

## SCORES and RECORDS

By COLIN McPHEE

THE music of Gustav Mahler is slowly coming into its own in America, and the firm of Boosey and Hawkes, convinced of the growing interest in this still so little known composer, continues to devote much of its paper and ink to a new edition of his most important works. Five of the symphonies will soon be obtainable in miniature score; Numbers 2 and 3 are out already, and 1, 4 and 9 will follow shortly. The edition is excellent and, considering costs these days, reasonable enough in price.

Delkas, a Los Angeles firm, gives us two short chamber works by Ernst Toch — a *Serenade* for two violins and viola, and *Poems to Martha*, quintet for strings and medium voice. The *Serenade* is bright and transparent, with Toch's smoothly fluid contrapuntal style and finished workmanship. In the quintet the voice is less of a solo than an integral part in the contrapuntal texture of the music, and for this reason tends to become colorless and not particularly moving melodically. Of the four movements I prefer the second, *In The Train*, for its rather special Tochian lightness and animation.

Turning to American composers we find the publishers less active than usual for the moment. Boosey and Hawkes brings out Richard Donovan's *Ricercare* for oboe and strings, a solid and ingeniously constructed piece with a somewhat Brandenburgian energy. Some eight minutes in length, the music has time enough to get under way and unfold in

a satisfactory manner. I have the feeling, however, that it belongs in a suite, that it needs at least one other movement to set it in proper relief. Henry Cowell turns to the idiom of the early American folk-hymn for inspiration in his brief two-part songs for women's voices, *American Muse*, *Swift Runner* and *Immensity Of Wheel* (Music Press). I like most the first chorus — a neat comment on a primitive style (barbaric from the European point of view) that is both naive and wise.

Virgil Thomson's *Piano Sonata Number 3* (1930) is published by Mercury. *Adventure in C* might better describe this chaste and Lilliputian work where a sharp would be as disturbing as a coarse word at a church social. The frame is further restricted, for the melodic line is bounded by the octave. Within these narrow confines the music manages to have an amusing vitality that is not completely guileless. Associated Music puts out two miniatures for violin and piano by Camargo Guarnieri, *Canto Number 1* and *Cantigar de Niñar*, but in each case the simple melodic line, vaguely Latin American in flavor, is marred by over-elaborate accompaniment. Nothing new or striking is to be found in the *Seven Venezuelan Songs* by Juan Plaza, also published by the same house.

### RECORDS

In the recording world there is a gleam of light, a ray of hope. Victor issues the long-wished-for recordings of Debussy's *Gigues* and *Rondes du prin-*

*temps*. These two seldom-heard pieces, especially the first, are shining gems; never has Debussy been more explorative, more original in his manipulation of orchestral color. *Gigues* has an amazing formal clarity and concision; at the same time, its strange melancholia and biting, at times acid coloring create an atmosphere, a mood that I find impossible to define. Why these pieces have waited so long for recording is a mystery. Monteux, conducting the San Francisco orchestra, is ideal for this music, and gives a beautiful performance. The recording is excellent. Victor also issues Chausson's *Symphony in B $\flat$* , conducted by Frederick Stock. The recording of this work was not so urgent, and perhaps the chief value of the album lies in its rounding out the picture of the Franckian symphonic school.

Under criminal waste should be noted the recording and issuing of Holst's *The Planets*, of which four movements are conducted by Sir Ernest MacMillan with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. There is not one word to be said in favor of this noisy and bombastic wasteland, in the *goût anglais*, which should long since have been forgotten, and one can only lament the loss of precious shellac.

It is good to see Hargail, on the other hand, recording a work by a young American for a change. Leonard Bernstein's *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*,

first performed last year at a League of Composers' concert is a work not especially distinguished for originality, but it is well assembled and professional, and it gets an excellent performance with the composer at the piano. The fourth side contains three short piano pieces. Continental gives out an album of Latin American piano music, played by Erno Balogh, but since it has not yet arrived for review comment is reserved.

Columbia resorts for the most part to reissues. Fauré's *Requiem* still sounds merely pious to my ears; its prettiness and elegance still seem more at home in Sainte Clothilde than Nôtre Dame. The *Delius Society Album Number 1* is orchestral — the tone poem *Paris, Eventyr*, the *Serenade* from *Hassan*, and the final scene from the opera *Koango*. *Paris*, for all its looseness of form, is by far the most living of these works, has more of the peculiar warmth and sensitivity that can make some of Delius' later music so appealing.

Decca has made an experiment by getting out an album of music from the film *For Whom The Bells Toll*. I myself doubt the permanent value of film-music independent of picture except, perhaps, as object lesson for the composer's lab. But in this instance there is not even the benefit of good music, for the music of Victor Young is the typical watered-Rachmaninov that surges through so many super-films.

## ON THE HOLLYWOOD FRONT

By LAWRENCE MORTON

IT is many years since I have read *Jane Eyre*, and I have forgotten all

but its main outlines. I hope it is not like the film, for if it were I should be