

give the occasional inclination towards harmonic thinness for the scintillating orchestration and exuberant freshness of approach. This thinness is particularly felt in the slow movement of the *Divertimento* where the piano carries rather too much of the burden of harmonic acidity; but the other two movements are exciting with ebullient motion.



Most of the music heard was an attempt of one kind or another towards American individuality. Some of this "Americanism" seemed to be national only in its close affinity with that dubious part of our American scene known as "movie-music." The concerts presented a varied picture of the musical scene in this country, for the composers included the veteran Bostonian, Arthur Foote and the more sophisticated members of our younger groups. This practice of contrast is less diverting than one might think, for it leads to very strange bed-fellows in some cases and necessitates constant attempts toward readjustment on the part of the audience.

In conclusion, this much was evident: Debussy, Ravel, Sibelius, and Schönberg still have a death-hold on a large percentage of the composers played here; it is about time that these last named gentlemen took out their musical naturalization papers!

Goddard Lieberson

MODERN WORKS IN CHICAGO

THE year which has passed since notes from Chicago last appeared in these pages has not set any lover of modern music on his ear with enthusiasm over the manifestations of musical progress in that city. It offered a few orchestral novelties in the concerts of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, four operatic novelties provided by three different producing groups, and a solitary composer's concert.

The Chicago City Opera Company produced for the first time in this country Respighi's *La Fiamma* and really produced it very well. The score leans farther toward a conventional Italian operatic style than does *The Sunken Bell*. The vocal line is characterized by a reverse English conventionality in that most of the melodies turn so often in the direction you don't expect

that pretty soon you begin to expect them to do what you don't expect them to do.

The City Opera Company's other novelty was *Gale* by Ethel Leginska. It started like a high school cantata and ended when Mr. John Charles Thomas threw his impressive bulk upon the resounding surface of a subterranean canvas river.

The season's third operatic novelty was Weinberger's *Schwanda*, creditably mounted by The University of Chicago.

Among the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's good deeds may be mentioned the symphonic pieces from Alban Berg's *Lulu*, Hindemith's symphony, *Matthias the Painter*, Walton's *First Symphony*, upon which a number of the subscribers had the effrontery to walk out, the Stravinsky *Piano Concerto*, twelve years too late, and Malipiero's *Symphony (In Four Tempi, as the Four Seasons)*, a quiet piece in the composer's most graceful manner. Other less conclusive works included *Types* by Ferroud (very attenuated), the Handel-Schönberg *Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra* which I thought a mess, and Haubiel's *Rittrati*, a curious and incompetent suite in three confused movements.

Only three local composers were given opportunity to bring distinction to themselves: Robert Sanders with a ballet suite entitled *The Tragic Muse*, Leo Sowerby with a new string quartet and a striking Easter anthem entitled *The Risen Lord*, and David Van Vactor whose composer-concert in January displayed a growing capacity to be articulate and to go beyond the somewhat classical limitations of idiom he has heretofore imposed upon himself.

A few hours away from Chicago the Ann Arbor Festival last May presented Howard Hanson's *Songs from the Drum Taps*, enthusiastic, noisy and sometimes exciting music in which the words are very badly set.

Cecil Michener Smith

GOOD RUSSIAN ADVICE ABOUT MOVIE MUSIC

LAST summer Schumiatski, the head of the entire Soviet cinema production, accompanied by his technical staff, visited Hollywood to study America's methods of picture-mak-