

one of the great hopes of the new generation. More recently in Paris, the composer and conductor, Rhené-Baton, died at the age of sixty-one. It was he who put on at the Paris radio stations the Concerts de Nuit whose programs contained so many contemporary scores.

Maillard-Verger, Grand Prix de Rome 1939, a gifted pianist and composer, is a prisoner in Germany, as are probably many other artists of whom we have had no news. E. Bondeville, musical director of the Radio Française, has succeeded in reviving activities at the Toulouse studios, and many artists hoping to find temporary employment have rallied to that city. The station is therefore assured of established performers like the Quatuor Calvet, the violinists René Benedetti and Roland Charmy, formerly first violins for the great symphonic orchestras of Paris; the famous harpist, Lily Laskine, and the pianists, Lélia Gousseau and Jeanne-Marie Darré.

Jacques Ibert, having been favored by the Front Populaire, was therefore distasteful to Vichy and so was dismissed from his post as director of the Villa Medici just at the moment when he was preparing to transfer the Academy from Rome to Nice. Bohuslav Martinu, the Czech composer formerly resident in Paris, has taken refuge in the free zone and is temporarily located in Aix-en-Provence. The celebrated harpsichordist, Wanda Landowska, is in Banyuls (Pyrenées Orientales) having abandoned her instruments, collections and manuscripts in Paris.

Arno Huth

THREE MILHAUDS

DARIUS MILHAUD, appearing as guest conductor with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in December, presented three of his own works: *Le cortège funebre* (May, 1940), *La fantaisie pastorale*, (1937) for piano and orchestra, and *La suite provençale* (1936). *La fantaisie pastorale* was given for the first time in America, with Stell Andersen, to whom the score is dedicated, as soloist.

Three different Milhauds were represented. First, the Milhaud who has written music for tragedies of Eschylus and now conveys, with a sense of horrifying immediacy, an emotion not recollected in tranquility. It is hard to think dispassionately about the *Cortège funebre*. The disquieting notion persists that almost any reiterative, sombre, directly melodic music with a funeral-march rhythm would be effective, what with the association evoked by the title and the circumstances under which the piece was composed. The eloquence may indeed be that of every man in a moment of

stress, rather than a considered rhetoric, but it is too soon to tell.

Then there is the Milhaud who delights in a not displeasing boisterousness and a frank acceptance of rhythm, color, and tunefulness, all of a sort sure to have popular appeal. A certain unsophisticated quality about the *Suite provençale*, too frequently absent from recent French light music, will probably help to establish this piece as a favorite.

The third Milhaud is the great composer, the mature master of intimate lyricism born of a chamber-music attitude.

The *Fantaisie pastorale*, though the piano always has a solo part in it, is not concertante in any traditional sense, but belongs to a genre peculiar to contemporary music, something between a concerto and completely obbligato chamber music. The orchestra consists of single wind instruments (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, and tuba), harp, a small percussion section and a full string choir. The ensemble is not often treated as a full orchestra; yet it is not a chamber group. There is a temptation to compare the medium with that of the old concerto grosso, a comparison fundamentally false. In the first place, a concerto grosso is true chamber music, no matter how it may be performed today. Secondly, the difference between the relatively fixed concertino of the eighteenth century and the changing solos of today is not superficial. The pitting of one choir against another, the two being occasionally combined in a tutti, is basically unlike the drawing out of the ensemble of first one, then another of the individual voices, against a background of partial groups and gradually built-up tuttis, all probably derived from the pointillist orchestral manner of Debussy, however otherwise different the style. Further, this piece is no "classical" concerto, for the piano is less than a separate solo though more than an obbligato, and the orchestra is not its antagonist. The individual winds, solo strings, and the harp (in this piece the piano's alter ego), appear and disappear in a complex texture; and the percussion, an integral part of the ensemble, is treated with a care and refinement too seldom accorded it. The melodic material, though short-breathed, is handled in a long-breathed manner, so as to present an argument at once concise and leisurely. The thematic fragments, bound together by the continuous flow of the piano part, are of such sensitivity in each note, that at one point a single stroke on the triangle assumes lyrical importance in the long line of what might best be called the interior singing of the work.

We who are jealous of the music of today are often annoyed by the consciousness of manner with which many composers advertise that they

are ill at ease in a not completely natural idiom. But when a master-composer such as Milhaud writes and produces a masterwork such as *La fantaisie pastorale* – in which every note is the convincingly right one, in the convincingly right color – we witness again the miracle of music.

Grosvenor Cooper

SCHÖNBERG, SHOSTAKOVITCH, STOKOWSKI

MR. STOKOWSKI'S annual fall visit to the Philadelphia Orchestra was productive of the only new music the city has had this season. The conductor wasn't lavish, but he was select. He began with Shostakovich's *Symphony Number 6* and closed his three weeks' term with the premiere of Schönberg's *Violin Concerto*. In the latter he and the orchestra were brilliantly assisted by Louis Krasner, who played the solo music several other reputable violinists had reported unplayable.

Schönberg may not have set out with malice aforethought to write the most difficult violin concerto of all time, but once under way in what seems to be an epitome of the twelve-tone technic he didn't let the violinist's problems obstruct the more important matters he had in mind. The story goes that one violinist told the composer he would never hear his concerto played until violinists grew six fingers on the left hand. Schönberg is reported to have answered "so be it," or words to that effect. The Beethoven and Tchaikovsky concertos earned the same complaints from contemporary violinists, which may be a good omen for Schönberg, but he is either further ahead of his time than Beethoven and Tchaikovsky were or ahead of all time altogether. His concerto has been played, but it is not likely he will live to enjoy its popularity. Philadelphia reacted almost violently. The ladies of the Friday afternoon audience edged towards the exits and some of them kept right on going. Doubtless more would have taken to their heels had the concerto not come at the beginning of a program otherwise climaxed by the *Prelude* and *Love-Death* from *Tristan und Isolde*. The Saturday night audience was characteristically less timid. They gave the concerto a round hissing, as they had hissed some little pieces by Schönberg's pupil, Anton von Webern, a few years ago. Mr. Stokowski was moved to give a lecture on sportsmanship, as he had also in behalf of Von Webern on the earlier occasion, and the performance proceeded to its end, unhissed and not very much applauded.

One or two hearings of the work, even when one has had access to the piano reduction, are hardly a substantial basis for the development of an