from critics in the capitals of advanced musical culture. Magnificent executants, gifted with ability to adapt themselves to any technical gamut, who could make the most diverse styles palatable by the authority of their own prestige, prefer to go on harvesting cheap applause with works that have been played millions of times throughout the world. Yet for these gifted artists it would be extremely simple to incorporate into their repertoires new or unknown old works, even if only as a professional luxury to distinguish them from their colleagues. Since it appears impossible for the celebrated repeaters to get out of the rut of

the *Moonlight*, the *Pathetic*, and the *Appassionata*, what can be the hope for new music? And what of those virtuosi, who are themselves mere gramophone records, who do not even play the music of the great masters with deserved respect, but dedicate their talents to purveying their own personalities by means of the geniuses of the past, selling these short everywhere to a public whose weaknesses are well known? For example Mischa Elman, Brailowsky and Horowitz, artists of enormous fame who could, if they chose, not only lead the legitimate evolution of musical taste in the great capitals, but help to discover and spread the creations of living composers. Audiences would accept without the slightest resistance any of their efforts. But Elman continues to hand out the tinware of Wieniawski, the circus pyrotechnics of Sarasate's *Zapateado*, and the caramel of his own *Tango*. Brailowsky would rather go on intoxicating South American audiences, and particularly the women, with his *Appassionata*, his *Fantasy-Impromptu*, his Chopin *Waltzes* and *Mazurkas*. The admirable Horowitz never seems to tire of Beethoven's *Thirty-Two Variations*, the Liszt *Sonata*, and his own fantastic arrangement of the lovely themes from *Carmen*.

Of those bolder spirits who have launched themselves into the contemporary field – what can one say? They play for us Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*, Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance*, and the *March* from Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges*, which are simply new warhorses to replace "the" Chopin *Nocturne*, "the" Liszt *Rhapsody*, "the" Paderewski *Minuet*, etc. To which must be added such clichés as *La cathédrale engloutie*, *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, and other now frankly popular Debussyan preludes – "new music," that for the most part is nearly half a century old. Is it bad to play these? Of course not. It is, as a matter of fact, a great event to hear the Liszt *Sonata* given with the perfection and grandeur of Horowitz' performance in Lima in 1941. What we deplore is that they play nothing else despite the available repertory of marvelous music of all times, including our own. But concert artists, with few exceptions, are today mere impresarios of their own personalities rather than apostles of art. This is true also of orchestral conductors. Bored by the small supply of original scores they consider worth their time, they resolve the crisis by picturesque "arrangements" and transcriptions of the least orchestrable works, a practice of which Stokowski is a conspicuous standard-bearer, with numerous scarcely less distinguished followers. Did I not hear my friend Hans Kindler's own orchestral transcription of one of Scriabin's *Etudes*? Singers are no better. They add words to Chopin *Etudes*, Granados *Danzas*, and

Liszt *Nocturnes*. Why not end up by singing the Octave *Polonaise*?

As for new music in Lima it is a calumny to say that the public is not ready. Audiences are ready everywhere. Ours is not one of the poorest, having more than once proved its sensibility. Recently Erich Kleiber won a notable success by presenting us for the first time with *The Fire Bird*. Late in 1941 we heard Copland's *Billy the Kid* and Thomson's *Filling Station*. True, they had the additional attraction of choreography, but the music itself pleased and was applauded and praised with sincere and legitimate enthusiasm. This was the fate also of works by Hindemith, Villa-Lobos, Piston, and other contemporaries including the Peruvians, Carlos Sánchez Malaga and Andrés Sas, whose music was revealed to us by the excellent American Wind Quintet; and of the few modern works Nicolas Slonimsky played here to illustrate a lecture on contemporary music. But that was all in 1941. The 1942 season was frankly poor in contemporary works. Let us not despair however. Our public still needs to become acquainted with much of the past. Meanwhile, we will continue to hope that on some not-too-distant day the great concert artists who visit us will vary (even if but briefly) the business of concerts with a more generous manifestation toward musical art. Then we will welcome them with greater enthusiasm and more gratitude.

Carlos Raygada

POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE,

Montevideo

MUSICAL life in Uruguay, insofar as important public performances are concerned, has been decreasing in quality for some time. It is directed and almost monopolized by the SODRE (Official Service of Radio Broadcasting), a powerful agency possessing, among other groups, a symphony orchestra of high quality. In addition to offering many kinds of performances, it rents out its hall at reduced prices to important artists and groups. Our whole musical life is practically centralized in that hall. Now the SODRE once had a certain artistic autonomy. But, as a government agency, it has been put under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and consequently under the direct influence of local politics. This has produced a rapid lowering of its artistic level. Lacking permanent, competent direction that might subject its members to discipline and introduce sane, professional concepts, the SODRE's orchestra has received a mixed treatment, both from inadequate foreign conductors, many of the second and third rank, and from natives of the same or inferior categories.