

of South American pieces for woodwind quintet, some of them in transcriptions by Adolph Weiss. The composers included here were Malaga and Lanao of Peru, Valencia of Colombia, and Villa-Lobos of Brazil. A new string quartet by George Tremblay has a diffuse first movement, that apparently is not calculated to make its explorations within defined boundaries. There is more purpose in the slow movement and hence more success in communicating its message about the strange dark corners of consciousness where the passions lurk. From these regions one is returned to fresh air and light in the final Presto, but with some shackles on freedom of movement.

Perhaps the most important of the Roof's presentations has been Hindemith's *Das Marienleben*, marvelously performed by Sara Carter and Ingolf Dahl. This is music from the composer's most fruitful period, before the time of system, method and code. Such songs as *Joseph's Suspicion* and *The Annunciation Over the Shepherd* present in all their freshness the kind of material that more recently has been put into straitjackets. Wisely Hindemith has apparently rejected in many of the pieces the contrapuntal methods that produced such rigid visual patterns as the fugato of the *Marriage at Cana* and the variations of the second poem on the death of Mary, where the ear is taxed to unswerving attention and rewarded with not even a slight concession to sensory pleasure.

Lawrence Morton

## HINDEMITH'S CHICAGO BIRTHDAY PARTY

**A**LTHOUGH Prokofiev, for obvious reasons, was not on hand for the first local performance of his *Fifth Symphony*, three composers did come to town—Hindemith, Harris and Milhaud—to officiate as conductors of their own works.

Since a man does not have a fiftieth birthday every year, it is fitting to write of Paul Hindemith first. Various events this fall brought Chicago's acquaintance with his output fairly well up to date. Isaac Stern performed a *Violin Sonata*, composed in 1939, for the first time here, and probably for the first time anywhere, but there are no incontrovertible records to establish the fact. Though the *Sonata* was printed in Germany, it was not circulated because of Hindemith's unfavorable status with the German government. When heard here, the sonata aroused great enthusiasm by the piling-up of fugal intensity in the finale.

Yet more imaginative and warmer works were heard at an all-Hindemith birthday concert in Orchestra Hall, which included *Hérodiade*, composed for Martha Graham's use last year, and *The Four Temperaments*, a theme and variations for piano and string orchestra, originally intended for a ballet with choreography by Balanchine. The former work, for all its

apparent ease and fluency, is really quite a tour de force. Hindemith has bound himself throughout to the actual rhythms of the Mallarmé text which inspired the piece, although not a word of the poetry is actually uttered. Thus in a literal sense *Hérodiade* is a song without words. The *Four Temperaments* has no such unique basis, but its inspiration is also literary, for Hindemith's preoccupation with the temperaments, or prevailing human moods, reflects the neo-medievalism which so often influences his musical thinking. The purity and clarity of structural design certainly suggest the dance. Deft and varied writing is combined with the melodic warmth Hindemith hates to have called romantic when it appears in his music – as, happily, it does more and more.

On Chicago's first all-Harris program at the University of Chicago all the works were unfamiliar here, except the *Piano Quintet*. Some bright and entertaining *Improvisations on American Folk Tunes* were played by Johanna Harris; the *Lamentation* for soprano, viola and piano, and the *Whitman Suite* for chorus, string quartet and piano duet, were also heard. The *Lamentation* suffers from the deficiency already apparent in the earlier *Quintet*: its rhythmic figures fail to develop or even to become more vigorous, and pieces which start well get terribly long and static in the middle. The *Lamentation* seemed to have a great many half notes. But the Whitman pieces, brasher and more percussive in idiom, made a better effect because difficult polyphonic problems were avoided.

Along with the sure-fire *Suite Française*, Darius Milhaud conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in his second *Opus Americanum*, originally intended for *The Man from Midian*, a ballet about Moses. Without something to watch on the stage the music seems overlong. Yet the work is interesting for its special eclecticism: somewhere in this big score is a touch of almost every style in which Milhaud had ever written previously, besides mementos of a good many earlier composers whose music had a hand in the formation of his own idiom. Still the piece is surprisingly homogeneous, mainly because each of the nine movements is solidly constructed, but also because Milhaud's massive and thick way of orchestrating gives the whole score a characteristic instrumental sound.

*Cecil Michener Smith*

## ROCHESTER'S FALL FESTIVAL OF AMERICANS

SIXTEEN works by Americans were given first performances during the twenty-first symposium of American Composers' Concerts last fall, with Howard Hanson conducting the Rochester Symphony Orchestra. Vincent Persichetti's *Piano Concertino* was certainly most enthusiastically received of all. Though a young composer's work, written some time ago, it shows unusual command of the orchestra. The style has various romantic