

which is making so real a contribution to the music culture of America.



The fourth program was devoted to compositions by that gifted member of the younger generation of American composers—Ross Lee Finney. The three works presented—*Piano Sonata*, 1933, *Violin and Piano Sonata*, 1934, and *String Quartet*, 1935, showed decided chronological growth toward less formalistic and more personal expression.

His talent lies definitely in the direction of solid construction and logical, orderly mass. The rather motoristic rhythmic scheme of 1933 becomes, in 1935, an ardent forward thrust that moves much more convincingly. In 1933 his slow movements do successfully establish a mood; but in 1935 the wistfully beautiful *Andante* sustains real lyrical power. The non-programmatic, wilful music that I heard at this concert inspired in me a strong interest in the future work of Mr. Finney.

Isadore Freed

RECORDING PREMIERES AT ROCHESTER

THE symposium of new American orchestral music held in Kilbourn Hall, Rochester, during the week of October twenty-fifth, brought thirteen new works before the public and inaugurated a new idea which should be of inestimable service to composers. Dr. Howard Hanson, the guiding spirit of the American Composers' Concerts since their beginning over ten years ago, conducted the augmented Rochester Civic Orchestra in informal programs. The compositions were all recorded, and copies of the recordings will be sent to the composers.

None of the works presented proved to be sensational discoveries, but several were well-written, original and worth hearing. George F. McKay's *Sinfonietta No. 2*, Opus 22 was solid, unified, concise and with good thematic ideas. Erik Leidzen's *Fugue with Chorale* can stand comparison with almost any of the orchestral transcriptions heard of late; he does not try to change the pattern he sets for himself. David Diamond's *Psalm for Orchestra* was brilliantly scored and at moments really moving. It could bear some revision and pruning. Other works

deserving of mention were the terse little serenade of Victor Alessandro and Robert McBride's *Rhapsody on Mexican Themes*, which, though much too long, succeeds in being frankly entertaining, a quality which some American composers seem studiously to avoid.

Robert Sabin

MORE PESSIMISM BY CECIL GRAY

A DISTURBING book is Cecil Gray's *Predicaments or Music and the Future* (Oxford University Press). If his prognostications are true, then indeed the twilight of the musical gods is upon us.

This final volume of the trilogy, which includes *A Survey of Contemporary Music* and *The History of Music*, is even more pessimistic, more prejudiced, than the other two. But Mr. Gray makes his deductions with such conviction and pitiless logic that his fearless stock-taking may, in the long run, prove constructive.

He calls the work a study in constructive criticism, and it deals with problems of esthetics, philosophy of art, with history and evolution. He turns the X-ray on present day music and finds signs of disease, of sterility. The methods of practically all the twentieth century composers come under that head: Strauss, Debussy, Delius, Milhaud, Honegger, Poulenc, Schönberg, Stravinsky. Mr. Gray sees in them the end of romanticism. Each new path, polytonality, atonality, nationalism, neo-classicism, is merely a cul-de-sac: "In art nothing which is pure innovation has any enduring vitality."

Besides examining his sick patient, Doctor Gray tries to prescribe for his recovery, basing conclusions presumably on logic, not on prophecy. He accepts Busoni's words as prophecy of a new kind of classicism, but not neo-classicism, which is "an entirely artificial thing." Berlioz, the unrecognized genius of the nineteenth century, presents the long melodic lines which the future polyphony should employ. Mr. Gray looks forward to a type which he calls "prose melody." Bartok is "among the foremost melodists of modern times;" he possesses creative imagination and, in spite of his "sadistic obsession with discord," his work seems to be a desideratum of the music of tomorrow. Opera is included in his prescription; "it satisfies some imperious esthet-