

wood Music Directors take note. (Yes, MODERN MUSIC is read by every Music Department in Hollywood).

I also religiously go to see the new Russian pictures but emerge always in a state of fury because the sound tracks are so atrocious that the very excellent music which seems to be coming from them is garbled and incomprehensible. The Soviets would do well to import some of our numerous sound men now out of a job in Hollywood, any one of whom seems to know more about sound recording than anyone in Russia. I wish very much that something could be done about this; after all it is a comparatively simple matter.

OVER THE AIR

GODDARD LIEBERSON

WINTER is the time for ear-muffs, and if the radio goes on as it has been, you can wear them right into the parlor and keep them on evening after evening with little or no loss in musical enjoyment. That is, if you want to hear the work of your contemporaries—for in the welter of music coming over the air-waves, the moderns have been reduced to a trickle in the flood. I seem to remember saying this before, and can now envisage a choleric and frost-bitten old-age in which I shall say it again and again. For radio, edition 1939, offers even fewer prospects for American composers. The most unkindest cut of all is from CBS, who will not continue their commissioning of American works. If they have good reason to be disappointed in those they did commission, part, at least, of the disappointment was due to their own choice, a sometimes indiscriminating one, of composers. Yet in justice it must be said that such choosing is, at best, an unhappy task and one which involves the most vacillating, the most transitory, the most personal, and the most unpredictable of all human qualities—taste. If this all sounds too pessimistic, let me say that CBS is far too progressive to disregard contemporary American composers altogether; I am assured that their policy of playing new American works on regular chamber and symphonic programs will continue.

NBC offers much for the new year which occurred in the old. There will be the Saturday night concerts with Toscanini and others conducting, and a host of broadcasts of symphonic and chamber music. How much new American music will appear is yet to be seen. The year's record of the new NBC Symphony shows works by twelve American composers on the programs. As a gesture to the native composer, NBC has commissioned Gian-Carlo Menotti for an opera which will be finished no one seems to know when. Of the ninety concerts which NBC will bring from Rochester, New York, some will be broadcasts of Eastman School composers or Dr. Hanson favorites in his American Composers series.

The Mutual Broadcasting Company has several sustaining programs conducted by Alfred Wallenstein and others, and though at various intervals American works are played, there seems to be no general policy about them. This is a shame, particularly since Mutual has built up a discriminating audience of music-listeners who would certainly welcome a thorough coverage of the present-day scene.

The last months of 1938 brought but little radio excitement. One occasion which was supposed to be exciting was Columbia's broadcast of an all-Stravinsky concert from Italy with the composer's son as soloist, and the composer himself as conductor. After introductions and eulogies in French, Italian, German, and English, there were performances of *Appollon Musagète* and the *Capriccio* for orchestra and piano.

Two young artists, Milton Kaye and Milton Katims, are responsible for a splendid series of viola and piano sonata recitals over Mutual. Both brought talent and verve to the microphone in sonatas by Honegger and Hindemith, and a suite by Bloch. Various chains and stations also performed music by Ben Britten (*Simple Symphony*—cute but unpenetrating stuff), Peter Warlock, Starokadomsky (the possessor of this terrifying name is the composer of a non-terrifying symphony which was conducted by Rodzinski), and Vittorio Giannini (*Beauty and the Beast*—a sugar-coated opera for those who over-ate on Thanksgiving day).