

again, this time a very grown-up virile Johnny. All the folksongs are authentic, but rich in harmonic tapestry and held up exactly by the structural underpinning demanded. The orchestral painting is sound, folksy. It's been a big year for Harris with the production of this work and the *Viola Quintet*; the audience gave him an ovation.

Most disappointing were the ballet scores. Cheap and a little like hotel dinner-hour music was *Theatre Street* by Robert Braine. Woltmann's *Incantation* (with mixed voices) sounded suspiciously like the *Sirènes* of Debussy. Rogers' *The Colors of War* loses its concentrated force when mimed. Light, satisfactory and balletish were Wayne Barlow's *Three Moods*, Burrill Phillips' *Dance* and Skilton's very old *War Dance*. A repeat – and a highly effective one – was Piston's *Incredible Flutist*.

Arthur Cohn

MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE IN ENGLAND

London, April 20

SEVERAL new developments have given variety to the London season. The Vic-Wells ballet, now back after a successful provincial tour, has brought out a *Dante Sonata*, to Liszt's *Fantasia après une lecture du Dante*, arranged by Constant Lambert for piano and orchestra. (This version was recently recorded, with the Hungarian pianist Louis Kestner.) The choreography is violent and orgiastic but effective, and Frederick Ashton, wisely avoiding a "story," has arranged the dances in the form of a struggle between two opposing groups. The Vic-Wells ballet is optimistically planning a visit to Holland and Belgium, under the auspices of the British Council, and also to the troops in France. Their forthcoming productions include *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*, to Bach chorale preludes (orchestration by William Walton), and a ballet to the eighteenth century music of William Boyce.

The other notable theatrical event has been the Glyndebourne production of the *Beggar's Opera*, also running in London after a provincial tour. It is performed partly by members of the Glyndebourne Opera company – Roy Henderson and Audrey Mildmay – and partly by well-known actors such as Michael Redgrave and John Gielgud, who have both taken the part of Macheath. The production, which is in John Gielgud's charge, takes the play out of its mid-eighteenth century period and puts it into the more

romantic style of the early nineteenth, which is no improvement on the famous Giles Playfair production at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith.

The Sadler's Wells company continues with its normal repertory of classical operas, plus a fresh production of *Don Giovanni*. There has been little new in the theatre. Most of the popular revues contain a certain number of political sketches but the music in them is of scant importance. The only consistently political revues, those at the socialist Unity Theatre, have not had much in the way of music either. No new war songs of any interest have appeared; the popular tunes are still the *Siegfried Line* and the *Beer Barrel Polka*.

Concerts go on much as before, with few important novelties. Prokofiev's *Nuits d'Egypte*, a suite from the incidental music to the play of that name, produced in Moscow in 1935, was not much use away from the theatre. Britten's *Les Illuminations* received a second performance by the Boyd Neel Orchestra in the series of concerts devoted to more or less unfamiliar music. It will also be performed shortly at the first of the BBC's revived series of contemporary concerts, together with Roussel's fourth symphony, Kodaly's *Galanta Dances* and the Bach-Schönberg *Prelude and Fugue in E-flat (St. Anne)*. The BBC also relayed from Basle the first performance of Honegger's new cantata, *La Danse des Morts*, on a text by Paul Claudel. In return the BBC is relaying to Switzerland in May a concert from Bristol of new British works, including Alan Rawsthorne's *Kubla Khan*, for chorus, strings and percussion, and a work by the Welsh composer Arwel Hughes. Alan Bush is shortly giving a concert of new Soviet music in London, consisting of Shostakovich's fifth symphony, Miaskovsky's sixteenth (!) and a piano concerto by Khachaturian.

Humphrey Searle