

It is not accidental that Stravinsky, in speaking of works that might go with the *Danses Concertantes*, mentioned the symphonies of Haydn. For here, as with the *Symphony in C*, one feels that Stravinsky's neo-classicism is entering a mellower, more serene and more readily approachable phase and, although the word will make Mr. Babitz scream in horror, that way lies a new romanticism.

Alfred Frankenstein

COLLABORATION IN FRANCE—SWISS NEWS

Geneva, January 30

NEWS from France has begun to filter into Switzerland through the long impassable barriers to the occupied zone. Now after many months of silence we finally have direct word from Paris. Activities of artists appear to have revived, concerts are again given weekly. These latter consist of regular performances by the Société de Conservatoire, the Concerts Lamoureux and Padeloup, the two former directed by their old conductors, Charles Munch and Eugène Bigot. There are also the "Gabriel Pierné" concerts to replace the Colonne, and those of the Orchestre Fémmin Jane Evrard and the Orchestre de la Chambre de Paris.

Something new, a bit startling in a German-dominated city, is the Orchestre Symphonique de Jazz comprising seventy performers. Its repertory begins with Debussy. Reminiscent of the Paris that used to be, there are also innumerable small groups, the Concerts Historiques, Ars Rediviva, the Société des Instruments à Vent and even La Jeune France and the Tryptique.

The last few months have been marked chiefly by ceremonial observances. The 150th anniversary of the death of Mozart was memorialized by a super-festival in Paris, and for a whole week lyric, choral and instrumental performances followed one upon another, the Orchestre du Conservatoire under Charles Munch and Hermann Abendroth, the Trio Pasquier, Alfred Cortot, Jacques Thibaud, co-operating with the chorus of the Bremen Cathedral and the Collegium Musicum of Berlin. The tenth anniversary of Vincent d'Indy's death, the anniversary of César Franck, and the memory of Albert Roussel were also honored. Modern music is once more cultivated by little groups, and the Orchestre du Conservatoire at the Palais Chaillot (the old Trocadéro) has ventured to give a program of Debussy's *La Mer*, Poulenc's *Concerto* for organ, string orchestra and kettledrums, and Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*.

The publication, *Comoedia*, with the cooperation of His Master's Voice, has organized a National Tenors' Competition. Using the slogan: "Are you a tenor?" they offer young French singers, professional and amateurs, prizes of 10,000, 5,000 and 3,000 francs, as well as a recording. Elimination contests have been held in many provinces, and as a finish the new Caruso is to be presented at the opera in Paris. Needless to say, it is specified that the future star be an Aryan.

In the free zone musical activity is much retarded. The one fact worthy of note is that the Villa Medici de Rome has been officially replaced by Paradisio, in Nice, the ancient estate of Baron de Zuylen where the first Prix de Rome winners are already installed and at work, under the temporary direction of M. Mignon, director of the Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen, who succeeds Jacques Ibert, now fallen into disgrace.

Let us note, in conclusion, that a French delegation went to Vienna to take part in the Mozart festival there. According to reports, it was the object of "innumerable manifestations of cordial and benevolent sympathy," and in its honor, Richard Strauss gave a reception under the sign of Franco-German collaboration. According to *Information Musicale*, a magazine published in Paris by Robert Bernard, former director of *La Revue Musicale*, a score of prominent figures made the pilgrimage. They included Hautecoeur, director-general of Beaux Arts, René Domange, director of the Maison Durand, who represented the city of Paris, Florent Schmitt, Alfred Bachelet, Gustave Samazeuilh, Jacques Rouché, Adolphe Boschot, Marcel Dellanoy, and two Swiss composers, Robert Bernard and Arthur Honegger.

MUSIC IN SWITZERLAND

The troubled times notwithstanding — or perhaps because of them — Switzerland demands much music and so musical activity has been extraordinarily intense. In Geneva, for example, the conductor, Ernest Ansermet, has found it necessary to organize an extra series of concerts, a well-merited reward for the efforts of his excellent Orchestre Romande. Great international artists have come back and, as in the past, are playing to crowded houses. Pablo Casals was warmly welcomed throughout his tour, which was climaxed by a sensational demonstration in Zurich when sixty-four cellists joined in tribute to him. Under the direction of Casals, this strange and buzzing "orchestra" played his *Sardana*, inspired by the Catalan dance. Also enthusiastically greeted were Jacques Thibaud and Wanda Landowska, the famous harpsichordist, making her farewells

before departing for America. To the roster of the illustrious must be added two fine Polish artists, Paul Kletzki, the conductor, and Arthur Gelbrun, a young refugee violinist.

After the customary – and conventional – opening, the season has been gradually enriched by works which are modern, or at least contemporary. Ansermet gave us four little symphonic pieces from Templeton Strong's *Cahier d'images*. Originally written for the piano, it has been made into a highly successful orchestral form by the American master who has lived in Geneva for half a century but carries his eighty-six years lightly. It does not speak the idiom of our time, but its simplicity and naturalness are affecting, especially in the solemn *Sarabande des Morts* and the turbulent capriccio, *Au Cabaret*. The *Suite Tessinoise* by Gustave Doret was performed by the Orchestre Romande on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Swiss composer, and Frank Martin's *Balade pour trombone et orchestre*, written for the 1940 Concours National Suisse, revealed the possibilities of that instrument. Jacqueline Blancard, pianist, and André de Ribaupierre, violinist, gave a first performance of Bohuslav Martinu's *Quatre Arabesques*, which are original without being forced. Despite their brevity, they encompass a world of feeling. This is pure Martinu – concise and compact in form, tied to folklore, with great expressive power and rhythmic and dynamic accents. It had an enormous success.

