

shows again Elwell's inclination toward a natural romantic idiom. Kirkpatrick delivered a paper on *United States Piano Music* which was held within bounds and revealed this pianist's fine knowledge of his subject. Ferguson's talk on *What is a Musical Idea?* and William Treat Upton's *Some American Instrumental Music 150 Years Ago* were of special interest in the meetings of the American Musicological Society.

It seems to me that one of the proper functions of these conventions is to show what sort of creative activity characterizes the locality that has been chosen for the meeting. And over a period of years the M.T.N.A., aware of its opportunity, has managed to open up the panorama of our country. But it was clear this time that the music of composers (with the exception of Donald Ferguson) who make Minneapolis their home, was absent from all the programs, and this is unfortunate since Minneapolis is not poverty-stricken in the matter of living music. Both John Verrall and John Becker should have been represented. One concert, by the use it made of a purely local musical organization, somewhat redeemed this lack. The Hamline University Choir under the direction of John Kuypers presented a program of vocal music that the musicians who came to the convention will not forget for a long time. This ranged all the way from William Billings to Roy Harris and en route included Bach and Kodaly. These college children sang like angels under the truly musical guidance of their director.

Ross Lee Finney

NEW WORKS IN CHICAGO

THE season in Chicago up to Christmas gave us just an average amount of new music. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the leadership of Frederick Stock has as usual presented the best works so far as quality is concerned. First performances were heard of Arthur Benjamin's *Overture to an Italian Comedy*, a very light piece, but directly appealing and well made, and *Three Symphonic Dances* by Sergei Rachmaninov. The latter composition is pleasant music and certainly bears the characteristics of its author, who, although called outmoded by many, in the opinion of others organizes his musical ideas in a more masterly fashion than most of his younger contemporaries. Critics have often confused method and matter; Rachmaninov's method has long since been proved good; whether or not one likes his matter is a question of taste.

Darius Milhaud paid us another visit, performing the solo part of his *Concerto Number 2 for Pianoforte*, and conducting again the *Symphony* which he wrote for the fiftieth anniversary of the Orchestra last year. The *Symphony* is a significant work; it is solidly constructed and filled with honest ideas, although the idiom seems unnecessarily dissonant. The piano piece is in no way comparable; and it might be better called a suite for orchestra with piano obbligato.

We also heard a revival of Hindemith's *Symphonic Dances*, and Bela Bartok, like Milhaud, in his *Second Piano Concerto*, an effective performance, a revised version of John Alden Carpenter's *Adventures in a Perambulator*, and Gliere's robust overture *Fête Ferganaise*.

Under the intelligent guidance of Albert Goldberg, the Illinois Symphony Orchestra (W. P. A.) provides novel concerts for Chicago. New works have been chosen more discriminately this season, and some important composers have been presented — Benjamin Britten (*Symphonia da Requiem*), Heitor Villa-Lobos (*Amazonus*) and T. Krennikov (*Symphony, Opus 4*). Other new works performed by this organization were *Plain Chant for America* by William Grant Still, the three fragments from *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* by Shostakovitch, and *Norfolk Rhapsody* by Vaughan Williams.

Two chamber groups also offer Chicagoans a healthy diet of standard quartets and unusual novelties. The Philharmonic String Quartet gave us our first public hearing of *Quartet Number 23* by Villa-Lobos, and revived the exquisite *Serenade in D*, Opus 77a for flute, violin and viola by Max Reger. The flute part was beautifully played by Ernest Liegl of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The novelty heard on the second concert was Leo Sowerby's *String Quartet in G-Minor*, a fully developed and vigorous work. The other group is the newly organized Fine Arts String Quartet which has given two very successful concerts this season, featuring the first performance in Chicago of the *Quartet*, Opus 49 by Shostakovitch on their first program, and Hindemith's *Third Quartet* on their second. This youthful and enthusiastic ensemble promises to be another important element in Chicago's musical life.

The Woman's Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Izler Solomon, paid its tribute to the American composer by playing for the first time *Ariadne Abandoned* by Irwin Fisher, and Alec Templeton's *Rhapsody Harmonique*, also *The Incredible Flutist* by Walter Piston, which won an enthusiastic reception.

David Van Vactor