

Klemperer played it marvelously, in a nobly tragic vein; but one can only imagine what it cost him to descend from these heights to the razzle-dazzle of a *Fantasy Number 1* for piano and orchestra by Mignone.

Alfred Wallenstein was at his best in the *Second Symphony* of Kabalevsky. According to the program notes, this work is shot through with philosophy and social significance. My ears heard none of this, however, and I found the music to be just what I expected: a product of the conservatory style which derives from Tchaikovsky, Glazounov and earlier Miaskovsky. It has a ready appeal, however, and it is of course well orchestrated. And happily it struck no attitudes of grandeur like those of Shostakovich when he wants to look like Manfred on an Alpine peak, defying the thunder.

We were no doubt supposed to be honored by receiving a gift from Deems Taylor in the form of an *Elegie for Orchestra* – world premiere, no less. With the piece came one of the composer's charming little essays, telling the story of the Egyptian princess for whom it was written. She died of love – at the age of twelve, and her untimely end moved Mr. Taylor to compose her funeral song. It was very sad.

Miklos Rozsa also gave us a world premiere, but a more significant one, a *Concerto for Strings*. In the classical manner, it is contrapuntal with most of the themes imitated canonically. It is a work full of skill, in the academic sense; but it has few surprises since the technic of composition becomes a mannerism, and you are always pretty sure of what is coming next. The character of Hungarian folk music is there, but in an attenuated form, diluted by a rather labored contrapuntal scholarship, and cramped by the limitations of a string orchestra.

Chavez made a hit with his colorful suite from *H. P.* To hear someone else release in sound all the brilliant commotion of a tropical ballet is next best to dancing in it yourself; and the audience reaction is similar to that at a ballet performance – "I wish I could be *in* it!" The *Sarabande* for strings, on the other hand, is in the composer's classical vein, and its tempered measures brought forth a comparably tempered response, which is just about what the composer put into it.

Lawrence Morton

BOSTON HEARS VILLA-LOBOS; ATTENDS THEATRE

VILLA-LOBOS' recent visit was accompanied by a considerable fanfare of publicity; there were receptions in Boston and Cambridge and the composer obliged everyone by ringing the now familiar changes

on nationalism, academism and education. He conducted the symphony orchestra at three concerts in a program consisting of the Toccata and Fugue from *Bachianas Brasileiras Number 7*, *Chôros Number 12* and *Rudepoêma*, all of which were new to local audiences. Certainly no clear-cut personality emerges. The bustling and heavy textured *Toccata* is a succession of brilliant often untidily executed baroque formulae; the highly conventional *Fugue* seemed almost inept. *Chôros Number 12*, announced as a first performance, was the most hybrid affair of all, and its stylistic heterogeneity was accentuated by the episodic character of its form. Nevertheless there were passages of considerable freshness and vitality but they appeared beside others in which half a dozen undigested influences float about. All of the music comes perilously close to being swamped in a sea of banality. Stylistically, the *Rudepoêma* was the most consistent work on the program and from my point of view the most enjoyable.

During George Szell's stay as guest conductor, we heard performances of William Grant Still's *In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died For Democracy*, and Paul Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*, neither of which would rank among the more impressive novelties of the season. *In Memoriam* is over-ripe harmonically and not very original, although it seemed sincere and workmanlike. The Hindemith piece is a *tour de force* of often questionable taste, especially in its orchestration. Compared with the elegance of Stravinsky's paraphrases or, for that matter, with the best of Hindemith, it is a disappointment; but it is, nevertheless, the work of a master.

More rewarding, to my way of thinking, was Nikolai Lopatnikoff's neo-classical *Concertino for Orchestra*, Opus 30, which had been commissioned by The Koussevitzky Foundation and was conducted by Koussevitzky himself. It seemed more diatonic and tonal than Lopatnikoff's *Second Symphony* which we heard a few years ago. The tuneful first movement has a fine sense of continuity and fairly sparkles with delightful solo passages. The second, called *Elegietta*, is quietly expressive, but tends to sag harmonically, a situation not retrieved by the composer's use of pedal points. The finale wanders tonally, but it has some ingenious ostinati, a few tricky piano solo passages, and considerable charm.

Edward Burlingame Hill's *Music for English Horn and Orchestra*, Opus 50, received its premiere performance on the same program. One of the most ingratiating of Mr. Hill's compositions, it is sensitive music

of quiet dignity, impeccably written in a conservatively impressionistic style. The solo part was magnificently performed by Louis Speyer.

Choral compositions by Edward Ballantine, Paul Hindemith, and Aaron Copland were presented by The Harvard Glee Club and The Radcliffe Choral Society under the direction of G. Wallace Woodworth, in a concert at Sanders Theatre in Cambridge. Ballantine's short, impressive, a-capella setting of Theodore Spencer's *Song for A Future* faithfully adheres to the declamation of the poem. Modal in character with occasional touches of descriptive chromaticism, it is effectively written for chorus. Hindemith was represented by three of the Rilke *Chansons*: *La Biche*, *Printemps*, and *Verger*. Hindemith's miraculous understanding of the *chanson* style is everywhere apparent in these charming pieces; they rank with the very best of modern a-capella choral music. Copland was represented by his slight but successful *Song of The Guerrillas* from the motion picture *North Star*. Also on the program was this writer's suite for chorus and piano obligato, *Four Choral Patterns from The New Yorker*.

Theatre music is looking up in these parts. Martha Graham and her company presented Copland's ballet *Appalachian Spring* and Hindemith's *Mirror Before Me*, which had been commissioned by The Coolidge Foundation. The nostalgia of *Appalachian Spring* is almost overwhelming; yet it is always under control, and the music as a whole possesses a formal integrity that is all too rare in music for the dance. The intense music of *Mirror Before Me* is richer in texture and more intricate in design, but seemed less ideal as theatrical music. The present writer had been fortunate enough to hear both works in Washington where performing conditions were adequate, if not ideal. The musical performances in Boston were atrocious, and Copland's transparent music suffered especially from the butchery.

A new play, *Dark of The Moon*, subtitled *A Legend with Music*, introduces a new composer, Walter Hendl. The music, which pays obvious homage to Copland, is tasteful and effective, if not strikingly original. Special mention should also be made of the excellent score that David Diamond has written for *The Tempest*. It is highly individual, yet of a remarkably Elizabethan quality.

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