

contemporary music policy it has become more and more imperative to coordinate our publication activities with those of our composers so that they would not drift away from us. Many of those associated with us are on this side of the Atlantic. Thus we have carried forward a steady production of works by Bela Bartok, Benjamin Britten, Arthur Benjamin, Ernest Bloch, Aaron Copland and others.

It is true that under the present emergency conditions we have lost one manuscript — the new Goossens' *String Quartet*. But we have now devised an expensive means of contact with London which provides a reasonable assurance of safety. It is now quite common for proofs to fly back and forth over the Atlantic several times, be printed in London and brought out in New York, all within a reasonable period. We have not lost a single freight case of music sent overseas; some parcel post shipments have gone down but they represent not more than two percent of all goods we have sent in that way. At the time of this writing a freight shipment of music, ordered by airmail from New York during the second week of September, was received safe and sound, less than four weeks later. This instance of prompt dispatch is by no means an isolated case.

While it is true that European music no longer comes to the United States from the Continent I can say, at least from the experience of my own company, that it still arrives on these shores from the British Isles. Our exports of printed music to the United States are far beyond our pre-war figures. New publications are issued from London, New York, Sidney and Toronto. (From our house in Paris, no news has been received for the last twelve months.) Not only have we not ceased to publish music, but we have actually increased our activities with new works. And we intend, for the duration, to press forward and expand our efforts everywhere.

*Ralph Hawkes*

## SUMMER FESTIVALS IN THE U.S.A.

**A**S summer follows upon summer, performances of new works, many of decided interest, are sprinkled ever more liberally through the local festivals of music held in vacation months all over America. These programs offer a valuable proving ground for first-times, but more than that, they help spread interest in contemporary music to far flung points in the country beyond the strict confines of a few large cities.

Late last May, in Spartanburg, South Carolina, a three-day music fes-

tival was held in the auditorium of Converse College. The foundation stone was a performance of John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*. This much-performed work, written in 1728, has been a major influence in the development of the whole modern English school of composition. Through its clarity and delightful jiggy flow it fits very smoothly into the contemporary repertory; its taste is of today. The same festival also offered a program of music by four modern Americans, *Annabel Lee*, for piano and organ, by Irving Hyatt, whose good traditional writing needs no special comment; *Connecticut Guide*, for violin and piano, by Edwin Gerschefski, which shows fine technic in dissonant counterpoint without having recourse to the twelve-tone system; *Welcome*, for cello and piano, by Ernst Bacon, a work dedicated to the birth of a new son, lovely in feeling, with a charming combination of romantic sentiment and freshness of style; and a song by William Grant Still, who has a happy faculty for exploiting Negro jitter-rhythms in serious music.

In late July, before an audience of several wildly cheering thousands at State College, Pennsylvania, an augmented band of some 140 pieces presented premieres of new works by Richard Franko Goldman and Morton Gould. These were not arrangements but original compositions commissioned for the event. This, of course, is an encouraging procedure for composers interested in the possibilities of the symphonic band. Gould's programmatic work is based on the Fall of Jericho. It is a tricky half-jazz affair, with many special effects, such as lifted clarinet mouths, for noise and glitter. It had however only a few moments of genuine musical interest; one such was the opening, with its poignant pseudo-oriental slow melody. Goldman's score, on the other hand, expertly instrumented in a quiet way, developed its simple but original and telling melody into a strongly-knit composition.

Bennington College in Vermont is always the scene of an abundant mid-August festival of music and dance. The music for Martha Graham's new work, *Punch and Judy*, was written hurriedly by Robert McBride just before his departure for South America, and it shows the effect of haste. Although it fits the remarkable dance technically, it is too slight in musical content to be interesting as a composition. The concerts of new music presented works by Piston, Harrison, Carpenter, Gerschefski, Horst, Van Vactor, Barrows, Goldman, Elwell and Becker. Of these I liked best Becker's song *You and I*, which is fresh and sparkling, simple but unexpected, and vocally perfect. Lou Harrison's *Sonata* for flute and per-

cussion reveals a very original and characteristic way of developing a simple melodic germ; and the percussion, which includes gongs, made a surprisingly emotional background for the intricate melodic weaving. *Divertimento*, for flute and piano, by Richard Franko Goldman (in three movements: *Aperitif*, *Icy Pastoral* and *Fado*) is in thinned lines of sophisticated simplicity, well written for the flute but as a whole, it does not stick together, nor is it sufficiently contrasted. The song *Ousel-Cock*, by Herbert Elwell, is in pseudo-classic manner, pert and singable; the audience liked it. *Meeting at Night* and *Parting at Morning*, by Edwin Gerschefski, are two songs with discords rampant in the piano part and difficult, wide leaps for the voice. Such handicaps usually create a very unsatisfactory effect because they are so much in opposition to the nature of song, but this set gave off the conviction that the words were enhanced by the strange intervals. Almost impossible to sing, they were, nevertheless a success when heard. Piston's *Sonata for Flute and Piano* is too well known to need detailed mention here. Louis Horst's *Change*, in chromatic romantic vein, was written many years ago in what the composer protested was a forgotten style; *That Soothin' Song*, by John Alden Carpenter, is a commonplace attempt to incorporate Negro feeling into a white man's song and its Negro folk-like tune dwindles off into a curious, French-impressionistic, vague close; John Barrow's *Song* is dirge-like and rather ordinary-sounding, obviously influenced by Schubert's *Doppelgänger*. David Van Vactor's *I Know a Maiden Fair*, one of those sure-fire hits with a lilting tune tied to slightly naughty words, would be in early-English style, were it not for some high-power and rather shocking modulations, which, however, lead safely back to the original key.

Henry Cowell

## SWISS NEWS

Geneva, October 24

**F**ROM the international point of view Switzerland is in an extraordinary situation in relation to the arts as to all other activities. Entirely surrounded by countries that are either belligerents or occupied, she attempts to carry on her cultural life exactly as in times of peace, and so remains a Continental "oasis in the midst of torment."

Last winter there seemed to be a general, voluntary inclination toward national, one might even say, cantonal expression. But for the coming season, for the winter of 1941-42, there is a renewed interest in contempo-