

some demonstration of pleasure. It was a triumph of musical degradation.

There is something of the same element in Barber's *Violin Concerto*, which is a sight better than the Schmidt symphony but still an orchestral and harmonic cushion. Barber is a better craftsman than Schmidt, and a man of livelier imagination than his teacher, Scalero, but both his imagination and his craftsmanship are of a conventional order, without significant distinction. It is music of talent, but hardly of fibre, and will probably continue to win prizes and general approbation.

The other orchestral works were all miniatures save the Rachmaninoff dances. These also would have been miniatures had they been cut as severely as they might have been, were Rachmaninoff not the composer. Bennett's etudes, urbane and witty, were skillfully made and adroitly scored. Scalero's tone poem was luscious orchestration and a wistful mood ad infinitum.

The stage works were hardly superior. Menotti's one-acter, originally written as a radio opera, is bright and clever, but not in a way one reasonably expects of a composer already wearing long pants. The juvenile character of Menotti's humor, both as librettist and as composer, suggests rather the precocious child than the mature composer of comic operas. He is still a talent. His orchestra moves with agility and sparkle, and it is spontaneous and natural. His stagecraft reveals a native feeling for theatrical forms; but he conceives as humorous the spectacle of an old spinster of ultimate respectability breaking into a liquor store in the dead of night to steal a drink for the young man she is presumably determined to win as a companion for her declining years.

Nordoff's *The Masterpiece* is not so naive, but what it makes up in sophistication of a sort, it lacks in lightness and humor of execution. Thickly scored and beset with an awkward and angular melodic line, it gave the singers plenty of trouble and discomfort, and not much pleasure to the listeners. Reznicek's one-acter is an ordinary comedy of back-stage intrigue couched in a vein accepted as funny in the Vienna of a decade ago. Professional enough, but localized and dated, even at the age of ten.

Henry Pleasants

## CHICAGO STILL IN THE JUBILEE

THE mid-season in Chicago has been saved only by minor works from the Symphony Orchestra's imposing list specially written for its Golden Jubilee, such as Zoltan Kodaly's unimportant *Concerto for Orches-*

tra, Albert Noelte's *Prologue to a Romantic Drama*, Rudolph Ganz's *Piano Concerto*, and Carl Eppert's excerpts from a ballet concerned with vitamins and musical clichés. The Illinois Symphony, usually active in the contemporary field, has so far offered nothing more inviting in the way of novelties than Sir Hamilton Harty's tedious bombast, *The Children of Lir*, an ill-advised "concert treatment" of Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid*, and such American efforts as Leo Kopp's new *Symphony*.

The Eppert work received first prize in the competition that the Chicago Orchestral Association opened to American composers as part of its program for the anniversary year. Second prize went to Albert Sendrey and honorable mention to Gail T. Kubik. The judges were Deems Taylor, Eugene Ormandy, and John Barbirolli. In all 105 scores were submitted.

Though it has often been observed that there is a subtle relation between the practice of music and the profession of medicine, so far as I am able to discover, the premiere of Eppert's *Two Symphonic Impressions, Opus 69*, is the first time that alphabetical vitamins have staged a two-round, two-fisted, no-decision battle with disease, in honor of a symphony orchestra. From the introduction, in which the Vitamin Theme takes shape, to the section devoted to Vitamin A, and so on to Vitamin D, the anti-rachitic principle, the score is written in the cheap and undistinguished style that is Hollywood's own. It was finally necessary for Stock to adopt Hollywood methods in an attempt to fit the material into the frame of a symphonic program. The result was the prize-ring effect, the closing section of the first part having been used again to finish off the second. It is difficult to say what other changes were made. Even after it had been treated by Stock's firm shears, the work sounded tawdry and regrettable. Was there nothing better in more than a hundred scores?

Kodály's *Concerto* is a little blunt in its appeal, like so many Handelian efforts in recent classicism. In some respects it even seems to go further back, stripping the classic line of rhythmic and melodic falbalas to achieve candor of utterance and structural significance of detail. But the result is neither unaffected nor satisfying; such pretensions only serve to conceal poverty of thought, and to place the musical argument on a higher plane than the musical ideas themselves deserve. The first performance of this new work also suffered by inopportune comparison with the composer's expressive choral work, *Psalmus Hungaricus*, which Robert Topping, tenor, and the University of Chicago Choir admirably performed on the same program. It was like turning from King David's splendor to a scholastic

analysis of human passion; where the older work preserves that brave intensity of expression which is always personal, the *Concerto* slips over the surface of classical rhetoric in not too successful a manner.

The fascination exercised over early twentieth century romantics by the works of Richard Strauss has often been noted. Perhaps no composer of decided gifts succumbed to it more completely than Albert Noelte. Strangely enough, his musical career began when he ran away from his home near Munich at the age of fifteen to become the pupil of Chadwick and Converse in this country. Even in the "elegiacal griefs, and songs of love" of this newly commissioned work, *Prologue to a Romantic Drama*, it is too easy to discover a relationship with *Ein Heldenleben*. But it should not be stressed with exaggeration. Noelte now speaks a forceful personal language despite his conscious and skillful use of Strauss's orchestral palette. The well-knit phrase, brilliant climaxes, and florid sadness of this glorified romanticism reveal a maturity of technic and style. It is one of the best contributions to the Golden Jubilee repertory.

The *Piano Concerto* that Rudolph Ganz wrote for Dr. Stock proved to be the dark horse of the season. Not having written in a major form for quite some time, Ganz, the pianist and conductor, dipped liberally into his long musical experience and sensibly picked simple and catchy materials, demonstrating to the chagrin of many a composer of more serious intent than adequate knowledge, that a thorough musical background can yield a satisfactory and well-written composition. On the other side of the fence should be mentioned the premiere of Roy Harris' *Cimarron*, a work for symphonic band, completed in January, 1941, and presented as a contribution to the fiftieth anniversary of the University of Chicago. The student band, with Harold Bachman conducting, played the endless organum-type harmonies, building the reiterated rhythmic bits into a sonorous climax intensified by a ten-gauge shotgun. The materials used are apparently those left over from his recent *American Creed*. Unfortunately the piece again demonstrates his rapidly developing technic in circumventing most, if not all, actual compositional difficulties.

Remi Gassmann

## QUICKENING THE DEAD

DEAD songs are being brought to life in the Library of Congress, for the Music Division's Archive of American Folk Music has now made its records available to listeners, students, composers. For years the Ar-