

musical theory and science which agitated the following centuries, all originating in this animated and dynamic era, are presented with careful judgment and consummate scholarship.

Men of letters consider it a duty to delve into the great literary monuments of the Middle Ages. Our museums are constantly increasing their collections, spending fabulous sums for early medieval woodcarvings, paintings, illuminated

manuscripts. Only the musicians persist in overlooking many centuries of great music as so much almost mythical terrain on the other side of an incomprehensible watershed called the "pre-Bach" era. It is to be hoped that Reese's work will provide a powerful incentive to explore this *terra incognita*. No one will benefit more by the extension of the musical horizon than the true descendants of the medieval musicians, the composer of today.

Paul Henry Lang

TOOLS OF MUSICAL CULTURE

I*n The History of Musical Instruments* (W.W. Norton and Company, 1940)

Dr. Curt Sachs, the leading authority on this subject has produced a detailed and highly readable account of the progress of musical tools from bull-roarer to Hammond Organ. As concentrated as the condensed version of *The Golden Bough*, the book makes fascinating reading, giving as it does a splendid survey which no serious musician can afford to ignore. It is an epic of materials and mechanisms, of the sounds that come from wood and iron, bamboo, bronze and jade.

The book is as rich from the ethnological as from the musical point of view. Here we can learn of the sexual symbolism of flute, trumpet and drum, of the functional value of music in primitive rites. I must confess a preference for this part of the book, which makes exciting reading. Others may prefer to trace the history of the oboe, or follow the development of the baroque organ.

The volume divides into four parts, The Primitive and Prehistoric Epoch, Antiquity, The Middle Ages and The Modern Occident. Here we can see for the first time the relation of one musical cul-

ture to another, and get a hint of unsuspected cultural connections through the distribution of musical instruments. The book is rich in photographs, drawings and diagrams.

In spite of the erudition that has gone into it there are, unfortunately, inaccuracies. It is, for instance, irritating to find Javanese and Balinese instruments and orchestras misnamed or misspelled, or an exaggeration such as "in Bali some bands are as large as our symphonic orchestras" (the largest I ever found there, included forty players; the average gamelan consists of around twenty.) Then again, in describing a Balinese composition to support his conclusion that the Balinese have preserved an early dramatic quality later lost in Javanese music, he gives a rather garbled version, gathered from several musical styles, all of which are in the modern idiom of the twentieth century. In spite of the fact that there is no practical evidence in either Java or Bali to prove it, we come once more upon the statement that in the Javano-Balinese *slendro* scale the octave is divided into five equal parts. Most Javanese and Balinese *slendro* scales I have examined came

nowhere near this division, and I insist that it takes more than theory to establish this conception. Such out-of-focus statements, together with several other hasty conclusions make this section not exactly the last word in scientific precision.

Nevertheless the book is invaluable, something that has long been needed. An extensive reference list at the end

helps make it the perfect introduction to the study of comparative music. Here Dr. Sachs's method, more fluid and narrative than in his *Geist und Werden der Musik-instrumente*, is well attuned to the temperament of this country, and will help greatly in promoting the book as a work of general interest.

Colin McPhee

CHARTING THE COURSE OF WESTERN MUSIC

LA *Rosa de los Vientos en la Musica Europea*,* by Adolfo Salazar, (Ediciones de la O.S.M., Mexico, 1940) is a rapid survey of Western music from prehistory to our day, with particular and insistent reference to the meshed relationships between conditions of society and artistic styles. Salazar defines his terms in two swift introductory chapters, and then deploys his chief argument under five headings: *Monody*, *Polyphony*, *The Baroque*, *Romanticism*, and *The Present Epoch*. As a composer, an internationally trained musicologist, and a sharp and witty writer, he is equipped as few men can be to produce exactly this book, which has numerous important virtues and only one major flaw.

First we are led by a true illuminator through the mazes of Oriental and early Christian monody. We are enabled to understand with pleasurable clarity the psychological implications of homophonic chant, the magical and ritualistic significance (as distinct from artistic meaning in the modern Western sense) of *raga* and *makamath*. We learn how and why so essentially Eastern a concept of music as monody came to endure in the Church, and why and how many-voiced music grew up outside it, in gathering

places of the commonality and the halls of the nobles. Here, as everywhere, Salazar is demonstrating the role of past eras in creating the musical styles that followed them down to our own day. He is never cataloguing for a musical museum, but always searching out the provenance of still-living ideas.

The gradual ground-shift from monody to polyphony (which musical style and era Mr. Salazar rather takes for granted than explains) leads gradually to the period called baroque. Here we are given an impressive survey of the origins of opera, which is called "the first, the greatest and most fecund creation of the baroque in the field of music." What makes the entire book valuable is here particularly rich – the materials by which Mr. Salazar links opera to all baroque manifestations, the baroque itself to geography, history, economics, religion, and isolated upflamings of individual genius.

More than one third of the work is devoted to romanticism, under which heading Salazar includes not only what is usually called "romantic" – Chopin, Schumann, and their contemporaries – but also most of the music commonly called "classic," nearly all music, in fact,

*A "rose of the winds" is a mariner's compass; the title symbolizes historic fluctuations of style in Western music.