reinforce the bass of a Bach transcription, though it is not inconceivable that an organ would have served him quite as well.

Of new works introduced to New York by the Boston Symphony , the *Second Symphony* of Arnold Bax seemed so good that the pity was it was not better. In spite of the composer's use of the cyclic form, the symphony sounded episodic, each of the movements taking on the nature of a dramatic tone-poem. The salon music which Serge Prokofiev and Alexandre Tansman played in their respective recitals rippled no new waters; Mendelssohn would not have objected to most of it.

New American compositions of consequence have been less numerous, but at least two, Louis Gruenberg's *Enchanted Isle* and Werner Janssen's *New Year's Eve in New York* possessed a skill of facture by no means secondary to that of the importations. It was possible, indeed, to prefer Janssen's rowdy jazz to the equally hard-boiled overture to a *Don Quixote* by the Frenchman, Jean Rivier, which appeared on the same program of the Cleveland Orchestra. The American succeeded manfully in portraying hilarity unconfined; Rivier only contrived to be cynical and imitative. The Gruenberg symphonic poem was confessedly a revision of an early work by the composer of the *Daniel Jazz,* and one of unabashed romanticism. It came to the ear fresh in spirit and rich in color, if rather obviously derivative and lacking in any very positive goal—an instance of *dolce far niente,* the dreaming of a youth.

Skill and brevity were noted in the *Sinfonietta* of Bernard Wagenaar, but its irony was haunted, like so many other examples in kind, by the ghost of poor *Petrouchka.* A revision by Deems Taylor of his *Jurgen,* to shorten and tighten it, left that symphonic poem substantially where it was. And that, it would appear, is where the array of novelties of the first half of the season has left New York's music.

Oscar Thompson

STRAVINSKY'S "CAPRICCIO"

THE opening of the Paris season was marked by two events of unequal importance. First was the premiere, December 6th, of Stravinsky's new piano concerto, a work in which more clearly

than ever before his technical perfection so blends with his genius that it is revealed as its most characteristic feature. The second was a series of festivals, December 11th and 18th, one devoted to orchestral, the other to chamber music, that commemorated the publication ten years ago, January 16th and 23rd, 1920, of two articles by Henri Collet which brought into existence the School of the Six.

Stravinsky's *Capriccio,* written between January and August, 1929, was, in a manner of speaking, composed backwards. The *allegro capriccioso,* which closes the work with an outburst of joy, was written first. It determined the nature of the preceding movement, an *andante rapsodico;* also of the *presto,* the first, though composed last of all, a movement which constantly forecasts the spirit of caprice that, more definitely Viennese, animates the final section. A second performance following immediately would enable the listener to understand more thoroughly the character of these first two fragments, which, though introductory, are at the same time complete and self-sufficient.

And here we perceive that admirable quality of Stravinsky's work which always develops the part to the order of a whole in itself, yet arranges all the segments in such a way that from their varied and logical succession, peculiar as it may be, an impression of totality emerges. The genius of Stravinsky, as well as of certain other very great artists rests in being truly present in the least note, the tiniest fragment. How long does each scene in *Petrouchka* or *Les Noces* last? A few minutes. But these periods are sufficient in their bold conciseness to erect and complete certain unique instants, not conceived before, and as yet not equalled, around which the whole work revolves like a bewilderingly swift kaleidoscope.

No one has recognized that the division into short sections, characteristic of most of Stravinsky's works, the ever recurring "fractionism" mistaken in him as a sign of Asiatic origin, is his response to a need to express himself completely in each moment and to make of his art a truly paradoxical succession of wholes. Any approach to Stravinsky and any attempt to analyze his nature confronts us with the startling unity of his ideas and procedure. I come back always to a statement I carefully formulated

in April, 1923, which seemed to me to sum up the essentials of his esthetic: the work of Stravinsky develops as a fan unfolds; from a single point of attachment, the units branch out in all directions, each depending on the displacement of a preceding one. This art is the more flexible, offers the more signs of a real mobility because its author is endowed with an incomparable gift of penetration. It is as if the wasp which dies, leaving its sting in the flesh, should revive immediately with a new dart.

The *Capriccio* reveals a pianistic writing which has no relation to that of the *Concerto,* composed in 1923-4. The *Sonata* (1924) and the *Serenade* (1929) had given Stravinsky a chance to come closer to a somewhat more "normal" style. He was influenced by certain sonorities of Beethoven (the *adagietto* in the *Sonata*) and of Chopin (chromatic scales in thirds) which contrast somewhat with the more generally contrapuntal style in the manner of Bach. These bring in their wake a harmony which, while being less completely dissonant, is still more artful and evocative. All the capricious and rhapsodic elements in the new work seem clearly to be the flowering of all that was incidental in the *Serenade.* The spirit of Vienna and of Budapest, of the Viennese waltz and of the rhapsody for cymbalists, which has been present in Stravinsky's work since *Petrouchka,* develops here and finds its most delicate expression. He expands into a chromaticism peculiarly his own, without endangering the tonal unity of the *Capriccio.* This unity is further reinforced in the last movement which constantly revolves around the polar center of G. It matters little that the note does not always play the role of tonic in the chord, for, with its almost hallucinatory quality, the joy of the work seems constantly to play and rebound on it.

The orchestra is that of *Mavra* with the additions of *Apollon Musagète* and of the *Baiser de la Fée.* Besides the piano and the wind instruments it includes a concertino of four solo strings—the violin, viola, cello and contrabass, and a quartet of the string groups, omitting the second violins. If *Apollon* offered us a sextet with first and second violins and first and second cellos, in the *Capriccio* the strings are reduced to a double quartet of soli and of groups. This lends a special balance, less strange than the most customary combination. Everything tends not to an instru-

mentation but to a veritable orchestration which, though reduced to strictest economy, yet has an unexpected richness. The work represents the most powerful effort to which Stravinsky has as yet bent his will but the appearance of mastery and at the same time of freshness remains undisturbed.

The jubilee of the Six emphasized both their non-existence as a group and the incredible manner with which they lend themselves to poor performances and pseudo-technics imposed by ideologists. A festival of this kind should have been organized with more care and critical sense. It was apparently easy for Poulenc, represented by his new *Aubade* for eighteen instruments and his *Trio,* to rise above his comrades; less expert than Honegger, he nevertheless has youth, a naive sense of play, of melodic rhythmic expression and a spontaneous harmonic grace. Auric, undoubtedly an outstanding figure today, did not at all justify his own achievements. Milhaud and Honegger made the impression of boxing with modern music. Further in the background, Durey and Tailleferre gave evidence of an art undeniably sincere though tenuous. Perhaps in leaving the care of preparing their jubilee to others, the Six would have lost less. Certain of their individual works undoubtedly have a worth superior by far to all that can be said for the group.

André Schaeffner

VOCAL INNOVATORS OF CENTRAL EUROPE

AN extension of vocal possibilities, particularly in the use of voices alone, is the keynote of a new musical development now growing rapidly in central Europe. There may be a hint of neo-classicism in the idea of returning to the voice; but it is not the purpose of the young composers to revive the old vocal style. They are finding new sorts of vocalization, sometimes quite foreign to anything formerly considered singing, yet always strictly within the easy capacity of the voice without undue strain.

Outstanding innovators are three young men, E. F. Burian, Hans Eisler, and Kurt Schwitters. Their music is not alike nor does it belong to the same general "school," although probably all of them are a bit influenced by Schönberg's half-spoken songs. They live far apart, and have not influenced each other; the idea