

*Violin and Cello*, a medium which can easily seem poverty-stricken, here treated with great invention. Wallingford Riegger's *New Dance* is very adaptable to the two pianos on which it was performed by Luboschutz and Nemenoff, showing as always its rhythmic strength, which inevitably suggests the dance. The *Fourth Sonata* for piano by Harold Morris, premiered by Thomas Richner, sounded like salon music, but it was too heavy throughout to be successful as such.

Theodore Chanler has again revealed his affinity for the art of song-writing in his *Five Rhymes from Peacock Pie*, commissioned by the League of Composers, and sung in part by Dorothy Maynor. The piano accompaniments, mobile and inventive without ever being overburdened, form a splendid prop to the vocal lines, on which the interest centers. Chanler has caught with great sympathy and understanding the naive, wistful feeling of these children's poems of Walter de la Mare. As is usual with works of this sort the songs are for the adult's retrospective glance rather than for the child. Yet I feel that their appeal could hardly fail to take hold of the imaginations of those to whom they really should be sung.

Donald Fuller

## MORE SEASONAL NOTES

**A**ARON COPLAND's *Quiet City*, for trumpet, English horn and strings, played by Chicago's Saidenberg Little Symphony on its first visit here, is a small and perfect piece. There is indeed danger of praising it all out of proportion to its size. Small though it is, however, it is essentially the reflection of a distinguished and important personality. Its long rising line of emotional intensity reaches a climax of great poignancy and then subsides again to the mood of the opening. The texture throughout is a joy. On the same program were Roussel's seldom heard *Sinfonietta*, *Opus 5*, and the well-known Bloch *Concerto Grosso*. The persistent rhythmic drive of Roussel's first movement brings his *Third Symphony* to mind and the noble chorale opening of the slow movement made one hope for things better than what followed. But the full-blooded contrapuntal vigor of this man's music inspires the wish to hear much more of it.

The merit of the music on the last concert of the WNYC Festival program was unfortunately out of relation to the pre-concert ballyhoo. Paul Creston's *Symphony* started out impressively but soon degenerated into a rather dull work of a thick texture which was emphasized by an orchestration neither brilliant nor even experimental. The *Violin Concerto*

of Henry Brant is less a concerto than merely two light movements for violin and orchestra. Its *Fantasy*, honorably intended to high-light the soloist, merely bunched the woodwinds in the bass and achieved a muddy gloom; its *Caprice* had an inane sort of Prokofieff motion. Roy Harris' *Railroad Man's Ballad* (more folk-material setting in the manner of the *Folksong Symphony*) got off to a good start with the chorus intoning the melody over an ostinato in the orchestra, but the ostinato went on much too long and the ending proved strikingly ineffectual. The *Jazz Poem* of Randall Thompson gave evidence every bar of the way that it wanted to be a second *Rhapsody in Blue*; the harder it tried the more it failed. There was neither native pagan quality nor enough variety of mood in the four movements of Morton Gould's *Latin American Symphonette*, only slick orchestration. Incidentally the performance given these works by the NYA orchestra didn't help them much.

The Philharmonic presented *Evocations*, which is Bloch at his worst, the emotional element swollen and obvious, with plenty of fireworks in the "God of War" section, but all stage-props and very little music. The new William Walton *Violin Concerto* – New York premiere by Heifetz with the Cleveland Orchestra – was a disappointment. Its tendency is eclectic and it lacks the rich exuberance of his earlier works. Walter Piston's ballet suite, *The Incredible Flutist*, is a thoroughly delightful piece, with perhaps too many sections, but witty and quite unlike any previous Piston. Roger Sessions' *Quartet* and Ernst Krenek's spiritually aged *Gesänge des späten Jahres*, given by the New Friends of Music, and Hindemith's suite from *Mathis der Mahler*, rather crudely performed by the Washington Orchestra, have all been extensively reviewed before. Of no importance were the *Sonnet* of Isadore Achron, the supposedly "modern" Hebrew music performed by Zacharin, the cellist, or the Poulenc *Suite*, all played in Town Hall recitals.

The League of Composers' recent "Young Composers' Concerts" have served to indicate the direction of much of today's youthful creative energy. Technically, most of the works show sound if not always inspired craftsmanship. Though many of the older contemporaries were indirectly represented, there seems to be a better assimilation of "influences" today than in the recent past. At the first concert, unfortunately, everything after John Lessard's *Piano Sonata* was increasingly anti-climactic. The *Allegro* and *Adagio* of the sonata were structurally convincing; the last of three sections in the *Finale* was the most inspired bit in the piece. As a whole it

was cleanly written and showed a productive study of late Stravinsky. Alvin Etler's *Five Speeds for Flute, Oboe, Viola and Bassoon* were neither clever nor otherwise interesting. Etler has done much better things than this, let's hope that the preoccupation with McBride is a passing phase. *Gather Ye Rosebuds*, a song of Miriam Gideon, though conventional, was much more successful than *Sonnet* and *The Too-Late Born* which started well, only to disintegrate. The program closed with an unconvincing *Oboe Sonata* by Jacobo Ficher and several totally nondescript pieces by Hector Tosar and Alberto Ginastero, both seventeen-year old South Americans.

The second concert was much more fruitful. Ben Gossick's *First String Quartet* is full of a primitive American feeling, naive, yet distinguished in character. The slow movement, "New mown hay and prairie moon," is a genuinely moving fugue, and although the first and third movements are too square, and overwork their short rhythmic patterns, the freshness of feeling almost make one forget the flaws.

The twelve-tone school was also represented. Emil Koehler's *Piano Sonata* has good structure and the rhythms of the last movement are interesting. But when over, it was like having eaten a filling meal that didn't really taste. Charles Naginski's best songs are those in a simple pastoral vein, like *The Pasture* and *A Bird Came Down the Walk*; but *Trickle Drops* is Whitman and Naginski at their worst; *Mother and Babe* and *A Lady* are handicapped by poor texts.

The *Sonatina for Oboe, Clarinet, and Piano* by Donald Fuller, was very moving without being pretentious. The opening and the second theme of the first movement, and the final coda were all exceptionally beautiful, and the texture of the work bright and airy. It encourages much hope for this composer's future. Very contrapuntal, very long and very dull was Robert Laidlaw's *Trio for Strings*. Harold Shapiro's *Trumpet Sonata*, contrastingly lively, was for all its formlessness and lack of direction very good fun. It would rattle along at a great rate with a boogie-woogie-like bass, then go slow while the muted trumpet played, then fast again. Not a dull moment, no depth, but the gay, pleasant, sophisticated mood of a good night spot.

Robert Ward

## MUSIC IN BRITAIN, COME WHAT MAY

MUSICAL activity has been increasing lately, in opposite tempo to the declining air raids. It is clear that people still want music