

concerts with Lukas Foss as soloist and Richard Burgin conducting. I found this latest work to be among his most charming. It represents a new departure for the composer in the care which he lavishes upon sonority. The orchestration is clear; the balance between piano and orchestra is neatly adjusted; and the thematic material possesses a grace and lyrical quality which one associates with his more recent compositions.

In Cambridge, the Harvard Music Department is sponsoring a program of the music of Schönberg. Included are *The Ode to Napoleon* and a transcription of *The Second Quartet* for string orchestra. The participating artists are Edwin Steurman, Norma Farber, and members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Richard Burgin. The part of the narrator in the *Ode* has not been assigned at this writing.

Irving Gifford Fine

FIFTEEN NEW WORKS IN ROCHESTER DEBUT

AT the symposium of American orchestral music given by the Eastman Rochester Orchestra in October under Howard Hanson, fifteen scores were heard, all in first performances. In general, the major merits were in the works of large proportions: two concerti and three symphonies.

Morris Mamorsky's piano concerto is a Leviathan-like work which swims blissfully in its ocean of ink. The author has considered Gershwin and found him good. The results of his contemplation are less good. It is a pity that a man as lavishly vital, and one with no mean technic, should fail in the act of self-criticism. The score is too long; it is also too thick, too loud, too encrusted with ideas of all persuasions. The piece shows a talent. But this talent is like ore as it comes from the ground. Mamorsky scores with abandon, sometimes with brilliance. The glitter is not that of the gem-stone. More promise than achievement is shown.

Joseph Wagner has written a three-movement first symphony that lasts eighteen minutes. There is something refreshing about the conciseness, modesty and adroitness of this composer. He is an old hand with the orchestra, although occasionally he makes the old mistake of thick writing for low winds. There are enough ideas, and they usually have charm. He does not woo the grand manner, nor does it come to him. When he has told his story, he departs. This is a lyric piece, in spite of its exuberant rhythms and frequent flashes from the "dry" instruments — xylophone, side-drum, wood-block, etc. The work is really a sinfonietta,

and a pleasant one.

John Verrall appears to be a man of serious, even austere, attitude. Like Mamorsky – but in a remote world – he displays more promise than performance. Judging from this first symphony, there is a good deal behind his personality. Verrall uses notes with great honesty. His palette is dark. (Who among recent composers can sing – as Renoir could – with black!) I believe that he will do good work, for he has feeling, integrity, and a certain amount of technic.

Although Peter Menini is a very young man, his style is rapidly forming. He draws with strong, clear, black lines. In his symphonic allegro there is incessant movement, and it is movement that has purpose. Menini is attracted by the possibilities of counterpoint, which he uses in his own way to suit his own needs. He scores very well indeed, with limpid, discreet color, set off by dramatic episodes in which brass and percussion make challenging sounds.

The violin concerto of Robert Sanders offered some curious anachronisms. Sanders has drawn many a promissory note on Strauss. The magician of Munich overworks his spell in this music. That Sanders has yielded to these ancient snares is probably due to the fact that his work was written some thirteen years ago. What the music possesses, in spite of various obvious derivations, is a youthful, romantic ardor, a considerable technical command, and melodic potency. There is something to be said for a composer who can make a tune that is expressive and controlled. It is a pity that Sanders, having begun his concerto in a lucid, lyric vein, did not go on in the same clear fashion. Instead, his purposes (and his style) grow more ambitious and, finally, more confused. His work is too long, but it is often rewarding for soloist and audience. Jacques Gordon performed it as he would a masterpiece, with affection and compelling skill.

Vincent Persichetti contributed a *Dance Overture* which disclosed a vigorous personality. Unhappily, it is too long, and eventually diffuse. His opening pages have a kind of gaunt, defiant sound that is brave and good. He grinds his own colors. He has imagination. But he *will* write a fugue – the inevitable fugue. This composer would do better to go his own way and let the past sleep. He is a twentieth century man.

Two soldier works, Earl Price's *Legend* and Simon Sandler's *Ozymandias*, were on the dark side. Both were honest – the issue of conviction – and won respect. Frederick Hunt, in a *Fantasy* for violin

and orchestra, shows a growing distinction. He is now deep in modality (but refuses to modulate!).

Space limits compel me merely to summarize the remaining works: Grant Fletcher's *Rhapsody for Flute and Strings*; Scribner Cobb's *Suite for Two Flutes and Strings* (circa 1780); Harold Wansborough's *At Dawn*; Leland Proctor's *Pocantico* (a warm, personal work); Jack End's tranquil *Song for Sleepy Children*; Irving Lowen's *Variations on a Peruvian Theme*.

The long list was played with devotion and ready skill by Hanson and the orchestra. Obviously these sessions form a model which, if freely imitated in other places, would be to the ultimate benefit of our music. Only in some such fashion is it possible to test new music and thus arrive at a just estimate of its worth. It is interesting to point out that sixty scores were considered, from which total it was possible to perform exactly one quarter.

Bernard Rogers

MODERN CHAMBER MUSIC IN PHILADELPHIA

NEWLY inaugurated here this season was the early Fall Chamber Music Series, with a concert of contemporary works. Thematic material moving inevitably through dissonant counterpoint, certain highly vitalized flashes of sound and a persuasive dryness, all set off by a high distinction of craftsmanship, assured us that we were listening to the familiar Walter Piston. His *Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano* had verve and inventiveness, and a more personal touch than earlier works. Although nothing was ventured beyond the usual trio sonorities, the extreme directness of structure and the polish of his linear texture were enough to set the composition off from the run of contemporary pieces in that medium, so often overwrought, strained and pseudo-orchestral. The Hindemith *Sonata for Piano, Four Hands* was also played. This and the Piston work have become favorites in Philadelphia through repeated performances.

The same group was also responsible for the Philadelphia premiere of Aaron Copland's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. It is not easy to forget this noble music, whose gaiety seems to be on the surface only for way down in the notes there is a thin thread of tragedy, suppressed but strong. The opening violin line is reluctant to make its statement squarely and only after hovering hesitation does it gain pace. The effect of one triad