

sight-read at these weekly meetings.

The Finnish Workers' Chorus continues to present proletarian poems in middle-class musical settings. Mountain-high quantities of such graftings will yield no mole-hill of revolutionary quality. On the other hand, the New Music Workshop continues to present technically revolutionary original compositions of great formal interest which say little. Since art is not simply a matter of formal relationships, but is rather a synthesis of form and content, one can scarcely help wondering what would be the result if the revolutionary musical technic of the New Music Workshop composers were to be used in expressing the revolutionary concepts served by the Finnish Workers' Chorus. Why not *Variations on Themes from The Internationale, No. 1* as a starter? Or *California Cotton Strike*? Or *Leipzig Trial* or *Lynching* or *Hunger March*, or *Soapbox Impromptu* or *Anti-Fascist Etude* or *Dirge to Democracy*? John Weatherwax

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

WHATEVER else may be said about modern music, it seems fairly certain that posterity will not suffer from a lack of documentation. In no other period of musical history have composers been so busy writing about music; and remarkably, about the works of others as well as their own. However, Marion Bauer approaches distinction in being the first American woman composer to write a book about the actual material of modern music, in addition to its philosophy and objectives. In her *Twentieth Century Music** there is much that is illuminating and valuable for the lay-listener who desires a closer contact with contemporary music than the unaided ear can provide.

After a preliminary survey which enumerates the transitional periods in the development of musical thinking and elucidates their contributions, Miss Bauer makes a close examination of the divergent directions in contemporary writing. There are long chapters on Impressionistic Methods; on Impressionism and Renaissance; on Atonality, and one dealing with neoclassicism, dissonant counterpoint, *Gebrauchsmusik*, quarter-tones and what she terms *ether-music*. The most direct and clarifying

*G. B. Putnam's Sons

chapter is on Atonality, largely devoted to Schönberg; in which, using as a text the study of that composer by Egon Wellesz, Miss Bauer has reviewed the technical procedures of the early Schönberg with considerable analytic persuasiveness. Interesting as this discussion is, it would have gained considerably in value had Miss Bauer touched upon some of the works since *Pierrot Lunaire*; the piano pieces of Opus 23 and Opus 25; the Wind Quintet, Opus 26; the orchestral variations, or the Opus 30 string quartet. For, after all, even we music critics have learned to listen intelligently to the Opus 10 piano pieces, published, as they were, twenty-four years ago.

There is no adequate reason presented for grouping Scriabin and Sibelius in the same chapter, but the discussion of the former is well planned, the examples from his music characteristic, the analysis informative. It is significant of some distinction in Miss Bauer's mind that of all the major composers discussed, Sibelius alone is treated without recourse to musical examples. Perhaps her description of him as "going his own way, untouched by the atonal, polytonal, neoclassic, outside world," she considers self-explanatory. The remarks on Stravinsky will serve well as an introduction to his music, although there, again, the interest for the musician is limited.

In the actual construction of the volume there are a number of weaknesses and inaccuracies which the author may have an opportunity to correct when a revision is put through the press. Such, for example, as the lack of tempo indications on at least seventy-five of the hundred (approximately) musical quotations; the reference, on page 52, to the Wagner librettos being written "in what Ernest Newman calls a 'telegraphic style,'" Newman, in his *Wagner as Man and Artist* (page 297 of the 1924 edition) assigns the credit for that *mot* to Emil Ludwig; the reference, on page 284, to Bernard Wagenaar "as the son of Johann Wagenaar, the Dutch composer;" the transplanted Wagenaar is no kin of the older man, merely his pupil; on page 167 the artist responsible for the strip cartoon *Krazy Kat* is identified as George Harriman; his name is Herriman. These are minor matters, but, in a volume designed for reference use, apt to create difficulties.

The bibliography of books and articles about modern music is valuable; and the index is comprehensive.

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A history of music written by a variety of hands, each an expert in the field allotted to him, complete in a single volume . . . this would be a valuable possession. An attempt to compile such a volume is presented by *From Bach to Stravinsky—The History of Music by Its Foremost Critics*.^{*} But a survey of the book reveals that the title and sub-title are equally unfortunate in choice; what we have here is not "the" history of music but rather a series of portraits of eminent composers, with the connecting links supplied by inclusive essays. There is but passing mention of Strauss, less of Berlioz and scarcely any of Gluck, though six pages are allotted to Tschaikowsky and as much to Franck. And can a volume lacking contributions by Ernest Newman, Guido Adler, Henry Prunières, Richard Specht, Donald Tovey, Walter Neumann and Guido Gatti really be said to have been written by music's "foremost critics?"

However, appraising the collection from the standpoint of what it is rather than what it could have been, one finds an excellent essay on Stravinsky by Leonid Sabaneyeff (from his *Modern Russian Composers*); a very choice account of Chopin and his influence from J. Cuthbert Hadden's *Chopin*; a workmanlike article on Schubert from Hubert Parry's *Studies of Great Composers* (although a definitive essay on Schubert should be more than workmanlike); and a well-reasoned, vigorously-written treatment of "Late Romanticism and Modern Trends" from Paul Bekker's *The Story of Music*. These are the really engrossing portions of the book; the rest ranges from sympathetic but not especially informative appraisals of Debussy and Ravel by Paul Rosenfeld (from his *Musical Portraits*) to a precious study of Mozart by W. J. Turner. The purely historical essays are all competent. It is obvious that compromises have been inescapable; but as a collection revealing various approaches to musical criticism the volume is of considerable interest. The whole was edited by David Ewen, and Douglas Moore contributed the biographical data. An index would increase the utility of the volume.

Irving Kolodin

^{*}W. W. Norton & Co.