

legends about him the spirit of the man is not at all lacking in geniality and warmth and humor.

Music in the smaller forms has been having its innings almost constantly. The Festival of Modern Music which Arthur Leslie Jacobs produces annually at the First Congregational Church always introduces us to something new. This year we heard Aaron Copland's *Violin Sonata*, Leonard Bernstein's *Sonata for Clarinet*, and a *Suite for Piano* by Lou Harrison. Of special interest and special worth was Ingolf Dahl's *Music for Five Brass Instruments*. It is in three movements, the first of which is a fantasy on the chorale, *Christ Lay in the Bonds of Death*. The tune appears in a harmonized version only at the end of the movement, but previously it has served the function of a diatonic "row," that is, almost every phrase in every voice is derived from the chorale by direct quotation, inversion, augmentation, diminution, and so on. Harmonically it is indebted to Stravinsky, but it also has the full flavor of the modality of the chorale. The second movement is thoroughly motorized but not at all angular; and very "American" without being jazzy or folksy. The third is a fugue on a theme associated with Gail Kubik, to whom the piece is dedicated. The score is by far the most distinguished yet produced by any of the younger California composers.

The society, "Evenings on the Roof," will concentrate upon music of the twentieth century this season, with special observances of the seventieth anniversaries of Ives and Schönberg. *The Concord Sonata* and *Children's Day at the Camp Meeting*, together with a group of songs, have already been played, and there will be more later. *Pierrot Lunaire* and other chamber works are in preparation. Adolph Weiss' *Concerto for Bassoon and String Quartet*, which I have reviewed before, has had its third local hearing. Other composers to be heard are Bartok, Bloch, Casella, Harris, Harrison, Hindemith, Juon, Kubik, Milhaud, Pond, Prokofiev, Schuman, Sowerby, Stravinsky, Thomson.

Lawrence Morton

CALIFORNIA'S VITAL MUSIC CONGRESS

LAST September, musicians of every kind and followers interested in music came together in the University of California at Los Angeles for a conference on Music in Contemporary Life, sponsored jointly by the Musicians' Congress, headed by Lawrence Morton, and by a Uni-

versity committee, Walter H. Rubsamen, chairman. The spirit of this lively, red-blooded affair was reflected in the animated participation of everyone present, from bandsman to professor. The Office of War Information duly recorded and filmed a great part of it for foreign distribution. Lieutenant James Thurmond, head of the United States Navy music school, led a session on Music for Our Fighting Men; Earl Robinson conducted a Folk Song forum intended to show how folk material can be used as a direct force in democratic education; W. O. William Strickland elucidated the theoretical and practical problems of the Army musician; Adolf Deutsch, most vocal of the participating Hollywood composers and directors, outlined a plan for increased collaboration between the film composer and his administrative, artistic and technical bosses and confrères; and Alfred Frankenstein and Lawrence Morton spoke most eloquently for a re-evaluation of the role and function of the musical press. During a session on opera, Jerome Moross, attacking the problem from the composer's angle, made the original suggestion of using the increasingly popular "ballet with voices" as an entering wedge to condition established audiences for American-sung theatre. Enlightening data on the smothering influence of totalitarianism on the arts, its methods of infiltration and the methods of fighting it, were impressively presented in Music under Fascism by Theodore Adorno, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Paul Nettl, to name but a few. Clang and clamor reached a high treble in the forum on Popular Song and Swing. There chairman Artie Shaw proved to be one of the most constructive and forthright minds of the congress; instead of alienating further the heps from the ickies he pleaded for the alignment of forces musical and, going beyond that, offered a practical plan of cooperation to stimulate the growth of American music as a whole.

Concerts big and small preceded and accompanied the congress. I can mention but a few of the many interesting pieces played. Joseph Achron's *Concerto for Piano Alone*, done with spectacular perfection by Lillian Steuber, is the last major work finished before Achron's untimely death. It is impossible to justify the obscurity and neglect into which Achron's late works have fallen. The concentration of form, the conciseness of utterance, the unity of style in this work are masterful. Indeed, its mastery sets it apart in several ways, and though perhaps we miss a certain measure of untrammelled directness we nevertheless feel the stature of a strong, noble mind. This is unequivocally progressive music, balanc-

ing free chromaticism with modal groupings, the latter culminating in formations of close, clusterlike seconds. Whatever folkloristic origins it has (as in the melismatics of the first movement built on a continuous athematic melody of extraordinary breadth and conviction) are so thoroughly sublimated that they never become obvious as such. Another feat of this piece is that it sustains a brilliant virtuoso style without falling into either cliché or mannerism.

The fact that music of this kind leads a sleeping beauty existence throws into relief the points vigorously made at the Forum in papers by Roy Harris and Gail Kubik. Kubik's excellent piece should be required reading for all those who learn in the conservatories how to make their product but not where, how, and under what conditions to sell it; it puts much of the blame at the feet of the composers themselves. Let them go out, get into the commercial scramble, make it clear that their particular talent is basically irreplaceable in many instances where money is being paid for music and where, so far, the esthetics of Mr. O'Malley's Colonel Wurst prevail.

III

The forum heard Ernst Toch read a Credo in which he told how, after the hot, sultry summer day of post-romanticism he and his generation satisfied the urge for a "plunge into a cool, refreshing pool" by the adoption of dissonant counterpoint and vigorous objectivity, but how they had perforce to emerge from the ripples after a time. Judging by his charming, sprightly and imaginative *Divertimento for Violin and Viola, Opus 37, Number 2*, performed at the Los Angeles Composers' Concert, I personally find the bathing suit more becoming to Toch than the brocaded robe he now affects. Conversely, one would prefer Quincy Porter's recent freedom to the moderately tempered homme-du-monde-ism of his *Second String Quartet* played at the closing concert by the superb Brodtsky ensemble. My own *Brass Quintet* was the only other contemporary work on this occasion. Clifford Vaughan supplied a new *Organ Symphony*, airy and free in content in light polyphonic passages but with artificial pomposity and bathos in the finale. Eudice Shapiro played Werner Josten's facile and spotty *Violin Sonata* and three older *Preludes* by Frederick Jacobi. Louis Kaufman contributed Aaron Copland's *Violin Sonata*, to me a piece of thorough enchantment.

Ingolf Dahl