

ham and Paul Creston. Mr. Bingham's *Tame Animal Tunes* for chamber orchestra were of that orchestral cleverness which some seem to like, but which for me is incomplete without the accompaniment of at least a newsreel. Mr. Creston's *String Quartet* showed a fine sense for line and imagination. The *Scherzoso*, we found particularly entrancing for its very original thematic material. The *Three Sonnets for Voice and Piano* were more conservative than one expected they would be, after hearing the same composer's *Three Poems from Walt Whitman* for 'cello and piano, the latter works being particularly effective.



I sometimes feel inclined to dissociate completely the art of singing from the art of music. Certainly a goodly number of singers show so little musical intelligence or imagination that a song of Bach or Debussy means less to them than *I'll Bring You Home Again Kathleen* . . . and as for the songs of Fauré or Mahler (to mention but two composers,) they are blissfully unknown. For this reason if for no other, Eva Gauthier brings with her recitals not only a deep intellectual satisfaction, but also a kind of hope that there may some day be other singers with intelligence and sensitivity. It is only a hope or trust of this sort that could allow the contemporary composer to continue composing songs. Certainly no one would go to hear Mme. Gauthier for her voice alone. Be that as it may, she gave the only series of solo performances this year which assured the listener a consistently good fare of music, ranging as it did from the seventeenth century to the present time, with a considerable amount of emphasis on contemporary song. However Mme. Gauthier seems to find songs of Bach and Beethoven that are equally as new to the listener as are the contemporary Spanish songs or those of Berg and Milhaud. Since these concerts were retrospective collections of music that Mme. Gauthier had performed in other years in New York City, it seemed too bad that she did not find it necessary to sing a program of American songs.

Goddard Lieberman

## BOSTON HEARS A NEW RUSSIAN WORK

**Y**URI SHAPORIN's *Symphony* in C-minor, introduced to America this month by the Boston Symphony under Richard

Burgin, is a work without distinction. A gigantic orchestra piles up theatrical masses of sound and a wordless chorus, when not engaged in fairly incisive worker's tunes, gives forth hackneyed musical sighs, the equivalents of the poet's obvious tragic symbols: "Alas, ah me, woe is me." The verbosity of this music was trying. Its conception had evidently been laborious.

Shaporin claims to embody the "transformation of human consciousness in the process of revolution"—from oppression to struggle to triumph. In the broad outlines of this concept Shaporin shares with the bourgeois (called romantic) symphonists of the immediate past more than Marxist critics would probably be willing to admit. Thus the romantic also had his formula of "oppression-struggle-triumph." In Shaporin, Miaskovsky and Shostakovitch, the oppression is that of the worker under capitalism, the struggle is one of overt action, and the triumph is the achievement of the Soviet state. In Tchaikovsky, Strauss and Mahler, the oppression is that of the individual whose intuition is stifled by the unnatural product of reason (i.e., civilization), the struggle is an internal one, and the triumph is escape into the inner self.

I do not take issue with Shaporin for having something in common with his predecessors, or for having recourse to a literary program which rapidly grows less fashionable. But I object to the pretentiousness of program music in its nineteenth century manifestation. The choice of a lofty subject is obviously no assurance of the loftiness of the musical substance in which it is embodied. Yet composers of that epoch and their current epigones, having determined the sketchy outlines of some impressive literary concept or having decided that it would be lofty to deal with "tragic" emotions, are so busy being impressed with themselves that they gloss over the demands of variety, coherence and significant relationships of the full qualitative musical presentation. Even more are audiences impressed. The current common conviction of the loftiness of the Revolution which every Soviet musical listener brings with him to the concert hall, is relied upon by the second-rate Soviet composer to make up for the lack of power in his own musical concepts.

*Arthur V. Berger*