

The orchestra had begun then to seem crude and limited to me. From my observation it has become clear that potentially the organ, even in some of its present aspects, is an instrument of a far greater scope of tone-color, and of an infinitely subtler palette than the orchestra, to say nothing of the possibilities of color and dynamics control which can easily reach the ideal.

The future of the orchestra can already be read with precision. One musician sitting at a small, portable electronic organ brought up to the richest imaginable orchestral palette and the highest possible control of color and dynamics; a musician who is an improviser, composer and performer, will be *the orchestra*.

Lazare Saminsky

SHOSTAKOVITCH REHABILITATED

ON January 21st of this year Shostakovitch's *Fifth Symphony* was given its premiere in Moscow. This event had important significance for the musical life of Russia. A few years ago there appeared the now famous series of articles in the newspaper *Pravda* which were followed by the highly publicized discussion in the Composers' Union, condemning the "formalistic" tendencies as well as the vulgar realism of *Lady Macbeth*. Both within and beyond the boundaries of Russia, admirers of that composer's remarkable gifts heard this censure as a thunder-clap from a clear sky. Shostakovitch—synonym of young Soviet musical creation, its most outstanding representative, with a world reputation to boot—was hurled from his pedestal!

Not many at that time understood the meaning, the purpose of the *Pravda* criticism. With courageous directness the paper raised the problem of "ultimate truth in art," and, more specifically of folk-consciousness in the composer, as against an indulgence in fruitless devices to enrapture the "art-gourmands." The articles were intended as a clarion call to artists to create as for a great epoch.

In the Western world the object of the avant-garde is presumably the overthrow of old artistic foundations, the breaking out of "new paths," however meaningless, at any cost. For us in the Soviet, however, the avant-garde is held to express progres-

sive ideas only when it talks to the people in a new, powerful and intelligible language. The demands of the wide masses of people, their artistic tastes, grow from day to day. The "advanced" composer is therefore one who plunges into the social currents swirling round him, and, with his creative work, serves the progress of humankind.

Just what is the nature of a truly advanced musical language, it is difficult to say. Only the musically creative act itself may answer this question. Shostakovitch however, has given us a clue with his new work. True enough, many excellent pages were written by him before; they can be found in his first symphony, his piano-concerto, and much of his music for the films. However it seems to me that in this *Fifth Symphony*, completed in 1937, Shostakovitch for the first time appears as a mature master, a universal composer of magnitude, destined to say something new in music. Each movement gives us a world of passion and experience profoundly felt and expressed. Outstanding are a marvelous richness, a seriousness of thought, which command one's attention from the opening measures. And despite a number of tragic moments, the general character of the symphony is uplifting and life-affirming.

The first movement, *Moderato*, unfolds the philosophic concept of the work, the growth of the artist's personality within the revolutionary events of our time. Energy, emotional power, concentration are the essential features. The musical language is at the same time complex yet clear. A wide polyphonic development, pungent harmonic combinations, an infinite variety in the orchestration serve admirably to convey the thought. The second movement, *Allegretto*, is written in a dance-form and unloads as it were, the intensity of the original musical impulse. Here Shostakovitch reveals his brilliant mastery of the orchestral palette. Most profound of all is the *Largo* which is a tribute to the composer's melodic gift and his keen sense of form. This movement is very long; nevertheless its interest is sustained throughout. After a tender and affecting conclusion, the *Largo* flows into an energetic bright and joyful march, an *Allegro*. Broad in scope and expressive power, this *Finale* leaves one literally breathless.

The performance of the symphony was hailed as a great oc-

casion in the musical life of the city. Tickets for all three concerts at which it was played were sold out in the course of three hours, long before the official announcement, and Symphony Hall of the Moscow Conservatory was filled to overflowing. The composer submitted his creative report, as it were, to a very exacting judge; from the ovation he received his triumph was obvious. Such a victory should bring joy to musicians all over the world.

Grigori Schneerson

COMPOSERS OF AND IN CHICAGO

FOR the second time in two consecutive seasons a Chicago composer has been awarded one of the Philharmonic-Symphony prizes. Last year the major prize was given to Gardner Read of Evanston for his *Symphony in A-Minor*. The current prize for a shorter work has been divided between Robert L. Sanders of Chicago and Charles Haubiel of New York.

Mr. Sanders, now thirty-one years old, has already achieved a good deal of local prominence both as a teacher and as a composer. He divides his academic attention between theory instruction at the University of Chicago and a number of lesser assignments. A competent conductor, for several years a protege of Eric DeLamarter, he has made guest appearances with the Chicago Symphony orchestra and the Illinois Symphony orchestra. The Chicago Symphony has performed his suite *The Tragic Muse*, and a number of less ambitious works have been heard here. Most recently of all, the Federal Dance project produced a Negro dance drama, *L'Ag'ya*, for which Mr. Sanders devised an interesting score based partly upon folk music from Martinique.

The Philharmonic prize-winning piece, a *Little Symphony* in three movements, is more conservative in idiom than most of the composer's recent works. The first and last movements are written in a sprightly, hearty popular vein with which Mr. Sanders has experimented in the *Barn Dance*, already played by the Philharmonic. The middle movement, in slow tempo, uses as its main theme an idealized and greatly improved version of the familiar hymn tune *Jesus calls us, o'er the tumult*. The or-