

Some interesting dramatic music for the theatre has been written by Darius Milhaud for a production of the Atelier, the *Chateau des Papes*. This little score for voice, for piano, for trumpet and for the Martinot radio wave instrument is rich in accent. The new film by René Clair, *Quatorze Juillet*, has popular music arranged and composed by Jaubert; a grand waltz by Grémillon, cinemist and composer, is its best effect.

André Schaeffner

A BOOK AND TWO CHAPTERS ON NEW MUSIC

THE task of rendering into a book of three hundred pages the dizzying panorama of the modern musical world has been achieved with more than ordinary success by Guido Pannian in his *Modern Composers* (Dutton, 1933). He has simplified his undertaking by limiting himself to a single chapter on general musical tendencies and devoting the body of his volume to essays on a dozen composers from Strauss to Honegger. Through his consideration of men so varied as Stravinsky, Vaughn-Williams, Kodaly, Hindemith, Bloch, Falla, Szymanowski, Busoni and Schönberg runs a single theme—the fusion of personality through technic and idiom, with the value of each assessed by Signor Pannian in proportion to the extent that he conceives this fusion to have been effected.

The discourse is carried on by a critical method that is happily the blending of musical and literary ideology, particularly in the essays on Stravinsky and Schönberg, both of whom he appraises as having been led astray (to different ends, of course) by the blandishments of objectivist thought-processes as opposed to their intuitive bent. As expository writing, the Schönberg summary is accomplished with singular clarity and directness, a survey of his development which, for impartiality and erudition, has not an English equivalent. Less valuable are the chapters on Strauss and Ravel; his castigation of the former partakes of the common misconception of him as a contemporary composer, rather than a predecessor, historically, of Debussy; and checking against him insufficiencies to whose solution he never aspired. Equally unstable is his praise of Ravel, which is invalidated by a procedure of selecting for analysis those works

which conform to his viewpoint, while neglecting, unremarked, others such as *La Valse*, the piano concerto and *Bolero*.

A survey of American music would seem to have been appended to this edition, as the amount of space so devoted allows only the swiftest surface-skimming. Signor Pannian's estimate of our current status is not without merit as dispassionate appraisal, but the remarks directed to individual composers hardly reveal an ideal grasp of details. Jazz, however, is well-described as "a means of expression, but not a means of self-expression." Among the many names mentioned there are not those of Roy Harris, Charles Griffes, nor of George Gershwin, while the publisher of the Copland *Piano Concerto* is referred to as the "Cos Boss Press." Altogether, the inclusion of this chapter lowers the quality of the volume.



As an appendage to *Music through the Ages* by Marion Bauer and Ethel Peyser, (G. P. Putnam, 1932) the chapters on Music in America and Modern Tendencies must necessarily yield to the formula of the book, which presents in an orderly succession the accepted views concerning music from primitive man to neo-primitivism. As a digest, it is an accessible compendium of names, dates and places, whose object is to render intelligible, from the mass of data available, the essential currents and movements underlying the present course of musical activity. In this survey, one discerns the same talent that has earned for Miss Bauer the position she occupies as a composer. Together with Miss Peyser, she has succeeded in segregating the accomplishments of several hundred modern composers, to most of whom is assigned a brief explanatory paragraph. Directing attention, for example, to the little-known society called *Young Poland in Music*, the authors' typical penetration has found this, admirably concise: "They were influenced on the one hand by Strauss and Reger, and on the other by Scriabin and the French Impressionists." There are also discussions of polytonality, dissonant counterpoint and quarter-tones. A bibliography accompanies each section, and the whole is excellently indexed.

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