

made to surmount the difficulties of the recitativo passages, which are often depressing in their commonplace realism. From the occasional symphonic surge of the orchestra one is led to believe that something is about to happen. But it never does. Harmonically and melodically, the music is without style, individuality or vitality. Unfortunately this opera is bound to sell out the house for some time to come, due to the unbridled passion of the New York audience to hear old music in new guise.

Stravinsky's *Symphonie des Psaumes*, Boston Symphony, Mar. 5

*The Symphonie des Psaumes*, an eclectically religious work with Latin text, is, despite its remote appeal, strangely moving in its sombreness. At times it rises to solemn grandeur. Stravinsky is always the virtuoso, even in asceticism, and the curiously limited combination of instruments he has allowed himself in this work creates a completely new color, mordant and acid. One of the happiest results from this combination is the introduction to the second movement, in which the contrapuntal use of the five flutes alone produces a refreshingly pure and impersonal tone. The choral writing is simple and beautiful and the *Alleluia* phrase for chorus, a single cadence three times repeated in the beginning, the middle and the end of the last movement, gives one a sensation of inexpressible tranquility and peace. The work abounds in passages of sober beauty for both chorus and orchestra. The final pages are without doubt among the finest Stravinsky has yet written. The performance of this work in New York by the Boston Symphony and the Schola Cantorum, was the bright spot in a month otherwise rather uneventful.

Colin McPhee

## SCHÖNBERG'S SUPER-FILM MUSIK

SCHÖNBERG'S *Begleitmusik zu einer Lichtbildszene*, for small orchestra, was given its Berlin premiere in the early season by Otto Klemperer at the second of his symphony concerts. It is a "modern" work but meaningless in any relation to the problem of music for the films. Threatening peril, terror and catastrophe are depicted, it is true; indeed it is music for a kind of super-production—but only for an imaginary, not a real,

an actual setting. The expressiveness of the greatest actors could not meet the demands of this music.

But why "Music for a Movie?" Why not just "A Psychological Study in Music?" Because that is what this music is. Music with a Schönbergian flavor, something in the nature of the *Erwartung* music, although not so photographically realistic in the psychological realm as this most beautiful of Schönberg's earlier works. There is a wide discrepancy between the subject of this *Begleitmusik* and the manner of its presentation. Of late, notably in his latest opera *Von Heute auf Morgen*, Schönberg has disclosed a marked penchant for artistic cheapness—what is called "Kitsch" in the German studios; but of course he dresses this tendency in a consistently exclusive, non-popular style!

*Alfred Einstein*

## WORLD ALMANAC OF RADIO

ANDRE COEUROY'S latest book, *Panorama de la Radio*, Editions Kra, "*Les Documentaires*", Paris, might be subtitled "All you need know about radio." Here in his first chapter one finds every type who "listens in": "mon ami Crabe," who fights against all innovations; the poet to whom the radio is "communion among men;" the musician to whom the psychology of listening over the radio is different from that of the concert hall. Tongue in cheek, Coeuroy contends that at a concert one sells one's soul for two hours, while the "listener-in" remains free; "master of his mood and of his soul, he dominates the music instead of being possessed by it." Besides which, he continues, at concerts, souls are conscious of elbows! But before a loud speaker the auditor is alone, turned over to his own judgment and taste.

An exhaustive chapter on "The Radio and International Life" gives useful information about present developments in practically every country. Having assiduously studied the radiophonic geography of several continents he is completely authoritative as to the history of the invention, the situation of stations and means of carrying on throughout the world. Thus the United States is seen to be alone in financing radio by making it an advertising medium. In the other countries, France excepted, the owners of sets pay a radio tax and are in a position to dictate