

mer for Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, will be introduced by the Kolisch Quartet at the University of California at Los Angeles this month. This work (in the twelve-tone idiom, like the *Third*) promises to stand as a fitting climax to the Meister's chamber music. The score suggests that it will prove somewhat less formidable to the lay ear than the enigmatic *Third*.

Herr Schönberg will conduct the Federal Music Project Orchestra for two performances in February. He plans to present several American works in addition to his own. While the programs are not yet available, one may expect the American works chosen to be of quite another calibre than the ones as yet presented by this orchestra.

Apart from the unimportant music given by the Project, younger composers have not received so much attention. William Grant Still and George Gershwin both appeared in familiar works at the Hollywood Bowl last summer. The only new compositions by Americans were *Arizona Sketches* by Victor Young and *Perpetuum Mobile* by Gregory Stone, both given at a benefit program in August sponsored by Paramount. Even the six grand pianos, added to the orchestra for Mr. Stone's opus, couldn't stir the audience of 25,000 to more than lukewarm applause. The less said about such music the better.

Gerald Strang

WORKS BY JACOBI, DIAMOND, McBRIDE

THE forty-third in the series of American Composers' Concerts, given in the Eastman Theatre, December 10th, was highly varied in content. Dr. Howard Hanson, leading the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, opened the program with MacDowell's *Suite*, Opus 42, in tribute to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the composer's birth. Unsubstantial though it be, there are bursts of orchestral and harmonic brilliance in this work.

Frederick Jacobi's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, with Irene Jacobi as the very capable soloist, was introduced to Rochester on this occasion. It impresses at first hearing with its directness and almost neo-classic harmonic unity. There is charming use of dialog between the piano and woodwinds in the second

movement. What the concerto may lack in brilliance and vigor it makes up in clarity and development. Perhaps one might wish for a more complete fusion of piano and orchestra and an expansion of the piano part.

The three works on the second half of the program were repeated from the symposium held earlier in the year. Timothy Mather Spelman's *Symphony* is, explained Dr. Hanson, a splendid example of line scoring and strictly polyphonic treatment. That it well may be, but as music it does not hold the listener. Its thematic material is trivial and uninspired and the general effect negative. David Diamond's *Psalm for Orchestra* confirmed the impression of originality and emotional power which it created at the symposium. There are things to quarrel with in this work, but it is deeply stirring. The color of the brass passages near the close is alone worth a hearing.

Robert McBride's *Mexican Rhapsody* would be good, if not lasting theatre, were it not very much too long. It is true that modern music as a whole is short-winded; nevertheless the greatest danger still lies in repeating oneself.

Richard Sabin

CHICAGO NOVELTIES

MAKING good its promise of last summer, the management of the Chicago City Opera Company produced the Louis Gruenberg-John Erskine opera *Jack and the Beanstalk* at a Saturday matinee in November. The work was repeated at a special performance sponsored by the Board of Education, when it was coupled with *Pagliacci*, for reasons which elude me.

This premiere was better rehearsed than most things in Chicago; well cast with talented young Americans, it was quite a success. Having read the libretto in advance, I was surprised to see how well the text carried. For Mr. Erskine's humor is very special, and probably very difficult to project. But Mr. Gruenberg's recitative has a natural cadence; sometimes he resorts to outright speaking. This clarifying treatment and the remarkable English diction of the young singers brought about a happy intelligibility.