

the musical horizon of the youth of our day, to enrich its knowledge and to attune its ear to the new musical life." The compositions by Copland, Cowell, Freed, Hanson, Jacobi, Josten, Kramer, Moore, Saminsky, Sessions, Shepherd, Taylor, Thompson, Wagenaar, Whithorne are on the whole not only very successful as "teaching pieces," but moreover in most cases present the personality of their composers unobscured. The entire series was performed recently before a capacity audience of adults, many of whom were well-known musicians and the results were astounding. The evening on the whole was one of surprise and sheer delight. Among the most successful pieces were the two by Roger Sessions, Aaron Copland's *Sunday Afternoon Music*, Saminsky's *Fire Bell*, Thompson's *Song after Sundown*, Freed's *Story at Evening*, Hanson's *Dance of the Warriors* and Cowell's *The Irishman Dances*. Here is real and welcome *Gebrauchsmusik* for America. The publishers have done everything to make this a successful venture, the editors have chosen wisely and with care, and the composers have rallied in an unexpectedly rich vein.

Lehman Engel

ROSENFELD'S "EXPERIENCE AND CRITICISM"

ON the jacket of his new book, *Discoveries of a Music Critic*, (Harcourt Brace, 1936) Paul Rosenfeld refers to his method as "the combination of criticism and experience. . . ." It seems to me in this combination something is lost on the side of criticism, and therefore a more accurate statement would be "the *substitution* of experience for the *analytical* part of criticism." That is to say, judgment which is primary and essential to criticism, and description which is merely instrumental (though the latter here, as elsewhere, forced beyond its legitimate estate)—both of these are present; but where analysis should follow, "experience" is substituted—"experience" here embracing the visual images that crowd the mind of this acutely sensitive auditor as part of the musical "experience."

For this substitution Mr. Rosenfeld has been duly criticized. But his detractors overlook two items: first, his native sensibility which enables him to overcome that initial stage of criticism, judgment, where most self-appointed prophets immediately fail;

and second, the fact that so-called analysis degenerates in most critics into grammatical expositions—and certainly Mr. Rosenfeld's vagaries in the imaginal realm are more engaging. It is nonetheless true that, pursued in excess, these carry the reader too far from the musical actuality and moreover are constantly in danger of being substituted for it. And though it is gratifying to find Mr. Rosenfeld, in *Discoveries of a Music Critic*, less entangled amid turgid imagery, and pointing more frequently to individual works and movements, yet pointed musical references are still much too scarce.

Quotations are again eschewed—this being, of course, an unfortunate concomitant of the method. It is by no mere coincidence that where Rosenfeld is at his best, namely, in considering operatic librettos, he is constantly resorting to printed excerpts. The meaning and significance, or lack of it, he is aware are demonstrable in the verse itself; the critic calls attention to the nodal points through which both meaning and significance particularly shine forth; and if possible, or necessary, he also interprets. Stein's "half indoors half out of doors" distinguished here as the refrain of the "divided saint"; Electra's mournful speech revealing the decadent institutions of family as the "hotbed" of those pre-War "dionysiacally dilating forces" diffusely, that is, without control, set forth in Hofmannsthal's "unbridled" verse—these are instances in point; and more are to be found in the excellent operatic discourses widely inclusive from *Khovantchina* to *Lady Macbeth* and that *Mona* of Horatio Parker which Rosenfeld again insists upon.

Surely Mr. Rosenfeld sees the disparity between this and his musical approach. Or if he believes them analogous he overlooks the fact that a similar treatment of music must be in its own terms, in terms of "musical" emotions formally related and removed from the particular, which Rosenfeld is loath to forsake. Such treatment of purely instrumental music would involve a similar extended concentration upon a single work, which is non-existent in this book except in the case of program music, such as Varese's *Ionization*. This approach would likewise linger less in the stratosphere than the generic musical portraits which are now presented.

The latter are worthwhile primarily as appraisals. Rosenfeld's distribution of values few can reject, at least summarily, who have ever considered modern music seriously at all. They may find some too highly praised, some too slightly. But the hierarchy in general they must admit is admirably conceived. Stravinsky appropriately looms highest; Hindemith as the "most fruitful of contemporary German composers;" Ravel is appreciated for his better efforts, even if *Valses Nobles* is curiously numbered among these; Bartok is perhaps placed too high; Harris, for his superior "movement," stalks in America's "first ranks;" Copland, in a former book musically "a young man," advances to his merited place as "one of the solid achievements of recent music;" Sibelius is neatly excluded as an "over-stuffed bard" whose elephantine bulk eclipses more worthy contestants like Milhaud; and though Scriabin, the pitiful visionary, is admitted, the apt swan-song for the disintegrating Bloch is an extenuation.

The list could be prolonged but for want of space. Suffice it to mention that one-third of the book treats some pre-Wagnerians from Monteverdi, and with such good taste as will possibly induce the reader to accept the subsequent oracles of modern music which he might otherwise sceptically reject. I must confess I do not follow the divagations on the "she" in Mozart, which divert a fine thesis, nor on the "free libido" in Beethoven, which seems to be an unnecessary complication of a plausible contention. The political and biographical excursions on the Wagnerian terrain are, however, absorbing additions to the bulging shelf. Item: was it the Freudian unconscious, or malicious forethought, that inspired the attribution of *Vorwärts* to "Kurt" Eisler?

Arthur V. Berger

FESTIVAL AT HARTFORD

FROM the lively imagination of the *Friends and Enemies of Modern Music* in Hartford, Connecticut, has come forth the idea of an annual festival in which new and rarely played music may be performed with the concurrence of the other arts in appropriate settings. By combining the many forms of contemporary music with the arts of the dancer, the painter and the