

and *Psyche*, conducted by Lange. Despite its considerable severity of three-part form and wealth of contrapuntal device, the overture is notable for its lightness of spirit, and makes one wish that Georges Balanchine, for whom the ballet score was originally planned, had not given up the idea of choreographing it.

The other contemporary works in the orchestra's programs have been consistently of lesser caliber. Isaac Stern gave a brilliant performance of Karol Szymanowski's second violin concerto, but the musical idiom of the once admired Pole has come to seem far too elaborate, too rhapsodic, too obscured by externals of harmonic invention and orchestral lushness.

Among the new American works, the most distinguished in its craftsmanship and general musical outlook, if not in specific materials, is the second symphony of John Alden Carpenter. Its success was hampered by the thick and laborious performance it received at the hands of Désiré Defauw, the orchestra's new musical director. The following week Defauw, evidently eager to foster Chicago's established talents, gave a much clearer representation of Felix Borowski's unpretentiously attractive second symphony. Also heard in Orchestra Hall before the end of the year were Eugen Zador's *Biblical Triptych*, a Hollywoodish tone picture of Biblical personalities; Walter Helfer's energetic but monotonously scored and developed overture, *In Modo Giocosco*; Wald's symphonic poem, *The Dancer Dead*, fragmentary in construction but full of rich French post-impressionist harmonic devices and orchestral colors; Alan Schulman's rather glib *Theme and Variations* for viola and orchestra; and Boris Koutzen's *Valley Forge*, which was played too late for review in this article. All but one of these works, for better or for worse, were directed by Lange, who endeavors seriously in his limited number of concerts to let a few rays of novelty pierce the musical night of Chicago's concert life. Meanwhile Defauw seems to have decided that it will be the policy of wisdom to restore Dvorak's *New World Symphony* to the repertory, and to add an organ part to the finale of Sibelius' *Second*.

Cecil Smith

MILHAUD'S "MIDIAN" IN ORCHESTRAL DEBUT

SO far as new music is concerned, the foremost event of the early season in San Francisco was the world premiere of Darius Milhaud's *Opus Americanum Number 2*, played, of course, by Pierre Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. This work was commissioned

in 1940 by the Monte Carlo Ballet, but various circumstances, particularly the defection of Massine to the Ballet Theatre, have prevented its being presented in its original form.

The original title was *The Man from Midian*, who is none other than Moses. The ballet was to contain episodes about the finding of Moses in the bulrushes, his divination at the Pharaoh's court, his protection of a worker from the brutality of an Egyptian overlord, the passage of the Red Sea, the worship of the golden calf, and the death of Moses as the Hebrews enter the Promised Land.

A parallel to the Massine-Hindemith *St. Francis* instantly suggests itself, and insofar as *St. Francis* is one of Hindemith's best scores and *Opus Americanum Number 2* is one of the best of Milhaud, that parallel is valid enough. Thanks to the emphasis commonly placed on things like the *Saudades do Brasil*, *Scaramouche*, and his endless spate of charming little sonatinas, we tend to overlook the fact that Milhaud is really a grandly dramatic composer. *Opus Americanum Number 2* is one of his weightiest, biggest and most ponderable scores. There is immense strength, vitality and directness in its textures and rhythms. The full orchestra is handled with the efficiency and clarity of a chamber ensemble, and while the prevailing tone is dark, there is just enough softness and lyricism. Augmented seconds are subtly insinuated into the melodic line to provide a kind of subconsciously effective "Oriental" color. Thus the music is very gently located in time and place, without making any special point about that location. The emphasis of this music is upon the drama in movement, not a superficial movement imposed upon it, but a movement energized from within.

This is what the Monte Carlo could have had. Instead it brought us, by way of novelty, a thing called *The Cuckold's Fair* with a score by Gustavo Pittaluga which seemed shamelessly contrived as a reasonably accurate facsimile of De Falla's *Tricorne*. Its other novelties were even worse – sentimentalized Bach, drivelated Tchaikowsky, and gaudy Glière.

André Kostelanetz introduced four real novelties and two semi-novelties in a pair of "pop" concerts with the San Francisco Symphony. Paul Creston's *Frontiers*, one of the American works Kostelanetz has commissioned, was performed for the first time in the United States. It seemed to me sincere, derivative, well made, unimportant and a little naive. The best of Kostelanetz's new pieces were Copland's fine *Lincoln Portrait*, which needs no comment in these columns, and the *Twenty-First*

Symphony of Miascowsky, a work of great dignity and power compacted into extraordinarily small space. There was also a pleasantly good humored *Overture to Colas Breugnon* by Dimitri Kabalevsky, Robert Russell Bennett's horribly pompous "symphonic picture" from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, and Jerome Kern's *Scenario for Orchestra on Themes from Show Boat*.

Stokowski introduced Glière's *Ilya Mourometz* to San Francisco audiences, a symphony which seemed a masterpiece when Stock brought it to this country in 1918, and which today seems a desperate, inflated pastiche of Wagner, Strauss, Rimsky-Korsakov and Moussorgsky. One hopes one will not be similarly disillusioned on future hearings of the sparkling, tuneful and gracious suite from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* which figured on Monteux's opening program.

Alfred Frankenstein

MUSIC BOOM IN WAR-TIME PITTSBURGH

WITH the clouds over Pittsburgh reflecting in flaming red and yellow hues an all-time high of war production, the musical organizations of this industrial city are better protected from the financial insecurities of former years. Yet, modern music, as always, is the last to benefit from such prosperity. Whereas we now hear more music and certain important innovations, the majority of concert groups and sponsors still give us the hackneyed and conventional repertoires. And so exceptions are doubly appreciated. Fritz Reiner, musical director of the Pittsburgh Symphony has promised us this season works of truly modern character.

Schönberg, Bartok, Kodaly, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovitch, Martinu and Villa-Lobos, along with Debussy, Ravel, Elgar, Delius, McDowell, Gilbert and a series of American premieres have been the twentieth century features of these concerts, but since the Pittsburgh programs start late, only a few performances have taken place at this writing.

Scores imported from the Soviet Union and all-Russian programs enjoy growing popularity here as everywhere else, with Shostakovitch still in the symphonic lead, this year with the *Fifth* and *First* (the latter contributed by Serge Koussevitsky and the visiting Boston Orchestra). We heard Kabalevsky's *Overture to Colas Breugnon* and will hear Kalinnikov's *G-minor Symphony* (the latter under the baton of Assistant Conductor Vladimir Bakaleinikoff), Prokofiev's *First Violin* and *Third Piano Concerto* and his symphonic suite, *Lieutenant Kije*.