

## OVER THE AIR

GODDARD LIEBERSON

WITH an unprecedented flourish of newspaper publicity, accompanied by announcements on black silk and pressed cork, the National Broadcasting Company is setting out to prove of late that the only true God is Music and Toscanini is His messenger. Salaams are the order of the day. Carpets are laid from podium to dressing room and great hushes fall as when the name of a dear departed is mentioned. If you have tuned in on these concerts, maybe you have noticed, too, the uncontrollable ecstasy of Mr. Milton Cross upon being so closely allied to the work of the Master. (Mr. Cross told his radio audience that he thought he perceived a halo about the head of Sig. Toscanini.) The Master, a simple little man, does naught but conduct music with characteristic excellence. I wonder if he realizes how deliberately, and only too obviously, he is being deified. I think not. Of course, the concerts are good. Well played, intelligently conducted by Mr. Toscanini, and programmatically stable. But to hear them, you are subjected to the largest dose of radio slush and eulogizing since the electioneering for Landon.

If the National Broadcasting Company feels so strongly about the cultural life of America, let them do something about various other concerts in which they have a hand. On Sunday, two concerts conducted by Erno Rapee come over NBC. One, in the morning, from Radio City Music Hall, in which you hear great masters played as only great masters should never be played. The other from Carnegie Hall in the evening, where a fine orchestra (paid for by General Motors) plays lesser masters who should never be played. Mr. Rapee has, therefore, one leg in Radio City Music Hall, and the other in Carnegie Hall. The stretch is too much, even for him, and he lands somewhere around 52nd and Broadway. The Sunday evening General Motors Concerts (now concluded) have steadily deteriorated since their inception. Under the baton of Mr. Rapee, they were little better than dolorous Sunday night pop-concerts with your "favorite" vocalists sing-

ing *Old Folks at Home*. There were exceptions; such as Mr. Rapee's inimitable interpretation of Ravel's *La Valse*, in which the whole orchestra searched helplessly for the thematic material.

Another Sunday night concert which has been on the musical downgrade is the psalm-singing Ford Sunday Night Hour. It once presented music which had some substance. As a matter of fact, it was Mr. Victor Kolar, an assistant conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra who gave it that substance. These days, their program building is exceedingly poor. Anyway, there is hardly any music that could make bearable the strange interval devoted to Mr. Cameron, who delivers those none too subtle Ford propaganda speeches. This program, undoubtedly a financial asset to Columbia Broadcasting Company, is a blot on their unusually high cultural standard.

Maybe you are hoping that by now I have struck bottom. Well, I have; for a brighter musical aspect is seen in the splendid programs of Alfred Wallenstein over WOR. Consistently interesting, well played, and inventive in every respect, these programs (usually called *Symphonic Strings*) are a joy. Mr. Wallenstein often plays contemporary scores and does a very important piece of work in finding and playing *new* old music. If you enjoy going through the music in Hugo Riemann's *Musikgeschichte in Beispielen* and similar tomes, you can't afford to miss these programs.

If Mr. Wallenstein is making WOR important for serious-music listeners, Morton Gould is doing his share for those interested in jazz. Mr. Gould's Monday evening concerts of symphonic jazz arrangements are made doubly interesting by the inclusion of original works by Morton Gould. His *Second Swing Symphonette* is an exceedingly clever and musical combination of classical sinfonietta forms with swing rhythms. The three movements, Lively, Pavanne, and Presto, are filled with inventive harmonies and interesting themes, all cloaked in really expert orchestration. The Pavanne movement is a sensitive piece of music considered on any basis.

I don't suppose there is much need to tell of the blessings that WQXR provides in their programs of recorded music. At four o'clock in the afternoon when most stations are carrying programs for "the ladies" or for "the children," it is gratifying to know

that you can tune in WQXR for a solid hour of good music which may be anything from Teleman to Jean Françaix. Thereafter, until 12 o'clock midnight (their time has recently been extended to this hour instead of 11 o'clock) good music is available from this station.

If you stay up late, WEVD carries a symphonic hour from 12 A.M. to 1 A.M. The announcer is a little "talky" (he says: "This is *definitely* dismal Tschaikowsky") and you are apt to run into *Aida* or *I Puritani*, but at midnight those things don't seem to matter so much.

## ON THE HOLLYWOOD FRONT

By GEORGE ANTHEIL

THE general run of music issuing from the Hollywood studios has been very disappointing indeed. Only one piece of encouraging news is definite, that Kurt Weill's score to Fritz Lang's *You and Me*, previously announced in this column as being indefinitely postponed, has not only been replaced on Paramount's production list, but is actually nearing the end of production. What I've heard is in Weill's best style, and if it's not barbarously cut upon the dubbing stage it will certainly prove a sensation in Hollywood and, very possibly, pave the way to better things for all composers.

All else is rumor. Ernst Krenek, according to news given me yesterday by Ben Hecht, is being seriously considered at Sam Goldwyn's. The author of *Jonny Spielt Auf* may be asked to lend his talents to the *Music Festival*, a "gigantic" picture about present-day Salzburg. Dr. Ernst Toch now seems to be a permanent member of the Fox-Twentieth Century Studios; one feels happy that a musician of his calibre has at last found a niche of such importance in the film world. Another rumor is that Kurt Weill's music for Walter Wanger's *Castles in Spain* will not be lost; that picture too will go into production shortly. And Louis Gruenberg, so it is said, will shortly write a score for the producer and director, Frank Lloyd, creator of *Wells-Fargo*.

The biggest piece of Hollywood news, of course, is that Sto-