

from the very depth of creative perception in an art so unallied as the plastic, is a matter of significance.

The principle of cycle and of oneness in esthetic perception evidently reveals itself in many more veiled phenomena than we suppose; the unity of art asserts itself again and again as a reality.

Lazare Saminsky

MUSICA AMERICANA IN A HANDY MANUAL

THE United States section of the International Society for Contemporary Music is to be congratulated for issuing a brochure, *American Composers of To-day*, which shows us where American music stands in the year of grace 1930. In this excellent work, we obtain in the space of fifteen minutes, a vivid vista of contemporary musica americana. Composers are treated alphabetically, with their birthplace and year, and their works classified according to the nature of the composition.

A first impression is one of amazement at the high type of composition the American composer is writing. No longer content with lighter forms, he composes symphonies, operas, ballets, intricate choral works and varied forms of chamber music. A former generation of American composers had done all these things but with them a symphony or opera was the crowning opus of a life's work. Our present day composer—as a rule he is still a young man—finds it most natural to take up heavy composition at an early stage in his career. He seems to have mastered the technic at a much younger period of his life than his predecessor.

As one reads the chronicle of performances, one can only deplore the fact that the majority of these compositions—especially those in smaller forms—are heard but once or twice through the good offices of some modern music organization whose raison d'être is propaganda for contemporary musical thought. These societies naturally function for very limited audiences and the vast majority of music lovers remain ignorant as yet of what excellent music is being made in America.

It is to be sincerely hoped that the foreign conductors of many of our symphonic organizations will take advantage of this cata-

logue and give Americans a greater opportunity to hear works emanating from the American soil. For those of them asking "Where is your American music?" a perusal of this booklet will be an answer more than conclusive. Incidentally this applies to some of our American conductors who are far too much on the lookout for the *dernier cri* of European music to interest themselves in what is going on in their immediate environment.

Having read the catalogue, one is inclined to ask "What is an American Composer?" Does the music writing individual who comes to America for a political, economical or "a desire to live in this country" reason become an American Composer when his entire heritage and musical training have been European? Can he absorb the spirit of the American scene after a few years of residence here, at least to a degree sufficient to dominate his old world background?

To Claire Reis, who compiled this catalogue, a debt of gratitude is due for her labor, her tremendous enthusiasm and her devotion to the cause of American music. May we suggest—if the thing be at all possible—that future catalogues be a little more discriminating in separating what one may consider composers worthy of serious consideration from talented dilettantes?

Alexander Smallens

MODERN ORCHESTRATION SURVEYED

FOR some time now we have been badly in need of an authoritative work on the subject of orchestration as practised today. Except for a short brochure written by Malipiero, there has been no serious attempt to study the underlying characteristics of modern orchestral technic since Rimsky-Korsakoff wrote down his *Principles of Orchestration* at the beginning of the century. Since that day many changes have taken place and entirely new manifestations, such as the recreation of the chamber orchestra and the influential jazz-band, have come into existence. That no one has sought to bring Rimsky's excellent treatise up to date seems all the more remarkable when we consider that even the most severe critics have long admitted the brilliance and cleverness of the newer composers in their treatment of the modern orchestra's varied resources.