

A symphonic poem *Damon*, by Rudolf Karel, showed great talent, but not the newness which the occasion demanded. Historical considerations, perhaps, accounted for the performance of *Toman and the Wood-nymph*, an older work by N. Novak, who, with Josef Suk, is at the head of the Czech movement today. On the other hand there was a piece, *Half-time*, by young Martinu, exceedingly modern, in the manner of Strawinsky, revealing, however, a lack of personality.

A very pleasing and promising picture was provided by the Italians, Rieti, Malipiero, and by the French with a ballet of Roland Manuel and several intermezzi by Darius Milhaud. A few noteworthy works were sent from Germany, a *Concerto grosso* by Kaminski, and another composition bearing the same title by the young and talented Ernest Krenek. Paul Pisk returned to the old form of the partita and reveals a quite exceptional sense of line and melody. Ernest Toch and a young Hungarian Georg Kosa gave us a very delicate blending of instrumental tints. Perhaps the greatest success of the festival was Bartók's dance suite, a lively, magnificently sonorous piece, full of motion, constructed entirely on national motifs, one which is already tempting all the conductors.

By Paul Stefan

MUSIC HEARD IN ENGLAND

THE outstanding feature of English musical achievement during the first half of 1925 was the performance by the British National Opera Company of Gustav Holst's *At the Boar's Head*. The existence of the opera is due to a curious concatenation of events. It is a well known fact that Holst has always been fond of English folk-songs. He has lately written much that shows their influence. Less deeply philosophical than Vaughan Williams, more direct in expression, Holst has made melodies and whole movements that are clearly molded on these forms of country dance and song. The special circumstances that caused the new opera to take shape in Holst's mind were these. Last year Holst fell ill after an accident, and while lying convalescent, he turned to some sets of old English melodies, Playford, Chap-

pell and the Cedric Sharpe collections of folk-tunes. At the same time he re-read Shakespeare's *Henry IV*. As a result there came the idea of this opera-interlude, a setting of some Falstaff episodes, the musical part of which should be a stringing-together of these old airs and dances.

Holst's treatment of the music is as clever as one might have been led to expect from such an able musician. The melodies are joined with skill. The humorous episodes are of the kind that in his present mood Holst would enjoy dealing with. For it is instructive in this connection to note how, as success has come to him and the popular judgment has raised him to national rank and importance, Holst has left behind the mysticism that he displayed in his early works. Now he responds to that idea of him which the public has built up. He writes bombastic music like *Jupiter* and *Mars* in *The Planets*, ingeniously witty music like *The Perfect Fool*, and reaches out towards the purely English expression of the folk-songs. Above all, his genuine cleverness as an orchestrator holds the attention of his hearers. He is become, in fact, the Handel of our day; and in his hands such a theme as that of Falstaff gets thorough treatment.

Diaghilev returned to London in the summer. It still is too much to expect that he should have a theatre to himself wherein a range of ballets could be presented in an adequate setting. As it is, his troupe are seen at the Coliseum. They came on between variety turns; and though it is so arranged that the item directly before the ballet shall be what is called a "musical interlude" yet the music which forms this interlude is of such a type as to do little but enhance the curiosity of that which goes with the succeeding ballet. To go straight from a pot-pourri of Leoncavallo to the angular counterpoint and strident orchestration of the Satie school is to experience all the delights of following an ice-cream soda with an oyster cocktail. The result is musical biliousness or would be if such things were taken seriously at the Coliseum. But they are not. There the music is just a gay noise, a background for talking in the audience. Or a discreet noise, an accompaniment for stunts on the stage.

And it would seem that this vicious musical atmosphere has been allowed to taint the new Diaghilev ballets. The music

which Poulenc and Auric write for Diaghilev is very undistinguished. It is theatrical in that it is written for the theatre. It is certainly not dramatic. It has only a few high lights and dark shades.

For the winter season the programs do not provide much of interest to those seeking the stimulus of novelties. The British National Opera Company is to give us the premiere of Whitaker's stage setting for J. S. Bach's *Coffee Cantata*. This promises to be at least amusing, for the company will attempt to repeat the success it achieved with *Phoebus and Pan*. Of the new music heard at Venice in September, Schoenberg's *Serenade* is to be given an audition in London. It is also possible that Malipiero's magnificent *Stagioni Italiane* will be performed by English singers, and Paul Hindemith's *Concerto* for piano and chamber orchestra may be heard at the concerts of the Contemporary Music Society.

By Scott Goddard

FRENCH GAINS AND LOSSES

THE last musical season in Paris presented us with a veritable kaleidoscope of bright silhouettes, drawn there by the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs*. In this whirlpool of sound, there appeared, naturally, some very mediocre works, and some excellent music.

The concerts of the *Section Française de la Société Internationale de Musique Contemporaine*, under the direction of Walter Straram, brought us an abundance of foreign compositions. Particularly outstanding was the sprightly *Concerto pour quintette à vent et orchestre* by the Italian, Vittorio Rieti, the *Etude Symphonique* of the Frenchman, Jacques Brillouin, the splendid *Suite de Danses* by the Hungarian, Bartók.

Koussevitsky gave us a *Concertino* for piano and orchestra, a new work by Honegger which is both humorous and poetic, Germaine Tailleferre's very pleasing concerto for piano and orchestra, and the *Second Symphony* of Serge Prokofieff, in which the rich musical nature of the composer does not seem to have found the form to properly confine his superabundance and