

cians and the additions and emendations to the four standard dictionaries mentioned above are of obvious value in research. The letters and documents included as the third portion of the book make exceedingly interesting, and in several instances humorous, reading. Taken in its entirety *Music Since 1900* is a scholarly array of impressive evidence objectively determined.

*William Schuman*

## NEITHER FISH, FLESH NOR FOWL

**I**N the preface to his book, *La Musica Contemporanea* (Ulrico Hoepli, Milan, 1938), Herbert Fleischer announces this point of view: "The book considers contemporary music as an element integrating the life and spirit of the new century." Then, in presenting his own rebellion against Wagner, against "the morbid, yearning romanticism of Strauss" and the *petit bourgeois* music of Bruckner and Mahler, he speaks with strong admiration of the "crystalline sound-world of Stravinsky," the sharper music of the European composers of today.

At the end of the book, in an italicized valedictory, Mr. Fleischer reiterates the thesis propounded in the preface: "*The new music, in its noblest works, unites nations and humanity.*" One reader, however, found nothing between these humanistic pronunciamientos that proved their claims, no paragraph, even, indicating that they are more than hopes in the author's own mind.

The actual material between preface and valedictory consists entirely of analyses of the style and tendencies of the composers who have worked during the past fifty years in Germany, Austria, France, Italy, and Hungary—and some of the Russians. Despite the inclusive title of the book, however, it does not contain a single reference to DeFalla, Sibelius, Shostakovich, or any English or American composer. Mr. Fleischer's belief that "the centre of the musical life and production of today is Europe" explains the absence of Villa-Lobos and Chavez, of Ives and Copland. But no phrase explains whether his omission of DeFalla, for example, means that he considers the Spaniard unimportant—while finding Petrassi and Dallapiccola worth including—or does not consider Spain one of the nations worth uniting.

The principal difficulty in estimating *La Musica Contemporanea* is in trying to discover its real—as opposed to its announced—*raison d'être*. It will add little or nothing to the knowledge and pleasure of any musician or lay listener acquainted with modern music itself. It will not do as a primer, for it presumes intimacy with such works as Mahler's symphonies, the most recent compositions of Stravinsky, the operas of Berg. Mr. Fleischer is neither celebrant nor encyclopedist. He undoubtedly has an admirable acquaintance with musical history, and in particular with what has happened since Wagner. But nothing about his present book indicates any fresh point of view, any real thesis, any of the unique penetration that alone could give such a book true value.

Although published in Milan in Italian, *La Musica Contemporanea* seems to have been written in German. As it is a "translation by A. Hermet in collaboration with the author," it seems to me a fair assumption that it was translated from a manuscript rather than from a published book. In any language it would, it seems to me, fail to give that stimulus toward listening and comprehending that makes the similarly personal books of Constant Lambert, Paul Rosenfeld, and Cecil Gray actual additions to a music-lover's library.

*Herbert Weinstock*