

to *The Last Supper*, and perhaps even more moving, deserves performance.

Twelve years ago Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* enjoyed a popular success here unique in modern music. Charming, skilful, unostentatious, it belongs in the current repertory. Why is it not mounted again? And why is it not recorded, at least in part?

In view of the widespread interest in Shostakovitch and his development as a symphonist, could we not have now a performance of his legendary *Fourth Symphony*?

Much of Stravinsky is performed repeatedly but what of "little *Renard*?" And what of his "poor *Mavra*," which he refers to as marking a turning point in the evolution of his musical thought?

. . . CECIL MICHENER SMITH

IT is doubtful whether there are as many as ten universally acclaimed modern masterpieces which are really neglected, in the sense that scarcely anyone has an opportunity to hear them on phonographs or to study the scores. On the other hand dozens of admirable pieces are overlooked by virtuoso conductors and touring performers, most of whom have the habit of choosing the music they perform because it suits them, not because it ought to be heard.

Stravinsky's *Symphony in C* was written five years ago. It is almost never played unless the composer is on hand to conduct it. Yet it is a score of serious, not to say classical purpose; its workmanship is flawless. Many of its materials are inviting even to the lay audience, and when it has been performed it has been an unfailing success. . . . An important and in many ways similar companion to the Stravinsky work is the *Symphony in E \flat* by Paul Hindemith. Since its premiere a few seasons ago it has been left alone so unanimously that scarcely anyone knows it at all. Yet the composer regards it as his most sustained and significant effort to achieve large symphonic form.

Perhaps the peaceful, nostalgic mood of Vaughan Williams' *Pastoral Symphony* and its limited harmonic vocabulary become a trifle monotonous, but it is all in all the best symphony stemming from the neo-archaic folksong and madrigal tradition.

In the field of chamber music two top-flight compositions urgently deserve more frequent performance: the masterful *Octuor* of Stravinsky, which presumably remains unplayed because of performance difficulties, and the equally difficult and original *Pierrot Lunaire* of Schönberg. These pieces should not be brushed aside as ancient history. Because audiences have never had a chance to become familiar with them, their idiom and content still seem quite novel. Although one or another of the six Bartok

quartets is sometimes played, the superb development of the composer's resources through this series of works is hardly known to the general public.

Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* is a concentrated and magnificent example of what may now, I suppose, be called the composer's "middle period;" I include it rather than the *Symphonie de Psalmes* because it has greater diversity of dramatic treatment and musical resources. My other nomination from the choral repertory is Kodaly's *Budavari Te Deum*, a work surpassing the *Psalmus Hungaricus* and, for that matter, most other modern choral pieces, in the strength and sinew of its polyphony, the breadth of its vocal sonority and the logic of its organization.

All the songs of Poulenc, or at least all the good ones, should be included in this list, as a tribute to the one contemporary composer who has devoted his best energy to the exploration of the craft of song writing and who has attained singular felicity in the setting of texts.

As an opera entry I'll settle for Honegger's *Antigone*, because of its searching attempt to come to grips with the basic problems of prosody. These are largely untackled by composers like Berg and Hindemith, who have been preoccupied with other than the poetic factors.

. . . CARLOS CHAVEZ

I HAVE not found it easy to decide what the ten most neglected works of the modern repertory are. Yet I should like to deal somehow with the idea that inspired the question. I shall not speak of the ten *most* neglected works, but of two *very* neglected ones.

These scores—Copland's *Short Symphony* and Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*—are completely different in their expressive content and form, yet they have more than one point in common.

Both are rhythmically complicated. This is probably the reason for their neglect, though certainly not the justification. Conductors can overcome these rhythmical difficulties; they simply do not want to take the trouble to study and practice them enough. The *Sacre*, of course, has probably been played by every good orchestra in the world, but not as often as it deserves. The *Short Symphony*, on the other hand, has been played by one or two orchestras at most.

There is probably one more consideration in the minds of conductors: these works are not attractive enough to the public. Obviously anything new, even if it is good, does not have instant appeal. But conductors must accept the consequences of this fact: they should give up all idea of immediate success and use all their power over the public to force it to listen to and eventually like these scores. They should not conclude too quickly that certain works are incomprehensible to audiences, when these