The radio in Switzerland does much for the music of today, consistently fostering the production of new works. Radio-Genève commissioned a play from Pierre Girard, poet, and Pierre Wissmer, composer, placing at their disposal excellent soloists, a group of actors, a female chorus, and a symphonic orchestra. The text of this lyric poem, *Naiades*, tells the ancient legend of a naiad punished by the gods for loving a human and so is not very interesting even though admirably suited to the music. The music, however, more poetic than the poem, speaks to us directly. The score reveals a sure hand and a clarity of writing and naturalness of expression. Particularly effective are the poetic lyricism, the simplicity of melodic and expressive line and the fluidity. The finely shaded color effects reflect the influence of French impressionism.

Pierre Wissmer is the great hope among young Swiss musicians. He wrote the best "set piece" in the 1941 Concours d'Exécution Musicale, a charming *Sonatine pour clarinette*, which might well appear on regular concert programs. In collaboration with Jean Binet, he gave the Swiss

film, *L'Oasis dans la tourmente*, an important score which will probably be made into an orchestral suite.

Berne, too, broadcast a work of large scope, *Jugend im Schnee*, a "Lehrstück" for soli, choruses, instruments and speakers. Its composer, Wilhelm Arbenz, is music director at Bienne and a lively influence in the artistic life of that industrial city. Following in the steps of Paul Hindemith and Kurt Weill (whose opera, *Der Jasager*, he performed with his pupils), he has composed a cantata on a text by Georg Thürer. This was inspired by an actual occurrence, the death of three boys lost in the snow. Like *Jasager*; it warns the young not to withdraw from the community and exalts the spirit of comradeship. It does not pretend to be a work of art, and limits its demands to those that can be met by any school interested in music, but it nonetheless attains a high level. The composition utilizes Lieder and choruses, and is close at the same time to the feeling of popular song and chorale; without abjuring all ties to modern music, it restricts its language to what is simple and direct. The enthusiasm of the young pupils of the Gymnase de Bienne, who performed under the direction of Arbenz, was the best testimony to the success of its creators.

An important event was the fifteenth anniversary of the Basler Kammer-Orchester (BKO) which has had such a great influence on the evolution of modern music in Switzerland, even in Europe. There have been fifteen years of effort, marked by a triumphal victory over the opposition of a reactionary public, hostile to all new expression. In the beginning the struggle was bitter, for the artistic conceptions of the orchestra and of its founder, Paul Sacher, were out-of-the-ordinary in their fidelity to the spirit of composers, in the unified effort of the musicians, and in the choice of programs which cultivated both contemporary and ancient music. Thanks to the BKO, Basle today is an advance-post of music. The concerts – a chamber chorus section was added to the orchestra in 1928 – are the forum of young Swiss music. Innumerable scores by foreign composers have been written especially for this ensemble. Basle has had the premieres of two works by Béla Bartók, three concerti by Bohuslav Martinu, Honegger's oratorio, *Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher* and his cantata, *La Danse des Morts*, numerous scores by Willy Burkhard and Conrad Beck, not to mention the first performances of Paul Hindemith (at least twenty), Stravinsky, Malipiero, Bloch and Britten. It has also been responsible for the revival of hundreds of choral and instrumental works by ancient masters who should not have been forgotten. Today, Paul Sacher has at his disposal

forty-five musicians and fifty-six singers, and can draw on 700 semi-active members. It is even necessary to be a subscriber to get seats for the orchestral and choral concerts.

Quite recent has been the founding of another organization destined to play a part in artistic life: The Groupe Culturel formed by the Chambre Syndicale des Artistes-Musiciens with the idea of promoting contacts and an exchange of ideas among members of the profession. Lectures are held each week at the Maison Internationale des Etudiants. Ansermet, honorary president, inaugurated the series with a brilliant talk on *The Musician in the World*.

Arno Huth

CHAVEZ AND THE CHICAGO DROUTH

CHAVEZ was here. He conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra through three of his major works. The impression made was direct and vital. The rest of the music we have heard recently is weak and doesn't reach far enough to even touch.

I didn't hear Nicolai Berezhovsky's *Concerto* for viola and orchestra. A criticism by Edward Barry mentions an "attractive sustained movement," the andante, and finds the "low musical comedy" of the second movement not "surpassingly deft." I did however hear Cadman's *Pennsylvania Symphony*. This has a variety of themes – of the forest or lurking Indian; of the pioneer, the river, the factory, the happy worker; and, finally The American Theme. The only things missing were moving pictures. It is sad to think how seriously the work must have been written, and how little of this seriousness comes off.

The Illinois WPA Symphony Orchestra, which is to be commended for its many first performances of contemporary works, gave on this occasion two very dull premieres: Radie Britain's *Drouth* and Leos Jánáček's *Lachian Dances*. The latter were written in the 1880's, and might have been exciting then. Miss Britain's *Drouth*, like Cadman's *Symphony*, also needed an illustrative film, particularly for the plaintive cowboy song which is heard toward the end of the composition, "expressing his loneliness and desolation as he sees the land blown away." The strings did most of the blowing and sighing. At one point a ratchet electrified the wind section and for a moment there were interesting jagged sounds. But these were written for a decorative-dramatic effect and not as an organic