

modern French, German, Russian, Hungarian and Spanish, as well as Swiss piano music. Radio Berne celebrated Zoltan Kodaly's sixtieth birthday with a series of special programs one of which the composer himself conducted, and Radio-Genève, always interested in French music, devoted a broadcast to Francis Poulenc's concerto for organ and orchestra, Henri Sauguet's piano concerto, and Darius Milhaud's sonata for violin and piano.

Arno Huth

RED STAR OVER THE SOUTHWEST

Houston

SOMETHING of a milestone in the musical history of the Southwest was passed on November 1, when the Houston Society for Contemporary Music – Texas branch of the League of Composers – gave the first all-Soviet concert to be heard in this part of the country. For a long time the South and Southwest have shied off from music labeled modern. The Russian program introduced its listeners to the milder forms of polyphonic texture and modern harmonic intricacies. Works of explosive revolutionary character, of startling innovations were wisely avoided.

A group of contemporary Russian piano works lent an important accent to the evening. They were interpreted by Julius Hijman, Holland-born pianist-composer, whose incisive and clear style well set off the mechanistic mood, the metallic quality of a Khatchaturian *Toccata*, the *Adagio* of Mossolow's *Twelfth Piano Sonata*, and the *Sonata, Number 6* of Samuel Feinberg. Especially powerful and assured was the effect of the Mossolow piece with its startling dissonances interwoven against a sombre, reverberating bass. The Feinberg sonata, inspired by a quotation from Spengler, has a certain Gothic majesty, with heavy emphasis on the irrevocable in its sonorous bass theme.

But it was of course the Red Army songs, put across by the baritone Billy Triggs, which got the biggest hand. Here was something the whole audience could respond to. The martial zip and tempo of Dzershinsky's *From Border to Border*, from his opera *The Quiet Don*, and Aturov's *Song of the Partisans*, the blustering gaiety of Listov's *Song of the Tachanka* and Lev Knipper's nostalgic *Cavalry of the Steppes*, demonstrate clearly enough why this "proletarian music" is popular. Songs like these must affect the people of Russia the way a Sousa march does the average American.

The only let-down came in the two Prokofiev numbers – *Snowflakes* which drips lush romanticism, and *Snowdrops* that simpers along like a sentimental English ballad.

Shostakovitch's *Quintet*, Opus 57, for two violins, viola, 'cello and piano brought the evening to a close. This is an example of the versatile young man's more fluent and entertaining style. The prelude and fugue are less interesting than the scintillant scherzo which had much display of bright technic and the typical Shostakovitch irony, or the sentimental violin cadences of the intermezzo and the serenade pattern of the finale. The strings carried their melodic burden well, while the piano, meeker now, ran little Czerny scales or switched from highest to lowest registers, a characteristic indulgence in extremes.

Eleanor Wakefield

LIVELY CONFERENCE; IN COLORADO

THE annual Fine Arts Conference at Colorado Springs was tailored this year to suit the tastes of soldier boys and their families. Consequently, the Roy Harris program and the Young Students' program were telescoped to make way for the splendid Army Band of Fort Logan. But much to the surprise and delight of local musicians, the opening concert of contemporary music drew one of the largest and most attentive audiences. The program was made up of Vincent Persichetti's *Piano Sonata* and *Two-piano Sonata*, J. Vantz Fitzer's *Piano Sonata* and *Trio* (for violin, cello and piano) and my own *Capriccio*, *March and Variations for Piano*, and *Prelude and Fugue for Three Violins*. The three hundred dollar composition award was divided three ways among us – first prize to Persichetti, head of the Theory Department of the Philadelphia School of Music; second to me, and third to Fitzer, of Oklahoma City.

Both works of Persichetti were brilliant, proficient, well calculated for the medium – good audience pieces. This music is eclectic and spicy. The stock rhythmic patterns and short form periods seem a little too pat, yet the timing and sense of continuity, as well as the ornamentation, are clear and expert.

Fitzer has a fine talent for harmonic color. He uses the modern application of overtone harmony that Harris gives all his pupils, but which is easily turned by Fitzer into an impressionism that sounds like Debussy brought up to date. He is essentially a miniaturist – an almost hypersensi-