

folk-musics, for one, is excellent, particularly if more dynamic and authentic groups can be found to contribute their services. To see an audience listen straight through with concentration to such a series of programs is an indication that open-air concerts can have a real cultural influence. It is to be hoped that this series will be continued next summer.

Colin McPhee

SUMMER AND EARLY FALL, NEW YORK

NATURE is perhaps our most irresponsible music patron and she caused many a scene this summer. Between storms, however, much modern music was played by the Goldman Band and by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Dr. Goldman has pursued the policy of encouragement to living composers for years. The results of this enlightened idea were evident in the general rather high standard of new works written directly for band. He is to be commended and thanked for their selection and for the manner of performance as well.

Pedro Sanjuan's *Cante Yoruba* treated the band as a giant sonorous body and made an exciting sound out of very simple material. The piece suffers from a surplus of dead-stop climaxes but it does preserve an air of intense vigor and seemed one of the most original of the pieces. It was also gratifying to hear the percussion section scored in a much more interesting way than usual.

At the other end of the pole from the rowdy archetype of band music stood Henry Cowell's *Shoonthree*, a delicately scored, continuously lyrical piece, outstanding for its restraint. This work (which appeared on a program dedicated to the League of Composers) is constructed of very simple and warming counterpoint and has several passages that suddenly usher one into that rich, confident world usually felt in the Bach chorales. The "music of sleep" (which is the English translation of the Gaelic title) could hardly be more ingratiating than this piece itself.

Wallingford Riegger's well-made *Prelude and Fugue* was the most advanced sounding composition presented. It is a very fine work. The *Prelude* is in the form of a passacaglia on a curious and provoking subject; very staccato and with an air of expectancy about it. A series of variations leads directly into a witty fugue on a semi-jazz subject. The impression left was that intelligence and wit had produced a work for band, modern in materials and scoring, yet transparent and pleasurable.

Aaron Copland's *Outdoor Overture*, broad and dignified, is one of his best pieces. It is simple in form, well put together and has a fine principal tune.

William Schuman's much-played *Newsreel* left one wishing he had seen the film; certainly the score would have had more purpose with one. It contained many movie-like fanfares slightly spiced with seconds.

Other American works played were a meandering *Legend* by Paul Creston, a vigorous *Commando March* by Samuel Barber, a *Curtain Raiser* and *Country Dance* by Richard Franko Goldman and Cowell's tuneful and straight-forward *Shipsshape Overture*.

The series also included contemporary English music represented by Vaughan Williams and Holst, and a Russian program with a pompous and ill-humored march by Shostakovich and the very popular and charming *Cavalry of the Steppes* by Lev Knipper. The band played several fine transcriptions as well; young Goldman's *Firebird* arrangement was particularly good.

III

The first eastern performance of Roy Harris' *Ode To Truth* was given by the New York Philharmonic at Lewisohn Stadium. It was supposed to be built as a Gothic arch and sounded like a prairie. It was a rather long exposition of Harris' substitutes for polyphony and had no theme to put your mental finger on. Harris' main idea of the importance of counterpoint is laudable and the fact that so many of his works emphasize it, even more so. But with few exceptions the subjects of his compositions do not spring intensely to the mind and lure one into a genuine interest in what follows. The present piece suffered from this defect, though its consistency and texture were impeccable. It was better formed than most of his occasional works, except for the ending which arrived without warning. Harris seems to have perennial coda-trouble; much go, no stop.

Villa Lobos' *Moorish Song* was in his pleasing impressionist idiom with a section of pure Brazil as relief from the main Moroccan manner. There were beautifully devised tunes for high strings with English horn interludes between them. While no world-shaker it was distinctly happy sounding.

The Gershwin program stood up well and made one wish that Gershwin had had the time to work into something wonderful those pure strains of integrated Gershwin that occur ever so often, instead of leaving

us sadly to look into them as through a fun-house distortion mirror of Brahms, Debussy and Stravinsky. Also played was a glittering and superficial *Second Overture to a Comedy* by David Van Vactor.

RECITALS IN THE FALL

Three songs of Poulenc were the highlights of the Povla Frijsch concert: *Air champêtre*, 1904, and *Chambre d'hôtel*, the last two being delightful settings of brief biographical incidents presumably by Poulenc himself. Clear and formful, they were a charming addition to the intimate kind of song. Paul Bowles' *Two Skies* was a moderately gay piece in neo-classical manner. The vocal line was perhaps written to move rather fast for complete vocal pleasure but it did convey a windblown feeling. The piano chattered amiably and diatonically most of the time except for an occasional sideslip in fourthish sounding chords, an increasingly fashionable effect. Samuel Barber contrived the dullest song in a long time in his setting of Hopkins' *A Nun Takes The Veil*. The vocal line is an aimless rise and fall without a moment of melodic distinction, and it is, furthermore, accompanied by piano material of an exactly similar degree of banality.

To revive the flagging humors, Bernard Wagenaar sallied into the Bea Lillie sort of thing and made a most amusing piece, gossipy and clever, to a poem of the raised-eyebrows kind by Millay. There seem to be few really successful modern songs of this genre and it was a good example of what could be done using the running parlendo of the night club singer.

Stanley Bate's *Piano Sonatina*, Number 6, played by Ray Lev at her Carnegie Hall concert, had a majestic opening movement conceived in a very simple manner around a solemn melody accompanied, note per note, by block chords with only an occasional scalewise run for relief. The second movement, while poorly integrated formally, contained a beautiful and pastoral tune in the best British tradition. Bate's melodic gift is a strong one and it is to be hoped he will gradually eliminate the "musical" passages which have little or no meaning and may be able to purify a style in which his rich simplicity will be better heard and less worried by obvious references to Milhaud and Vaughan Williams.

Lou Harrison