

The book, finally, is provided with admirable appendices—lists of works and bibliographies—and an excellent index. The latter could be made much easier to use by setting index numbers in bold face when they refer to discussions of person or subject indexed rather than to mere references to them.

Arthur Mendel

ENCOUNTERS STIMULATING AND OTHERWISE

AT each of last summer's outstanding fiestas of modern music, the one at Munich, the week of the I.S.C.M. in Oxford and London, and the Pan-American in Paris, new works of great vitality were presented. In general they exhibited a higher level of creative, emotional or at least, technical maturity than the morbid and confused average which many a past season has brought forward.

However, this summer's festivals were again marred by the chronic flood of mediocrities and nonentities that are slipped into the programs through diplomatic manœuvring. The very appearance of some of these products at representative modern music concerts is shocking; the trickery of their sponsors too evident.

There could be no more telling juxtaposition than was offered by the two major compositions of the Munich Festival, the new operas, Malipiero's *Torneo Notturmo* and Alois Haba's finally achieved quarter-tone opera *Die Mutter*. Here at last we saw the woods behind the trees, and could appraise the new academic labels, classifications and pseudo progressiveness which still confuse us.

Malipiero's *Torneo Notturmo*, a work of conservative technical habits so far as the music is concerned, fairly vibrated with freshness of stage conception, of dramatic fancy and invention of detail. The composer's favorite operatic idea, so convincingly embodied in *Sette Canzoni* has found a new and varied development in the *Torneo*. The grouping of the tonal material of each scene around a rigid musical form as a gravitational center, Malipiero now supplements by grouping the dramatic material around a central emotion from which the climax is developed.

In *Torneo Notturmo* one finds the same acute visual and theatrical clarity and self-sufficiency that may be observed in *Wozzeck*. Combined with expressiveness of an almost cinematographic definiteness, these qualities make the new opera a real stage achievement. Haba's *Mutter* is a tedious, interminable and miserably prosaic story of a peasant whose lot is alleviated by his simple-hearted but noble second wife who brings happiness to both her own and to her step-children. The music is a mercilessly grey and motionless aqua distillata in quarter-tones. Its tonal courage and velocity do not exceed the vitality and speed of Chekov's archdeacon riding his bicycle. I pitied the incomparable director of the Munich Festival, Hermann Scherchen, a magnificent musician and conductor of the highest competence, fanatically devoted to the cause of modern music.

The Pan-American Festival in Paris conducted by the highly gifted and versatile Nicolas Slonimsky, director of the Boston Chamber Orchestra, had very valuable points, yet it was misleading in some ways. In spite of their crude and clumsy technique, it was important to bring to Paris works of a manifest New England spirituality like Charles Ives' *New England Corners* or Ruggles' *Men and Mountains*. And it was good to surprise Paris with Alejandro Caturla's pugnacious *Bembé*, young Cuban music of almost animal drive and sharp coloristic dexterity.

But the balance was reversed by performances of the dead and futile *Canons* of Riegger and the *Synchrony* of Henry Cowell. Is not Cowell perhaps the American counterpart of Alois Haba, a naively fanatic "new" academician laboring in a space artistically empty?

In London, at the closing concerts of the International Festival one heard side by side, the dashing, loud and off-hand, half-prepared rendition of Vaughan Williams' *Benedicite* and Roussel's *Psalm 80* under Adrian Boult, and the chiseled and inspired, the matchless performance of Webern's *Symphony* and Wladimir Vogel's admirable *Etudes for Orchestra* under Hermann Scherchen.

Webern's works are well known and could survive a bad performance if unhappily they had fallen into the wrong hands. But

fancy the harm a young composer of the first water, still to be recognized, Wladimir Vogel, for instance, might suffer through misrepresentation by an indifferent and slap-dash conductor. Had it not been for Scherchen, we might never so much as suspect the outstanding qualities of Vogel's *Etudes*, this music of great inner force, of finished and new mastery, of a few words, true art of our day. Too much misinformation is spread about unknown men by those incompetent and insincere judges, the self-appointed sponsors of new music who can scarcely tell wheat from chaff.

It is a pity that the chosen official observers along the highways of Europe's modern music do not find the time to observe the modest and isolated work of younger, still unknown individual creative forces. It is a duty to mention here some of the more valuable younger authors who sooner or later will be brought into prominence.

Mario Bruschetti, born a little over thirty years ago in Turin and still living there has attracted my attention by the remarkable mixture of vitality, excellent artistic judgment and uncommon taste, which mark both his music and his utterance. Sponsored by such eminent musicians as Franco Alfano and Francesco Malipiero, he is already the composer of an enormous list of works, including a mass, several orchestral pieces, a string quartet and many instrumental sonatas and songs. These have recently been performed in Rome, Paris, Lyons, Milan, Bologna etc. The *String Quartet*, one of his best works, reveals a creative gift lively and unusual in its sense of form and ensemble writing.

Randall Thompson, the young New Englander, a Prix de Rome and Guggenheim Fellow, has played his new *Second Symphony* for me. The vivacity of its themes and development, the technical assurance and elimination of verbiage compensate us for a somewhat conventional thematic and formal profile. There are refreshing rhythmic-thematic oases in the Scherzo and even the more ceremonial Finale is not lacking in sparks, with a delicate jazz-breeze propelling it throughout.

Mark Wessel (born in Michigan), a student and lately professor of composition at Northwestern University in Evanston,

Illinois, is also a Guggenheim Fellow and is now living and working in Vienna. His *Suite for Orchestra, Piano-Burlesque* for piano and instrumental ensemble and *Symphony-Concertante* for orchestra with horn and piano obligato, were given during the past seasons by the Vienna and Budapest Philharmonic and here under Damrosch, Hanson and Stock. Mark Wessel's piano pieces, very youthful, discreetly ardent and somewhat romantic in their swing possess a gratifying formal and expressive equilibrium and a very definite personal note.

Lazare Saminsky

STANDSTILL AT BREMEN

IN the development of post-war music, the festivals of the Allgemeine Deutsche Musik-Verein have come to stand more and more for the traditional. Experiments and efforts to abandon academic models were left to the International Society for Contemporary Music or to the Donaueschingen meetings. The contrast was once very marked; it is so no longer. This is not because the flag of revolution has been raised by the ADMV, but, rather, because the other camp has lost much of its former enthusiasm. The present tenor of German music is like the conservative tendency of the ADMV, founded by Liszt: an attitude of conciliation, innocuousness, not to say, timidity. The opposing poles of modern music have come suspiciously close; most of the productions given by the ISCM this year in Oxford might have been rendered in Bremen, and vice versa.

The ADMV has now rounded out its seventieth year, and it is perhaps unreasonable to expect so ancient an assembly to do justice to changed cultural and sociologic conditions. Consequently we shall not comment on the crisis in concert music, the dying out of concert life, and the question whether there is any point in continuing to compose symphonies and quartets when no one wants to hear them. In the ADMV this is not discussed—one simply composes. The results are not precisely enrapturing.

In Bremen there was an inexhaustible supply of choral, orchestral and chamber music. Despite the weariness induced by