

Predestined and predetermined by this trait, Stravinsky's creative route leads from his early Russian nationalism and discipleship at Rimsky-Korsakov's academy to a cosmopolitan creative attitude colored by a radiant "Mediterranean" tonal feeling. De Paoli is so eager for the Latin or the "Mediterranean" race to own Stravinsky that he explains the composer's recent domiciles and the birthplace of the last decade's work—Switzerland, the Riviera, etc.—by an urge to compose in surroundings that are inwardly native.

This thought has a fresh turn and the racial loyalty underlying De Paoli's ideas wins one's sympathy. But in spite of his thesis—which one might find supported by Stravinsky's neo-classicism; the return to Scarlatti etc.—the Mediterranean Stravinsky seems to me something of a new legend.

*Lazare Saminsky*

## A CONDUCTOR ON THE MODERN ORCHESTRA

The formidable complexity of rhythm and orchestral color—to say nothing of the tonal concepts—in modern music, makes exigent two technical requirements in present-day conducting. They are clarity and stability of wrist motion to govern the orchestral rhythm and achieve coherence in the ensemble: and mastery in the working out of orchestral sonority.

The composer of today very often—and on most occasions justly—accuses the conductor of distorting his work because of a superficial egotistic and casual approach to its spirit. But an ignorant dislocation of the very body of a new piece is an even grosser misdeed; a composer who looks at a score and does not comprehend its actual tonal goal, as the French say, *n'existe pas*. Yet misrepresentation of the all-important tonal aspect of a composition by inarticulate rhythmic guidance and by a blurred and haphazard orchestral sonority is common.

In the invaluable new book\* on conducting by Hermann Scherchen, especially in the chapter "Orchester Kunde," at last we find a systematic and painstaking description of the endless labor involved in dealing with the great palette of tone-colors used by modern composers.

\**Lehrbuch des Dirigieren*. By Herman Scherchen. Leipzig: J. J. Weber Verlag, 1932.

Scherchen's analysis of the problems of orchestral sonority is extremely valuable. He is a musician and conductor of the first rank. His recent performance of Stravinsky's *Oedipus* at Munich and of the Vogel and Von Webern works at Oxford astonished us not only by the amazing clarity of his reading and his Toscanini-like rehearsing but also by his sure re-incarnation of the composer's conception of tone-color.

What Scherchen says about string playing—accentuation by the fingers as opposed to emphasis by the bow—is significant in its relation to the rhythmic subtleties demanded by our modern composers which require an especially clear articulation. Also illuminating are his remarks on the variations of tone color in the woodwinds, illustrated by passages from Stravinsky, Hindemith, Miascowsky and others. They will help our contemporary composers to realize the difficulties involved in transmitting their tonal thoughts. Scherchen, of course, has systematized the procedure which the great European conductors, Toscanini, Muck, Furtwängler, Mengelberg apply at rehearsals. But he has added a wealth of personal observations that will be invaluable for the reading of modern works.

L.S.