

The only let-down came in the two Prokofiev numbers – *Snowflakes* which drips lush romanticism, and *Snowdrops* that simpers along like a sentimental English ballad.

Shostakovitch's *Quintet*, Opus 57, for two violins, viola, 'cello and piano brought the evening to a close. This is an example of the versatile young man's more fluent and entertaining style. The prelude and fugue are less interesting than the scintillant scherzo which had much display of bright technic and the typical Shostakovitch irony, or the sentimental violin cadences of the intermezzo and the serenade pattern of the finale. The strings carried their melodic burden well, while the piano, meeker now, ran little Czerny scales or switched from highest to lowest registers, a characteristic indulgence in extremes.

Eleanor Wakefield

LIVELY CONFERENCE; IN COLORADO

THE annual Fine Arts Conference at Colorado Springs was tailored this year to suit the tastes of soldier boys and their families. Consequently, the Roy Harris program and the Young Students' program were telescoped to make way for the splendid Army Band of Fort Logan. But much to the surprise and delight of local musicians, the opening concert of contemporary music drew one of the largest and most attentive audiences. The program was made up of Vincent Persichetti's *Piano Sonata* and *Two-piano Sonata*, J. Vantz Fitzer's *Piano Sonata* and *Trio* (for violin, cello and piano) and my own *Capriccio*, *March and Variations for Piano*, and *Prelude and Fugue for Three Violins*. The three hundred dollar composition award was divided three ways among us – first prize to Persichetti, head of the Theory Department of the Philadelphia School of Music; second to me, and third to Fitzer, of Oklahoma City.

Both works of Persichetti were brilliant, proficient, well calculated for the medium – good audience pieces. This music is eclectic and spicy. The stock rhythmic patterns and short form periods seem a little too pat, yet the timing and sense of continuity, as well as the ornamentation, are clear and expert.

Fitzer has a fine talent for harmonic color. He uses the modern application of overtone harmony that Harris gives all his pupils, but which is easily turned by Fitzer into an impressionism that sounds like Debussy brought up to date. He is essentially a miniaturist – an almost hypersensi-

tive colorist of exotic moods.

Harris' *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Medal Award), is one of his important works. It is a virtuoso piece using every technical device of the medium, but so skilfully that the audience is never made aware of its difficulty. The four movements are admirably contrasted. The first is a fantasy of *Kreutzer* proportions; the second (muted), a little honey which brings forth sighs of contentment, is based on the folksong, *I'll be True to my Love*; the third is Harris at his best, a long noble aria with limpid pure harmony, a breathless yet deeply moving climax and long melodic return to the close, a perfectly controlled arch; the toccata is a *tour de force* for both instruments. This work received a top flight performance by Robert Gross and Johana Harris.

Hanya Holm's dance program presented *Orestes and the Furies*. This was sometimes weird and exciting, but seemed much too long. John Colman's music was appropriate to the dance, but its sequential form patterns, stereotyped rhythmic and melodic designs, in combination with a persistent percussive dissonance, only aggravated the monotony of the two-piano medium. However, the continuity of form was always well controlled. *What so proudly we hail*, music by Harris, for string orchestra, piano and chorus, conducted by the composer, is a suite based on folk songs – grateful music, which Holm and her group realized with telling effect.

The band concert revealed a new talent, Cecil Effinger, who is also a very able conductor. *Prelude and Fugue for Band* was strong and clearly resounding, with every factor in balanced control. Although Effinger is self-taught, many of us felt a strong Harris influence in the form, the bold contrapuntal themes and treatments, the brilliant brass climaxes. But this young musician has something of his own to say. The audience went for his music in a big way.

The premiere of Harris' *Piano Concerto* puzzled me. It received a magnificent performance by Mrs. Harris and the band; its power and drive gave me a thrill, one climax sent the chills down my back; the audience liked the work, but I was left with a feeling that it was not quite right. It was tremendously exciting, but it didn't quite satisfy.

The conference came to a brilliant close with a carefully prepared program: Bach, Mozart, Debussy, Hindemith, Riegger. The hit was Ravel's four-hand arrangement of Debussy's *Fêtes*. What clear, precise timing, harmony and form! Wallingford Riegger's *New Dance* had an

arresting rhythmic idea, but was much too repetitious. Repetition is probably very serviceable to the dance but certainly not to concert music. The scherzo of Hindemith's *Sonata for Two Pianos* is sure-fire music; its well calculated motifs and sequences click like a machine that can be turned on and off at any time. The two-piano team of Mrs. Harris and James Sykes wound up with some fancy improvisations on U.S. Service and popular Broadway tunes, which brought the house down.

Robert Evett

MARTINU'S SECOND SYMPHONY

THE newly appointed conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, caused a considerable stir in the city's musical circles by announcing the complete programs of the Cleveland Orchestra's symphony season more than a month before the first concert. A number of new works were promised, nine of them by Americans. Already two of this latter category have been heard, *Music for a Scene from Shelley*, Samuel Barber's early piece, not previously performed in Cleveland, and Morton Gould's resourceful orchestral rhapsody on *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*. In this brief work which Gould calls an *American Salute*, he has managed to summon up the curious nostalgia which underlines the bright tune of one of our finest marching songs. Barber's music more than justifies its revival. It was well received when it made its appearance ten years ago, but it has had occasional performances since. Despite obviously impressionistic derivation, it remains a work of substance which creates its mood quickly and persuasively. What is still more important, it sounds well, the musical texture is lustrous.

The *Second Symphony* of Bohuslav Martinu is, however, the event of the Cleveland season so far. It was commissioned by a group of Czechs here, and bears the dedication: "To My Fellow Countrymen in Cleveland." I have not heard Martinu's *First Symphony*, so I am unable to compare the two. Both of them, incidentally have been written since his arrival in American and after his fifty-first birthday.

In many respects, Martinu's symphony is an answer to those who claim that the form is no longer hospitable to contemporary composers. Martinu has composed a work in four movements which is in the best traditions of the style and yet completely novel and original. There is no slavish imitation of the academic principles of symphonic form. Rather the music follows episodic patterns, benefitting by such traditional unify-