

dragged back to the gutter, and is eventually strangled by her paramour who is drawn irresistibly to the spot where the foreman was mangled. With Hopkins at the switches, the machines whirl on.

The softer spots of this lurid melodrama, those in which the love element is developed, disclose no very superior inspiration in Brand. Nor are his night-life pictures indicative of any marked individual ability to say what other men already have said. But his musical dialogue has a firm, emphatic line, and his drama progresses easily and naturally, so far as the conversational necessities are involved.

His real achievements in this work are the two industrial scenes whose vitality have a machine-like throb, and the creation, in Hopkins, of a character who is himself an avenging machine. The great clanking upbuildings of sound at the finale, when the huge industrial plant is in full operation, with Hopkins in control, and a multitude of puny workers going through their machine-like routine, have their power in the theater, and transcend in their weight and clangor the mechanistic music that has had its place in ballet and orchestral programs. Whether it will have any interest for audiences, once the machine fetish has run its course, one who has harkened to the opera at Duisburg is inclined seriously to doubt.

Oscar Thompson

DE FALLA IN REVIEW

THE eternal problem of discussing an art in other terms than its own has been met by Mr. J. B. Trend with unusual clearness, precision and lack of sentimentality in his book on Manuel de Falla, just published by Alfred A. Knopf. The subject is one which might easily have slipped into the florid phraseology of another school.

Instead of luring us with purple wiles among the intricacies of the gypsy cave and the Moslem mosque where so much Spanish music found its origin, Mr. Trend leads us with dispassionate clarity through the Iberian centuries, accenting here, depreciating there, but never imperiling his or our sense of direction or proportion.

An enthusiastic, but never blind admirer of his subject, Mr. Trend is wise to quote Falla's own analysis of the determinant influences on Spanish music. We learn that they are:

"The adoption by the Spanish Church of Byzantine liturgical music;

"The Moslem invasion; and

"The immigration and establishment in Spain of numerous bands of gypsies."

This thesis is developed to show the Spanish "tendency to profuse ornamentation in every form of art . . . a tendency which undoubtedly goes back to the time of the Moors." Later Mr. Trend brings out the fact that the Spanish composer, while ornamenting his themes, does not prepare for them in the sense that the Germans do, by definite architectural principles.

"A Spanish composer," says Mr. Trend, "as a rule works on almost the opposite principle. He will deliver his message straight out, in all its uncompromising force, and subsequent re-statements are practically only repetitions driving the point home."

Such a lucid presentation of the idiom is more useful to the creative listener than a dozen pages of colorful superlatives.

The influence of street music with its peculiarly Spanish timbre, based on the various uses of the guitar, is likewise dealt with, while a curiously adroit analysis of the intrusion of primitive music into the work of such a sophisticated composer as Alois Haba by means of quarter-tones sheds light on a most interesting situation.

It is to the Spanish rhythms, colors, and idioms that we must look for the essence of Falla, then, rather than to the Spanish tunes. To quote again:

"With Falla, harmony has become less important as a means of giving 'perspective' to a piece of music, of allowing it to be seen 'in the round.' Modulation is reduced to a minimum. The chief means of expression are melody and rhythm; the former consisting of short, incisive phrases presented with the contrasting and unblended colors of various instruments; while the latter depends upon the clearness of accent and cross accent, so that a vital combination of conflicting rhythms becomes a guiding prin-

ciple of the whole work. Lastly, there is no suggestion of improvisation, romantic hesitation, or feeling the way; the interpreter does not come before us and let his fingers 'wander idly over the noisy keys' until the divine inspiration falls upon him. With Falla, we feel that the music has already been going on for some time elsewhere, when the performer by art or magic begins to let us hear it."

Mr. Trend, for all his precision and intellectual keenness, has a drop or two of magic in his pen. Here is his impression of Falla's *Harpsichord Concerto*. "To those who have ever experienced or imagined what that festival is like in a Spanish cathedral this movement will certainly give a new meaning to their memories: the confused, magnificent jangle of voices, and instruments, bells, and organ; the subdued grandeur of hanging tapestries and silk brocades, the flare of innumerable candles, and the great silver *custodia*, which enshrines the object of the whole festival. There is not the faintest suggestion of program music. . . . The composer tells me that it was a matter of pure chance that he happened to finish the movement on the morning of the Corps. It is merely a vivid pattern in sound and rhythm, but it brings what Albeniz would have called an '*Evocacion*' of the most Spanish of all Spanish festivals."

In such a description there may lack the effulgent raptures of a Huneker or the magnificent cosmic applause of a Rolland. The composers of today do not ask for the white light that beat about the thrones of Chopin, Wagner, or Beethoven. But clear discernment, and impartial analysis they do demand, combined with what tincture of sincere enthusiasm may color the picture without distorting it. As Mr. Trend himself puts it, summing up his admirable attitude with his usual keen words: "It is the privilege of a musician, and the obligation of an English or American musician, to preserve a strict neutrality and make as many friends as he can."

Mary Ellis Opdyke