

*Concerto* for piano and orchestra, entitled *Marches Militaires* by Francis Poulenc; *Suite* in five parts, for violin and orchestra, *Double Choeur* on a text by Charles Peguy, *Quartet* for violin, flute, clarinet, and harp, and *Quatre Chants*, with string quartet, on verses of A. Spire, by Georges Migot; *Suite pour Chant* by Vincenzo Davico; *Sonata* for violoncello and piano by A. Tcherpnine; *Orphée, mimodrame lyrique*, by Roger Ducasse, to be given at the Paris Opera; *La Prêtresse de Korydwen*, ballet by Ladmirault; and *Salamine*, drama after Aeschylus, by Maurice Emmanuel.

*L'avenir nous le dira.*

*By Irving Schwerke*

## AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

BY some irony of fate, the Olympic Games, designed to present to the world a glorification of the physical, achieved only moderate success from the point of view of sport; whereas music, its poor and humble relative, admitted chiefly in order to profit by the publicity of the games, somehow carried off all the honors of the season. The Stadium of Colombes had many dull days, with tiers of deserted seats, while the Champs Elysées Theatre overflowed with a public more eager for new music than for athletic feats, a public that showed no less favor to the concerts at the Opera House and the Cigale Theatre.

At the Champs Elysées concerts, Mme. Bériza, a singer of talent and a distinguished patron of the arts, presented three works of unequal merit. The first was *L'Histoire du Soldat*, an insipid legend which Ramuz dragged by the hair from Russian folk-lore. We won't probe the mysterious reasons which interested Stravinsky in this story, especially since the music is really music for the stage even when considered apart from the libretto. It is full of life, humor, and unexpected, queer rhythms.

*Le Carrosse du St. Sacrement*, a one act operetta by Lord Berners on a play by Mérimée, is an inevitable failure, despite the composer's great talent. The music has a true logic of its own which does not lend itself to all the dramatic developments. The subtle

unity of drama and purely musical logic is seldom achieved, but rarely are they so completely irreconcilable as here. The text skips continuously from one idea to another, forcing the music into abrupt changes of sonorities which soon become tiresome.

*Le Plumet du Colonel*, an opera bouffé in one act, based on a military theme, by Sauguet, is a little work not without freshness and charm. It is a pity that the very young composer (I believe that he is only eighteen years of age) did not feel the necessity of a little further study before presenting himself to the public, for he might thus have avoided a certain awkwardness in harmony and orchestration.

After Madame Bériza's season, the Russian Ballet brought to the Champs Elysées Theatre a distinctive group of new works. *Le Train Bleu*, pantomime-ballet by Darius Milhaud with the libretto by Jean Cocteau, introduces us to the joys of the seashore resorts. The music, admirable in its effects of local color, meets all the aesthetic demands of the Casino dances.

*Les Biches* by Francis Poulenc, following no precise plot, consists of a group of charming dances accompanied by delicate and subtle music continually striving to please and succeeding. Poulenc, who provides himself with orchestral effects and intriguing harmonies gathered from the best masters, stamps these loans with the seal of a real personality, which gives his work an original and attractive coloring.

*Les Facheux*, a ballet by Georges Auric, is a work to be kept with us. Let us not ask whether the theme drawn from Moliere called for a more delicate and subtle musical commentary. The music Auric presents to us is original, well constructed, and well orchestrated, rugged, clear and tender in turn, without any hint of raillery. Moreover, if this work were free of the choreography which limits without illuminating, it could become an excellent orchestral suite.

At the Cigale Theatre, rented by Count Beaumont to give some presentations which he called "Paris Evenings", the program announced that "Dancing, painting, music and poetry tend to reveal, each in its own way, the new spirit and the most youthful expressions of France." Alas, this prophecy was not followed by any very convincing realization, at least in music, for, summoning all

due optimism, I cannot believe that the new spirit and the youngest musical expression of France are revealed in *Salade* by Milhaud, in the *Mercure* of Satie, or *Les Roses* by Sauguet.

At the Opera house the group of new orchestral scores produced by Koussewitzky proved of great interest. The *Pacific* of Honnegger, the symphonic movement inspired by the action of an express train running at full speed across the country, is an astonishing score. Almost completely stripped of descriptive elements, it holds one breathless by its unrelenting dynamism, its flashing themes, its orchestration, which builds up one continuous line despite its trenchant cadences.

The *Concerto for Piano and Wood-Winds* by Stravinsky establishes a new level in the evolution of the composer of the *Sacre du Printemps*. Every trace of romanticism is vanished. Objectivity is complete. A tense and terrible striving is apparent from the first to the last note. It is this quality which spoils the work. It lacks grace and spontaneity. Moreover, the deadening resonance of the wood-winds mingles ponderously with the hammered tones of the piano. And yet, from the *Concerto* emerges the impression of that magnificent fury rarely lacking in Stravinsky.

*Sept, Ils Sont Sept* for chorus and orchestra by Prokofieff, based on a poem by Balmont, is a close relative of the *Scythian Suite*. The music is full of a savage force and frenzied rhythms. *Tempo di Ballo* by Roland Manuel, a short symphonic piece of exquisite grace, could not have been more skilfully orchestrated.

*By Daniel Lazarus*

