

say that Mr. Kolisch and his colleagues are, beyond all comparison, the ones into whose understanding care the playing of the Schönberg quartets should be delivered henceforth.

The remaining items of the Chicago autumn may be disposed of as addenda. Rieti's somewhat stolid *Second Avenue Waltzes* were made known by Dougherty and Ruzicka before Ballet Theatre brought them along in orchestral dress. Mischa Elman played the garish Martinu *Violin Concerto*. And that is about all. Outside of Mr. Barber, American composers hopeful of recognition in the nation's second city were allowed to sulk in their tents, except when the ballet companies visited the city.

Cecil Michener Smith

### CLEVELAND COMMISSIONS POEM BY STILL

THE first of three works commissioned for the Cleveland Orchestra by The Fynette H. Kulas American Composers' Fund received its premiere at a concert of The Cleveland Orchestra under Rudolph Ringwall in early December — William Grant Still's short *Poem for Orchestra*. In February we will hear the *Concerto for Orchestra* recently completed by Morton Gould, and next season a new overture of Randall Thompson.

Still's score is based on a poem by Verna Arvey which evokes a soul-sick world reborn through faith. There are three short, joined sections. The slow opening part, in the composer's own words, gives us "the desolation of the world;" the energetic second section tells of "building for the future;" and the final part suggests "an exultant spirit and a growing spiritual consciousness." The very naïveté of the program is an indication of Mr. Still's sincerity, and he has written music of originality and intensity. The idea of sub-dividing a short piece into as many as three sections, all of about equal importance, seems to me questionable. Many such works fail to make their points in each section and, as a result, in the work as a whole. Mr. Still, however, is an individual voice, and the depth of his feeling goes a long way toward making his work convincing. He is to be congratulated, too, for writing a practical work which should prove effective for opening symphony programs.

Dr. Ringwall also gave a hearing to the work of an amateur — Lionel Barrymore. His *In Memoriam* was received by the Cleveland audience as an attractive curiosity. Dr. Ringwall's other contributions included a revival of the Suite from Walter Piston's Ballet, *The Incredible Flutist*, and the first performance of *Three Songs for Orchestra* by Herbert Elwell,

sung by Marie Kraft. Mr. Elwell's songs, which have been heard before in their piano version, are based on texts by Conrad Aiken, Robert Frost, and Alice Meynell. Mr. Elwell has set the poems very sensitively, and they make an attractive suite. The scoring, while effective, is a little thick for the subtle emotion of the texts and the music.

Other conductors have brought various novelties to The Cleveland Orchestra's concerts. George Szell gave a stunning performance of Hindemith's new *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by C. M. von Weber* which had an enormous success here. This effective score makes its way quickly with the broader musical public and should bring many new friends to Hindemith's music. Vladimir Golschmann introduced Copland's *Quiet City*, and Eugene Goossens revived his *Sinfonietta* of 1922, which remains one of his most impressive scores. Fritz Reiner may be credited with another revival, the *Dances from Galanta* by Kodaly which are already eleven years old and worthy of more frequent performances.

There remains only to mention the *Bachianas Brasileiras Number 2* by Villa-Lobos which was introduced to Cleveland by Mr. Goossens. This is the work that contains the charming *Little Train of Caipira*. The other movements of the suite, however, prove useful material for the concert hall. It might make a better impression if the second and third movements were interchanged; as it stands, the fervent *Aria* is dulled by coming after the long quiet periods of the *Prelude*. A greater contrast is needed between these first two movements. The music of all four parts is impressive, and some of the best to come into the orchestral repertory from South America.

Little has turned up outside of the symphony concerts. The Cleveland Orchestra gave a stunning performance of Leonard Bernstein's *Fancy Free* score with the Ballet Theatre at some special ballet performances, and the Walden String Quartet repeated the D-minor Quartet of Normand Lockwood.

G. H. Lovett Smith

## BALTIMORE THAWS OUT IN WAR-TIME

THE thoroughly rejuvenated Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, now in its third season under the skilled ministrations of Reginald Stewart, is bringing to this city and its war-swollen population an increasing number of new works. So far, we have heard the Stravinsky *Circus Polka*, the Prokofiev *Third Piano Concerto*, and Nicolas Nabokov's *Sinfonia Biblica*,