

remains one of the best evocations of American historical atmosphere, and Schönberg's *Second Chamber Symphony* were also played. Recent works included the Shostakovitch *Sixth Symphony* and Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by Weber*. The latter is immensely clever, learned and effective stuff, which restores the leaven of humor missing in many of Hindemith's recent achievements. Nevertheless I much preferred his *Quartet* for clarinet, strings and piano (introduced here by the Music Lovers' Society), which is simply colossal in its energy, breadth, size and grand seriousness.

Howard Brubeck's *California Suite*, a strong American piece, is perhaps the only orchestral work about California without a mission bell, but its virtues are not simply negative. It is *sec* with a fine, clear sonority, and it is beautifully modeled. Brubeck, like Milhaud, knows the value of a tune.

Another young composers' event of the late season was a concert devoted almost entirely to songs by the San Franciscan, John Edmunds. These are at their best when they deal with nostalgia and whimsical moods. Though a little like some twilit English songs, they have a firm, crisp harmonic texture and real rhythmic propulsion. Their major defect is a tendency toward excessive brevity. There is, after all, a difference between subtle suggestiveness and the throttling of an idea before it has really been stated.

Alfred Frankenstein

## ONE-MAN WEEK IN PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA this spring season paid honor to a native son with two world premieres and one first performance of works by Vincent Persichetti. These revealed a personality of great energy. Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra presented for the first time the *Fables for Narrator and Orchestra*, with six of Aesop's fables for texts. Persichetti provides a musical parallel to the tales, an emotional equivalent to their underlying meaning. The mood is never broken by imitative sound effects. He has dealt well with the problem of narrator and orchestra. The speaking voice is treated as an instrument; it is part of the orchestra but also clearly in contrast to it. Especially successful were *A Raven and a Swan*, the tender tale of a raven's death, and *The Fox and the Grapes*, where the desires and frustration of the fox are portrayed by

the changing harmonies and the curve of the melodic line.

In the chamber music field, Persichetti's *Pastoral for Quintet of Wind Instruments* was given its premiere by the Franklin Institute in conjunction with the Art Alliance. This is bright music, clearly scored, achieving even in its five-part contrapuntal texture a nice balance between the characteristic variety of the individual instruments and the unity of the ensemble. The Philadelphia Conservatory Chamber Concerts offered a local first performance of his *Third Piano Sonata*, played by the composer's wife. This substantial work is built entirely upon a choral motive. It moves from a tragic *Declaration* to a memorial-like *Episode*, and culminates in the *Psalm*, a hope for peace and hymn of praise.

The Twentieth Century Music Group presented an earlier work by Persichetti, the severe *Sonata for Two Pianos*. Although at times thick harmonically, it has breadth and deep sincerity. On the same program we heard again Randall Thompson's exquisite *Suite for Oboe, Clarinet and Viola* and Poulenc's terse *Sonata for Piano, Four Hands*.

Rafael Druian